219

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**SPEAKERS**

Interviewer, Participant 219, Interviewer 2

**Interviewer 2** 00:02

All right. So thank you for your permission to record the interview. So the recordings now on your participation, Kiana is volunteered. And at any time, you can choose not to answer the questions or even if you say, Hey, I'm done, you withdraw from the research altogether, you can do that. At any time. We record and we keep the recordings confidential. Within our research team, we basically like to use them so that we can hear and capture everything that you're sharing with us today. And we also don't share your name, or any kind of identifying information about you in any of the research results that we report out, we would ask that you be mindful who's around you. So you can protect you know your own confidentiality in case there's things you want to share. And you may not want, you know, others to hear your comments while we're talking. As we go through this, when we finished the interview, if you find that you still have questions, after you're not being us come back to you later, feel free to reach out you have Chris's email or context standpoint, please feel free to reach out and share anything or get any additional questions answered that you might need. And your concern is actually demonstrated by your continued participation in the interview itself. Do you have any questions before we go on? I do not have any questions at this time. All right. Wonderful. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Alrighty, so we want to start out with a question asking you to describe your role, or your experience, you know, and local food system. And so, I am new to this work, my daily role. In my daily role, I manage the Office of Public Health, which is an extension of the mayor's office here at the city of Flint. It was created in response to the Flint water emergency has existed for about four years, focused primarily on response to the community needs of the community that became that came to light after the crisis. I started in this role about 10 months ago, and really wanted to expand the work of the office, hoping to do some some different kinds of things. And at one point was invited to have some conversation about the office participating in the Food Policy Council Flint's Food Policy Council. So that's kind of how I came to know more. Other than that, I grew up in Flint, and have been around this circle for a very long time, in that respect, personally, so I used to be on a board of an organization that led a research study at at one point and just have always worked in the community. So I'm aware of what the food needs are. I grew up in North Flint, understand that there were lots of food deserts that still exist to this day, even though I don't live there anymore. And the challenge is in resolving that. Okay, wonderful. What thank you for that. Thank you, thank you. Um, what we'd like to, um, to do is share with you, the sectors, the five sectors that we're focusing on in the conversation, so we're looking at production, so people that are growing crops, as well as raising livestock and Kiana that scale could be anywhere from your backyard to, you know, larger farm, you know, operations, we've coupled processing and packaging together. So those folks that are responsible for washing and packing things for us, or even turning things into value added products like lovely tomato here, and over here we have salts, some other wonderful being that we've mixed. Looking at the wholesale and resale the folks that are reselling both the things that have grown animals, the value added, you know, products and making sure we have access to those. And then the retail sector dealing with all the places that you know, we buy food from the grocery stores, the farmers markets, farmstand, restaurants, caterers, the food boxes, and all of those areas in anyone, any medium that we're using to sell food, you know, to customers. And then last but not least, because not everything is edible, nor do we eat everything. We're also looking at the waste category. So whether it's food that is inedible, and we or it just doesn't get eaten, and it gets recycled. And also considering that there's some folks that are managing waste by, by redirecting food to other people. So those are the those are the five food sectors, that we're focused on. Any questions or comments about those sectors? I don't have any questions at this time. Okay. Okay, but feel free as we go along. If you do, we can always come back to references that we need to. So based upon your expertise, and you're living in Flint, knowing about food in Flint, where would you say that you have the most expertise as a relates to these these sectors? Probably retail, probably retail Okay. Some some experience with produce producers. Yeah, primarily retail. I suppose also some some if waste management includes sharing the food, some some experience in that area as well. Okay, great. Yes, thank you. Okay, great. Well, we use a a method called mental modeling, to do this process. And Carissa is going to introduce you to that and show you how it works. And I'll turn the floor over to her to do that.

**Interviewer** 06:45

And I'll just run you through a quick example of the kind of things we're going to be doing today. So this is sort of the site that we're using, and there's two main pieces to it, the concepts, which are the words on the bubbles, and then the connections that will drop between them. So as we build out, you know, your understanding of the system, it'll be more, it'll grow and grow and be more complex and more lines and concepts and stuff. So if we're looking at an issue, like traffic in a city, I might say that something that influences it is the number of cars on the road. And when I've decided that there's a connection between two things, I basically have two decisions. The first is if it's a positive or a negative connection, and that doesn't necessarily mean that it's a good connection or a bad connection, it just means if one goes up, does the other one also go up? Or does it go down. So for cars and traffic, when there are more cars, there is also more traffic. So we have a positive connection, and we'll have a blue arrow on the map. Public transportation might be more of a negative connection, because if we had more public transportation or a better public transportation system, we would have less traffic and people are taking buses or riding a subway if it's a really big city or something like that. So we'll have an orange arrow for negative connections. My last choice is if it's like a strong, medium or weak connection, so how influential or impactful is one thing on another so for cars to traffic, I might say that's a strong connection. Because it's really influential, you know, if nobody drove cars, we would happen traffic, whereas public transportation, I'd be more of a medium connection, that it can have a lot of influence. But you know, some people really love driving their own cars, or they live or work somewhere, that's just always going to be inconvenient. For a public transportation system. A weak connection might be something like the number of cyclists on the road, you know, so we promoted people biking to work or something like it could impact traffic a little bit. But it's not like a realistic solution to a traffic problem. You know, you can't carry a lot of groceries on a bike, you can't move a couch on a bike, like it's just not going to be a main mode of transportation, people. And so that's where the two decisions if it's positive or negative, and it's weak, medium or strong. Any questions about this process so far?

**Interviewer 2** 09:15

Not yet. Thank you so cool.

**Interviewer** 09:17

So um, just before we get into it from taking like a high level perspective, as Rene kind of you guys have this conversation, I'll be in the background, adding in concepts making connections based on what you're telling us. So your knowledge and experience in the local food system in Flint, and we definitely wanted you to have ownership over what the map that's created. So definitely feel free to jump in and correct what I'm doing saying, you know, I wouldn't connect it that way. Or wouldn't word that concept that way? Because it's definitely your map and I'm just trying to make sure that we get it as accurate as possible to your understanding, so definitely correct me. I got

**Interviewer 2** 09:57

All righty, so Now what we have in front of us is those five sectors that we talked about, can I here in the green. And then you'll notice on the retail one, it expands it out just a little bit to consider the markets, the stores and the restaurants. And then off to the left, you'll see where we'll talk about racial equity and inequity, because we'll bring that in. And know that as we're talking, sometimes it's just a stream of consciousness and people sharing. So don't worry about where to start, you know, just kind of talk with us about your experience. So, you know, based upon what you share with us, you know, in your role and now engagement with the policy council and being a lifelong Flint person in eater, can you share with us just how you see the connections between these different sectors? You know, in the, in the food system in Flint, how would you, how would you connect them? Or how would you see connections between them?

**Participant 219** 11:12

And so, the producers are the controllers of all things. They are responsible for getting all of the items that we need to make a food system. I'd have to go back to the definition of value added processors to know.

**Interviewer 2** 11:17

Okay, so the value added processors are the people who would take the things that the farmers grow-the producers grow and they turn it into like the next product.

**Participant 219** 11:24

So like, canned tomatoes,

**Interviewer 2** 11:25

Yes. Mm.

**Participant 219** 11:36

Hmm. So the value added processors are connected to the producers in that without them, we wouldn't have those canned tomatoes to prepare dinner or sell at restaurants. And so then I would also connect producers to certainly wholesalers, but I'm looking at the composters first because I think that there is a positive connection there. What I remember growing up was that how the food looked in the store seemed to be a huge priority for whether it made it to the store or not, and working in food distributions here in the city of Flint during the water crisis, and after, and understanding that a lot of the produce that comes from the producers that don't make the cut-that aren't the pretty ones to make it into the wholesaler group-go into that composters group to be distributed to the community. Even some-I've seen a commercial online for an online grocery distribution store that sells the less than gorgeous pieces to-I don't know how to describe them. And so that's new, that's so positive, that really sort of responds to what to do with the waste, which is important to all aspects of our our ecosystem. And yes, right, I'm just processing here and thinking.

**Interviewer 2** 13:05

Oh, you're good [laughter].

**Participant 219** 13:07

And so one of the things that I've been giving a lot of consideration to is the lack of local production of food and the distance that food has to travel in order to make it to this community and how that feeds into racial inequity. Now, I don't know if I'm supposed to make that connection-

**Interviewer 2** 13:34

Oh, no, make the connection. Go ahead.

**Participant 219** 13:37

That's one of the things that has really been on my mind in the last several months. And that has to do with my role here at the city of Flint, but also my personal life where I really think a lot about solving problems, and my husband and I had a conversation about-there's a farm for sale somewhere just outside the city of Flint-and it used to be an apple orchard. So we've been having these conversations about- and my husband isn't really into this in the same way than I am, right. But we're having these conversations about why that's significant-why-when we're thinking about approaching it as a business, why this would be a very good move, not just for us financially before our community, and that's really huge for me personally, being able to give back, being able to address the racial disparities that exist in our community as it relates to having access to food. But also having connections to farming, like culture-farming has been everything to the culture, and there is a disconnect there and how to bring it back, and so layers in that relationship as well.

**Interviewer 2** 14:36

Got it. Yeah, I hear a number of things inside of that. When you talked about the connection between the distance and racial equity. So you see, closer, tied to the local, tied to equity, say just a little bit more about how that equity connection works. You mentioned culture.

**Participant 219** 14:54

Yeah.

**Interviewer 2** 14:54

How else does that connection-?

**Participant 219** 15:31

So yeah, and so based on what I know, and what I've experienced in my own life, and traveling, our local communities don't often house farms. There are people in the city of Flint who do have a few chickens and that kind of thing, that they raise on their own. But there isn't a community of producers, and I think that became really significant during the pandemic, and when the grocery stores dried out, right, when there were no products, there were no things to buy. Right. And so, having local production-having access to local production that comes from people in our community isn't valuable. And that's not to say that the farms that exist outside of-in the township, and that kind of thing aren't significant and important. But what's being raised right here and increasing the production of what's being raised right here in the city of Flint, I think, really matters. And so, I think in order to respond to the-what is the word that I want to use? To the demands, I'll just use it-demands of the community, right, the requests of the community, to be treated equally, to have access to foods equally, can be addressed by investing in local farming, by continuing to support. And this may not be connected programs that teach young people farming and gardening, and really sort of providing-yep, education-perfect-access to that, so that kids can understand how they can make-not just kids-so our community can understand how they can make a contribution. So when that shortage happens, they have a knowledge of how it happened, and why it happened, and then can, as they see fit, respond to it, right. So who knows, it might motivate some retired person to just buy that farmland just outside the city of Flint, and really start to respond and make a difference. But without that seed of education, nobody really knows. I can't count on my hand the number of people who really understand this process and how it works, and so that education is expansive, and invaluable.

**Interviewer 2** 19:36

Great, thank you. There's a lot of connections there. So as you're looking at that, [Interviewer] you want to talk us through a little bit?

**Interviewer** 19:49

Yeah, so the structure kind of comes through of this lack of local production, dropping producers and increasing food miles, and then also, impacted by education, not only to create producers, but also general foods systems understanding in the community. And then also some of the benefits of having local producers, having a local food economy, increasing food access that isn't dependent on larger supply chains, cultural relationship to farming. Any changes that you would like to make, any additional connections? Again, it's your map, if you don't like how I worded something, let me know.

**Participant 219** 20:31

No, I think this is good where it is. But I think... I'll just say my words and then I'll. I see an opportunity for connection between produce and local businesses, restaurants in particular, right. There is a budding restaurant industry in the city of Flint, there are so many independent-I was just looking at a menu thinking about lunch of a young lady who has a restaurant called a traveling-a restaurant called The Gumbo Trap, right. And she goes around the local area several days a week and sells; she doesn't have a food truck or anything, but she was able to get her licenses through the Health Department, so she's good there. But seeing opportunities to be present for small business owners via local food production, I think is a big deal, and again, tying it back to that cultural relevance. She's learned how to cook-probably I'm speculating, but I will-from a generation of women or men who've influenced that, and carrying on that tradition and building on that culture-what that gives back to the community again, you can't put a price on that. And bringing back a connection between that history and how that history for her is significant for an entire community and to that, yeah.

**Interviewer 2** 22:38

Yeah. Yeah. And then the link of that back to actual education as well, cause you talked a bit about that learning, that informal kind of learning that happens between generations. That generational learning. Mm hmm. Okay. With this small-I'm just following too. So we've got education to the education-I think that what I heard in terms of education was also that you talked about that the cultural aspects showing up in the small business ownership, which is important to the community. So we've got that connection between the restaurants and cultural foods. Does that capture where you were? Okay, alright, got that. Okay. Other connections that you see? We've got cultural relationship to farming from the producer side, and you talked a bit about the food system understanding. Is there anything you want to-anything that supports that or anything that's a barrier to that happening? Yes, the education system. So again, racial inequality, I think that's connected there. And it is to no fault of the school system themselves, but sometimes lack of funding and resources. But time, state standards, there are all these things that influence. But the young people don't get to learn about farming or food production in the classroom, and again, I'm kind of gonna go back to the the water crisis, the water emergency, because I think now we're seeing-we're getting the fallout of what happens when young people are poisoned by lead, right. So there are a lot of disciplinary concerns in the classroom. There is for whatever reason, the lack of resources and support-or disconnect between resources and support, I don't know, I'm speculating. And so that takes away from the time that might be available for teaching young people-educating young people about farming. As it relates to elders in the community, again, isn't it the same thing? Lack of resources. There may be people in our community who are very much interested in continuing farming, who aren't sure about how to move forward, and in an already cash strapped community, who's there to provide that information-that resource? Whose responsibility is it even to provide that information-that resource? Is it on the municipality? Is it is it on the education? So like whose responsibility? Is it all-what we said in the lack of nonprofits? Mmhmm. That's a good point. But right now, who is. You talked about two systems, as well as students and elders. Two different populations, and tying that back to just the opportunity to actually really learn. You did mention too some barriers in terms of school. You talked about standards, as well as (well three barriers in schools). You talked about standards, funds, and time as three barriers in schools to education. Okay, standards and time. Okay. And the connection between the water crisis and discipline-young people's ability to learn and discipline. So we definitely want to catch that with the water crisis as education. But you spoke to the discipline problems in the classroom as well, affecting the time available to learn, so there was a connection between education, time, and discipline, which was a result of the water crisis. So we're just try to make sure we get those connections in there. Okay. And you mentioned income, you said cash strapped. Those were your words. Who is cash strapped? And how do we connect that to which aspects of the food system-that mainly you're talking about the eaters? Are you talking about other folks or, where does the income part of it connect? So, I think that there is a concern related to income for residents and inaccess to work that pays a fair wage for a day of service. And I think, too, there are some concerns around the school system and having access to money. The city of Flint's population has been declining, the charter schools have come into the community and taken resources away from the community schools at Flint community school, and the school didn't have a lot of time to plan and respond to that. And so on top of trying to address the everyday concerns, there are the larger issues that exist because of the lack of resources and those resources going out. And I think that a large amount of those have gone to charter schools. And I'd love to see somebody conduct a study that says, you know, that was the right thing to do, or something that really helps us to evaluate that decision for the state to open it up and allow for the charter schools to move in. Mm hm. Yeah, it's a bit of a ripple effect. Right? Indeed, and I do think it's connected to, again, the access to food. Right. So the after school programs that fed children if the school has to close, they don't exist anymore. The opportunities become more difficult to access, the access is limited, and many other charter schools exist outside of the immediate community, and so how to get those resources to the kids-becomes even more challenging. Okay. Just even the location. Even the location of the schools, okay. Yeah, yeah, yeah, so my daughter's in a charter now. And it's-I live in Flint Township, just adjacent to Flint. Her school is about 10 minutes from me, but most of the kids at the school are from North Flint. That's a 20 minute drive, and how do you hosting an after school or summer program where you feed the kids if the kids can't get to the school? Gotchu okay. And so that access is tied to when they can't get there you saying-they can't-their physical ability to get there, like the transport?

**Participant 219** 31:33

So lack of transportation.

**Interviewer 2** 31:34

Transport? Okay. Yeah-

**Participant 219** 31:37

Or support at home, right? If mom has to go to work, Dad has to go to work, and they're there from eight to five, how can they sort of make that happen?

**Interviewer 2** 31:49

Right, so I'm hearing a connection between the education-access to school access to school. Mmm. Education with the connection between transportation and access to food programs. Gotcha. Okay. There we go. We should have warned you this gets pretty fast. I've seen this a time or two, so. Oh good! Okay. Okay, excellent. Excellent. Good, good. Good. Ah, great. So we got transportation. Okay. Other connections that you're seeing? You introduced a couple of the shocks that have happened, the water crisis or emergency as I've heard you refer to it as. Are there other ways in which you've seen that the water crisis affected the food system?

**Participant 219** 33:05

So yes. So what I saw during-I used to work for-volunteer for an organization called Bottles for the Babies. It was one of the first organizations to start to deliver bottled water in the community when it first happened. We were all not sure what was going on. And in the process of doing that work, one of the things that we did was start to take a look at specific foods that were led fighting foods, right. And so we made efforts to promote them, we held events to try to introduce them to community, and that was great. Outside of tha, what I noticed was that there were a number of organizations-and I worked for one-where they were tied into the help centers here in the city of the Flint. So, after the crisis happened, everybody got into a room, strategized, made some determinations about how to move forward for distributing water, and also distributing food. So there are currently three health centers in the city of Flint. All housed at local churches, and they distribute both food and water. In addition, there are multiple church locations that distribute food and water. This isn't to say that it wasn't happening before the water crisis. There was a significant increase in food delivery and food distribution at no charge to residents.

**Interviewer 2** 35:12

Okay.

**Participant 219** 35:14

And so I think-I don't want to call it an increase in access, because I don't think- I feel like when I say that, it means something different. But it did allow for an opportunity to distribute resources to those most in need. So in some ways, it is still-even though it's still going on, you know, five years later-it's still a temporary fix. Yeah, I think that's how I describe it.

**Interviewer 2** 35:51

Okay. Okay. Alright. Great. Great. You mentioned COVID, as well. What kind of impacts have you seen the food system experience due to COVID? All my beloved restaurants are out of my foods still, right. The reduction in menu items, and that kind of thing is just-I think it's surprising for me, because at this point, we've been in it for a while, we've gone through, and like a true American, I'm like, why aren't we done with this already? Where's my chicken? And, and so that's been surprising for me, it's been eye opening for me, honestly, because I had not considered reduced access to resources for restaurants. It made sense, at grocery stores. I didn't connect restaurants at the time. My focus was the grocery store, because it just made sense that restaurants would just have access to what they needed to run their businesses and, nope, wrong, learned the lesson there. Or I was just kind of blinded by it. It just wasn't on my radar. And so I think there are some continued issues with access to foods at the grocery stores that do exist, right. And so I have concerns about the grocery stores that are still in the community, and what they are lacking, right? If it's not available at the Kroger in the suburbs, what is happening with people in North Flint? What are they, you know-and people are gonna eat what they have access to. Right.

**Participant 219** 37:48

Right, and so that makes me really worry, I get really concerned about that.

**Interviewer 2** 37:53

Right, right. And I see [Interviewer] has got those connections between COVID in the supply chain and access to food, and that's connecting back to the stores, there so, okay. We got that. Any other things that you feel that COVID has impacted in the food system, besides the supply chain, making sure the food is getting to the restaurants, into the stores? Nothing I can think of right now. Okay. Okay. Are there other-

**Participant 219** 38:34

I had a sad moment, I'm sorry.

**Interviewer 2** 38:36

Oh, that's okay. I hear you. Hey, it's a big deal. Just yeah, take a moment. Yeah, this is heavy stuff, right? Because we're talking about people. And that's the part, I'm sorry, I should always be professional, but- No, listen, [Participant 219]. If I was in the same room with you, you know, we're pressing pause, because we are people. I just worry. I just worry, because that's where I'm from you, and that's my community. My dad's still there, my uncles are still there, and I know-I know, realistically that there are so many people who are trying really hard to respond to that and just being met with lots of challenges. So thank you for granting me that grace. I appreciate it. Listen, look, [Interviewer] will tell you, I'm always saying, we are people first. And the minute we forget that, then why are we doing what we're doing? If we're not doing anything with people first, then why are we doing right? That's my philosophy, [inaudible]. You know, so I get that. It's our humanity, shoot. It is our humanity, and picking up there, [Participant 219], I would ask you, what are those barriers? What is it that you-when you think about this-what's influencing-where are these influences coming from that are impacting this system? What else is happening?

**Participant 219** 39:37

I think it's just, in part, I just keep tying it back to lack of education. And lack of education and lack of resources. I guess this is tied to me too, but a disconnect that exists in the culture. Again, I don't find that community share in the same way that they have before, and so we don't know because no one's told us. Or we've not been made aware of where the opportunities are, or we don't have access to internet, or we do have access to internet and don't have clear education on what that means, or how it even connects to food, right? My dad has no idea that he can order groceries from an app and have them delivered to his home, or that he could utilize his SNAP dollars to order food from Walmart, and then go and pick it up.

**Interviewer 2** 41:42

Mm hmm.

**Participant 219** 41:43

He doesn't know. And that's available to him, he has the SNAP benefits to be able to purchase the food, but he doesn't know how to do that, and he's not going to bother with it, and he's not very old. He's in his mid 60s, he's not very old. But, he hasn't had access to people who do that.

**Interviewer 2** 42:07

Okay.

**Participant 219** 42:09

He doesn't understand how to use utilize the technology in that way. And so how to make sure that people are equipped, again, becomes a challenge. And what happens with the next pandemic or immediate emergency, and what do we learn from an experience like the water emergency or COVID, and being prepared for the next time? When I was an undergrad, I was in the Red Cross Club, and we planned the emergency response for Isabella County, the Red Cross Club in relationship with the Red Cross the Isabella County. We had a whole emergency response; we focused on trying to figure out how to get people food, where to house individuals, and everything. This was 25 years ago. But, when I think about COVID, and I think about food, I think about how we should start planning for the future. How we should be more prepared for how to respond to this in the future.

**Interviewer 2** 43:28

Mm hmm. Yeah, that's a deep connection to COVID that's that one of the things that triggered was, how do we prepare going forward if we ever have another major crisis like that, like this, how do we prepare for it? We have shocks like that. I heard a couple of things around the technology I want to get into. So I hear the technology, I want to just take a quick peek, make sure we see everything is there, that the technology barriers in terms of food access, and also the technology barriers tied to education because people don't know how to use both the technology and the connection between technology-and we got food access, okay, so that takes care of the ordering by SNAP and delivery of foods. But we also want to make that connection back to education, because one of those barriers was due to lack of education and how to use the technology itself. So we want to make that connection here. So I heard that. Great. Okay. Just seeing if I have anything else in my notes. [Interviewer], show me where we see the connection in the-[Participant 219], you talked about disconnects in our culture, in terms of sharing in the same way-I wasn't quite sure-let's see-lack of share-there it is. Okay, thanks, [Interviewer]. Sometimes these little tricks where we, you know, fade out [inaudible] so we can see the connections were there, I just want to make sure we got everything, because these are really very powerful connections that you that you've made. Let's delve a bit into racial equity and inequity for a bit, you've weeded it in some here. So let's talk explicitly about ways that racial equity or inequity impacts participation in the food system itself. How do you see that?

**Participant 219** 45:52

So I think I mentioned it earlier. Having the knowledge to really understand how to become producers, and having an impact on the food system in that way-being equipped to fully respond to the needs of the community, and how to do that. Again, you know, I had grandparents who had a farm-a garden in the backyard. My great grandmother raised her chickens in Dallas, South Dallas, and I understood know-I had a basic understanding, right, I can barely keep plants alive-but I had a basic understanding of what I should be doing in order to grow food. The grandmothers in that way of going on, and we have less access to that familial connection to gardening, or to farming. And so the only way I can think to reconnect to it is for somebody to take responsibility in teaching it, right? And making sure that those who are interested understand how to gain access to the resources, how to start a business, how to farm, where to find support, and make an impact-a local impact on farming, on gardening, on production of food for community.

**Interviewer 2** 47:41

Mhmm. Where are our local processors in Flint, Genesee County, local processors? I know they exist in the state of Michigan. But even if our community is not terribly interested in producing, where do we make that line where, if someone is, we do have someone else who is a part of the food chain, right, in becoming a food processor, right? How do we empower people to do more, which affects their own lives, right? The individual life, but also the life of the community. Gotcha. Okay, I'm gonna play a couple of those back, because I think [Interviewer], she's doing magic here. A couple things I heard was that we talked about this from a racial equity or inequity-you talked about just the generational farmers and access or not access to them. The fact that, where is the responsibility for teaching, which helps with the education on farming, which also helped with the access to resources, I heard those two connections. Something important-and I'm not quite sure how we captured this-was that you made the statement that to have this local impact, we need to be able to empower the people who are interested, because you talked about not everybody's interested, but how do we empower the people who are interested, which really pulls out a thread, right? It's like, we know everybody's not interested, but how do you connect those who are interested in the local system? is what I heard. So I'm not quite sure how to best depict that, [Interviewer]. Are you noodling that one? Okay, thank you. And so that was definitely tied to the localization-the localizing the food system. You kind of call that out, make that local impact by being able to teach and empower the people who are interested. That's a distinct call out. That was a connection to both the value added producers and producers. Yeah, gotcha. Okay, I got it. Yeah, perfect.

**Participant 219** 50:18

And wholesalers and resellers as well.

**Interviewer 2** 50:20

Mm hmm. Okay. That's a great call out. What are some of the racialized barriers? What do you see as some of the barriers that are racial equity or inequity related, to people actually participating in these food sectors? I think I'd connect the impact back to resources and knowledge Resources. Okay. Keep coming back to resources and education. Right. Yeah. Resources and education, and really understanding how to get it done. Promotion and support, which I guess is sort of tied to- Promotion. Okay. Yeah. Okay. Okay. Barriers. I'm gonna flip that one more time. I got one more way. I want to ask you about that. Are there ways that the food system actually contributes to racial inequity? Yes. We're right back to resources and education. But I think that one way that racial inequity-that maybe I haven't said-makes a contribution isn't-I guess, so I'm thinking about a store called Landmark in North Flint. And Landmark is a store that (there's Landmark and Mr. B's, right). And those two stores don't-they aren't full service, they don't have access to the healthiest, prettiest foods available on the market. And so, that ain't fair. That's not fair. You're shipping the ugly food to the people in urban communities, and they're not getting the best quality of food, and in my opinion, it's still overpriced. Mm hm. And I don't-I have questions about-I don't think that's a mistake. I think that is by design. I don't think that people think folks in that community are concerned about what their food looks like or really about a lot of the presentation of it. I don't think they're as concerned about that. I don't think they think the community is as concerned about that. But one of the reasons that I stopped shopping there was for that reason. I moved away from North Flint not even three years ago, that store is right down the street-both stores are right down the street from where I live, two minutes, a 10 minute walk. I am going to get in my car and drive to the suburbs because I'm not being offered quality. That is by design. I have concerns that that never happened at the Kroger at Corunna Road, and that's a problem that is absolutely related-connected to race. Mm hmm

**Participant 219** 54:37

I didn't-I didn't want to put those stories on the spot, but I couldn't figure out how to talk about them without talking about them.

**Interviewer 2** 54:44

It's okay. We know these are suburban stores and and we got the connections here. The geographical differences. We talk about this in Flint or outside of Flint, so we won't call them out, we just make reference to those stores that are outside, and even those two that you said that were in and on the north end, there is still a distinction in what happens in our stores because of where they're located.

**Participant 219** 55:10

Yep, absolutely.

**Interviewer 2** 55:11

So that's how we get in on the map without totally calling them out.

**Participant 219** 55:16

And then I wonder-because I feel like the owner at Landmark in particular has taken some steps to try to respond to the community's feedback on quality and that kind of thing, at least at the height of it, right. So we don't get the chicken or the pockmarked chicken in the store when there's a study going on, or there are people paying attention to it, then it just kind of reverts back? And maybe there's some impact there because they've got a budget and a business to run, and I get it, but that doesn't mean that the community doesn't deserve more, and fair pricing. Fair pricing.

**Interviewer 2** 56:08

Mm hmm. Got it. Okay. Okay. All right.

**Participant 219** 56:22

It still seems true that the stores that are closer to folks who get the SNAP benefits have the highest prices.

**Interviewer 2** 56:32

Mhmm okay. Yeah, seems to be a connection between that and income too.

**Participant 219** 57:08

Definitely. Okay.

**Interviewer 2** 57:17

So as we take a scan at that, any other connections or any other ideas coming to you that we haven't reflected on the map so far?

**Participant 219** 57:31

So right there, the composters? When we talk about redistributing food to the community, 99% of that seems to happen through faith based organizations, and sometimes I worry about that too, particularly for those folks who are not faith based people. What might happen in those spaces if there are some attempts to then-I would just like folks to be able to go to places where they can pick up the food as they need. I I'd rather not-I have concerns about whether they're being invited to the church or being pressured in any kind of way to support the church, because that is where they are getting their resources.

**Interviewer 2** 58:42

Okay, so I hear in that distribution is just making sure-okay, there we go, comfort, that's it. Influenced by, okay, got that. And you started that connection-so those are the folks that are distributing-got it. Okay, that was the waste connection, was that piece. Okay, got that. Anything else come into mind? Thanks, [Interviewer].

**Participant 219** 59:23

Not coming up with anything else,

**Interviewer 2** 59:26

Okay. So let me bring us in home, when we look at all of this and by the way, that's a beautiful map, [Participant 219]. That's as I like to say your beautiful brain on paper. As we as we look at that, and we start to think about and consider where there might be leverage points or places where we can make change that we might make to improve the improve the system, kind of going back to [Interviewer]'s example with the with the traffic, you know, bikes make a difference. So do public transportation make a difference? When you look at this, what ideas do you have, or thoughts about ways that we can improve the food system? What would you propose? I think education makes a difference, and that's from teaching my dad how to use an app, to educating the owners of the Landmark store why the community deserves better produce. Mmhmm.

**Participant 219** 1:00:34

In a way that does not make it political, but makes it really human. Would you shop at your own store? Do you take these products back to your home? And really having some honest and transparent conversation about how to make the business better, this is going to benefit your business, whatever the positive link is to it. I don't know if it's necessarily the responsibility of food policy, but really trying to figure out how to make more connections between producers and small business owners/new business owners, and helping to facilitate the start of that business locally.

**Interviewer 2** 1:01:40

Okay.

**Participant 219** 1:01:43

And getting my favorite foods back to the restaurant, right.

**Interviewer 2** 1:01:49

Right. Yeah, bring those things back.

**Participant 219** 1:01:52

I want my foods. And being prepared, that's really key. I think that a lot more conversation has to happen amongst organizations around being prepared for the next thing.

**Interviewer 2** 1:02:10

Mm hmm.

**Participant 219** 1:02:15

And I know it can be done, I've seen it done by a bunch of college kids. I know it can be done.

**Interviewer 2** 1:02:21

There you go. There you go, mhm. Right. Anything [Participant 219] we didn't think to ask you, or any last thought that's coming up right now?

**Participant 219** 1:02:54

No, I'm just-I'm really happy to see the work being done. Maybe something-and this ties back to education too-but I think that community likes to see things happen swiftly, right, they want to see the turnaround really, really fast. This part of it is often very-is hidden from them. They don't really understand, maybe-I don't want that to sound condescending. They don't have access to the information, and fully understanding why this part of the process is important. They just want to see change, and how to help people like even through socials, how do we help people understand that this part is necessary? That the research is necessary and why the research is significant to attaining the goal? I think it's a responsibility that food policy can kind of take on. Okay.

**Interviewer 2** 1:04:01

Great. That's great to hear that. Great, great, great. Awesome, awesome, awesome, awesome. Thank you. That's it. You're welcome. Thank you. So yeah, and thank you for making the time, we knew I just had a sip. I took a recess and let's circle back to time was tough. And we deeply appreciate it. And you can see why now, right? Yeah, I do. And I understood it. Yeah, we appreciate it. Because I mean, we know all the all the highly productive folks is like really, it's tight to get on a schedule. Yeah, we just want to say you know, absolutely. Thank you for that. Um, we know this won't be the last time because you're engaged in your office as well as the Food Policy Council. One thing we would add I asked you to do for us today, you know, we there's an evaluation that you'll link will be in the chat but also Krista will email it to you. If you would please, you know, just take the time about two minutes to do that for us. And if you do think of anything else, yeah, because we know how it goes light bulbs go off later. Sometimes you just reach out to Carissa and she'll capture that and add it to your you know, and add it to your to your mat. All right. We're sure we'll be because we're in this together. We'll be seeing you again. All right here good. Thank you. And you have a great day. Thanks. You too. Good job. Yes, she's did on it. Yeah, she was. Alright, take care. Bye bye.