



SCHOOL FOR ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY | MASTER PROJECT

STORIES OF A PANDEMIC: NARRATIVES FROM GRATIOT/7 MILE RESIDENTS

BY MAITE ELIZONDO PIÑEIRO AND MADELEINE LANE

A MASTER'S PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE

APRIL 2021



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We want to start this report by thanking each person that helped us throughout this journey. Thank you for giving us guidance and/or the strength to keep moving forward, especially during such difficult times.

We'd like to thank our faculty advisor, Mark Lindquist, for his generosity in sharing his expertise with us and his ability to give the right advice at the right moment. His words of wisdom, infinite patience, and good humor were critical in times of need.

Also, all our gratitude to Khalil Ligon and the City of Detroit Planning and Development Department for making this project possible; their commitment to the Gratiot/7 Mile Neighborhood Framework Plan is inspiring. The opportunity to work on the G7 planning effort has been a wonderful learning experience and an amazing journey.

Most importantly, enormous thanks to all of the storytellers that gave us their time and shared stories giving life to this project; without you, this project would not exist. We appreciate your candor, vulnerability, and the opportunity to learn from you. We hope we honor your time and your stories with this project.

Lastly, thank you to all of the family and friends who supported us through the pandemic and this project--we wouldn't be here without you!

Our immense gratitude to you all,

Maite Elizondo & Maddie Lane

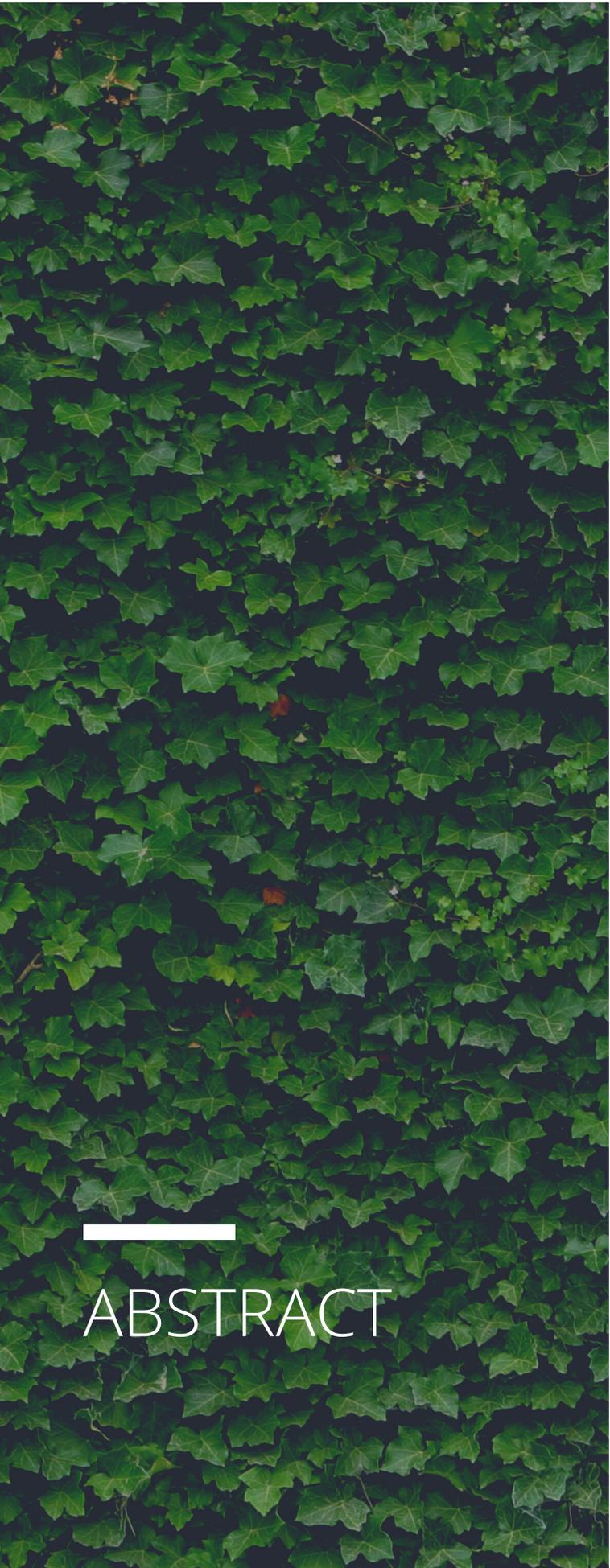


The City of Detroit Planning and Development Department has been receiving research assistance with the Gratiot/Seven Mile Neighborhood Framework Plan from students at the University of Michigan's School for Environment and Sustainability since 2019; this project is a continuation of this partnership.

i. Acknowledgments	2
ii. Project Partnership	3
iii. Abstract	5
I. Introduction	6
II. Methodology	9
III. Research Design	11
IV. Personal Narratives	14
V. Emergent Themes	19
V.1. Pandemic Household Situation	
V.2. Occupation and Educational Changes	
V.3. Mental Health	
V.4. COVID-19 Precautions	
V.5. Alternatives Activities	
V.6. Connection to Neighborhood Community	
V.7. Use of Public and Outdoor Sapace	
V.8. Public Safety	
VI. Discussion	39
VII. Conclusions and Recommendations	44
Research Team	46
Infographic	48
Appendices	49
References	60



INDEX



In 2019, the City of Detroit Planning and Development Department began to formulate the Gratiot/7 Mile Neighborhood Framework Plan, which will be used to guide neighborhood planning and future development in four northeast Detroit neighborhoods. At the end of 2019, the world faced an unprecedented health crisis as COVID-19 began to spread across the globe. The pandemic changed people's lives and had major implications for the use of public space. Through this project, we explore the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on Gratiot/7 Mile area residents by collecting oral histories on their personal experiences of the crisis. These personal narratives allow us to explore how the COVID-19 pandemic affected residents' daily lives, their use of neighborhood space, and their connection to their community. In an interactive ArcGIS Storymap, we document the stories of Gratiot/7 Mile residents and other members of the community as part of their community history. These narratives also prompt future research avenues as social scientists, urban planners, landscape architects, and Gratiot/7 Mile neighborhood residents seek to understand how the COVID-19 pandemic has altered neighborhood planning and development, both in the Gratiot/7 Mile neighborhood and beyond. We found that the pandemic shifted how neighborhood residents used public space and interacted with each other. As the City of Detroit Planning and Development Department continues to develop the Gratiot/7 Mile Neighborhood Framework Plan, we would encourage consideration of how the pandemic has transformed residents' lives to inform the City's planning efforts.

ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION

In December 2019, the City of Detroit Planning and Development Department kickstarted the Gratiot/7 Mile Neighborhood Framework Plan (“G7 Plan”). Encompassing the northeast Detroit neighborhoods of Regent Park, Mohican Regent, Mapleridge, and the eastern edge of Franklin, the G7 Plan is intended as a “city-led plan of action, co-crafted by residents to guide future growth and investment in the neighborhood” (“Gratiot / 7 Mile Framework Plan” n.d.; for map of neighborhood, see **Figure 1**). Part of a larger project of developing Strategic Neighborhood Frameworks (SNF) across the city, the Planning and Development Department has held multiple community meetings with residents of the G7 area to garner feedback on the City’s four target areas: neighborhood stabilization, parks and greenways, mixed-use redevelopment, and streetscapes and mobility (City of Detroit Planning and Development Department 2020).

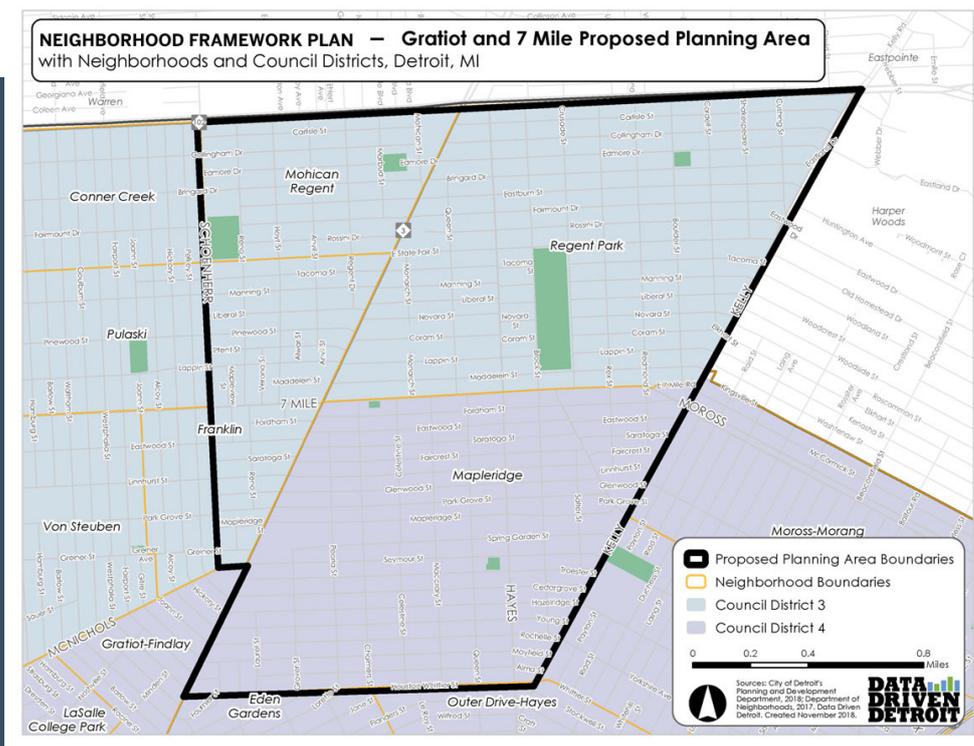


Figure 1: Map of G7 Planning Area (“Gratiot / 7 Mile Framework Plan” n.d.)

However, at the same time as the City began outreach to G7 residents and developing recommendations for the G7 neighborhoods, the world was on the precipice of an unprecedented crisis. On March 10, 2020, Governor Gretchen Whitmer announced the first two novel coronavirus cases in the state of Michigan; the next day, on March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a global pandemic (Witsil 2021). Michigan soon went into a consecutive series of lockdowns; hospitals in Detroit and across the state were stretched to capacity; hundreds of thousands of

Michigan residents contracted the virus, and tens of thousands of Michigan residents died (Witsil 2021; Times 2021). As of April 2021, over 143,000 of Michigan's COVID-19 cases were located in Wayne County (Times 2021).

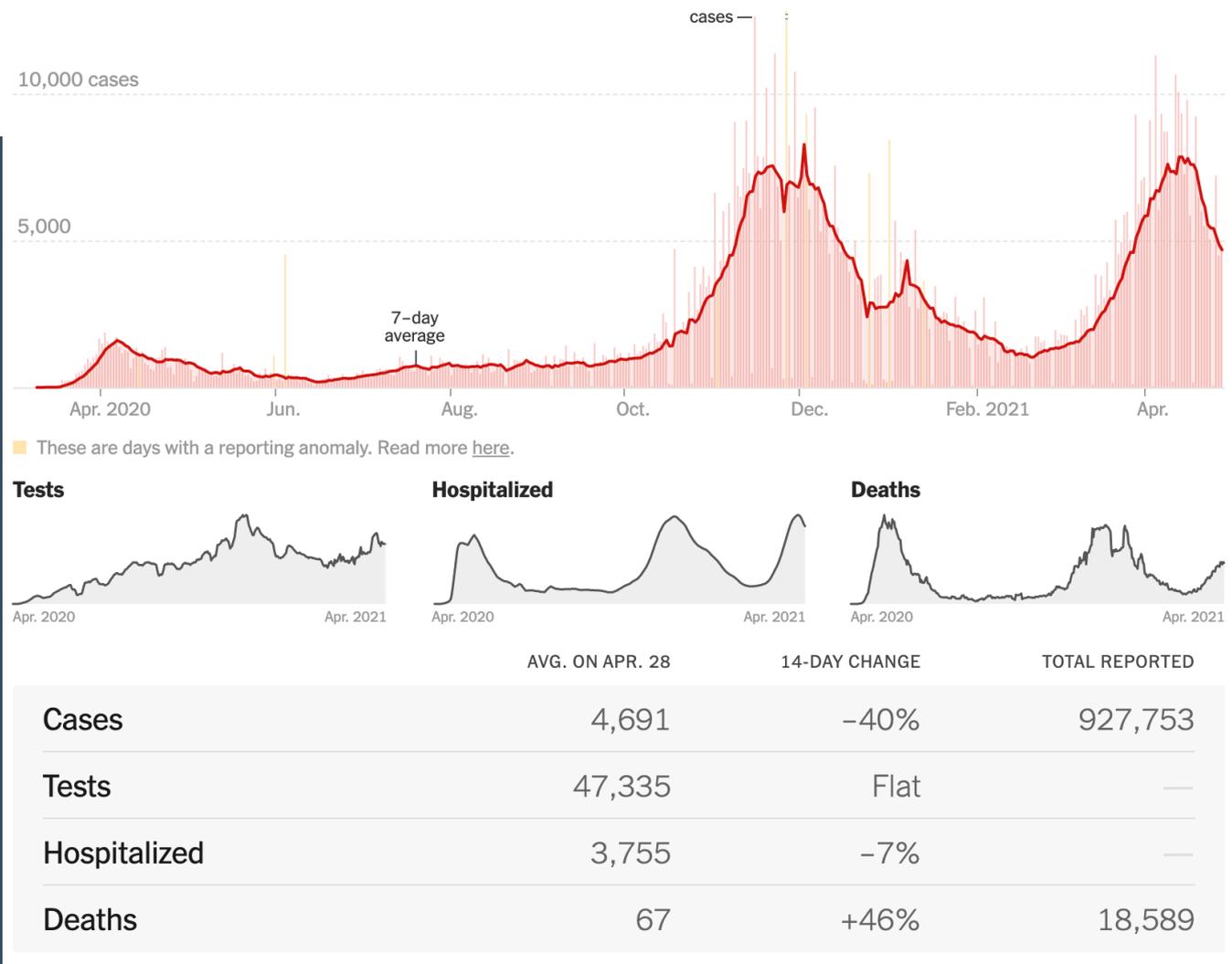


Figure 2: Michigan COVID-19 Statistics (Times 2021)

The pandemic wrought significant changes in the lives of Detroit residents, G7 planning efforts, and this research project. State, local, and university mandates prohibited in-person interactions, and as a result, all communication between residents, the City, and researchers went virtual. The City was forced to hold community meetings virtually to ensure public safety, raising questions about the digital divide in the G7 area and whether the City and researchers would be able to reach all residents interested in neighborhood planning efforts (Perrin and Atske 2021). More critically, the uncertainty and chaos of the early months of the pandemic left neighborhood residents, City planners, and our research team with little clarity in how to move forward. As tragedy engulfed communities across the

country, it was not clear that G7 residents would have the interest, time, or ability to fully participate in planning efforts.

Despite these challenges, the Planning and Development Department forged onwards at the behest of the G7 community. The City sought input from community leaders, residents, and stakeholders about their desire and ability to continue the planning effort, and how it could be effectively conducted following physical distancing guidelines (see **Figure 3** for results from the Planning and Development Department’s virtual engagement feedback survey). The City continued the G7 planning effort with targeted online engagement efforts and virtual community meetings. As the new “pandemic normal” emerged, so did questions: how could, or should, neighborhood planning efforts be informed by the COVID-19 pandemic? How had the pandemic impacted G7 residents’ interactions with neighborhood public spaces, local businesses, and other residents? How did the pandemic affect residents’ daily spatial patterns? How had the pandemic impacted residents’ incomes, household situations, and daily schedules?

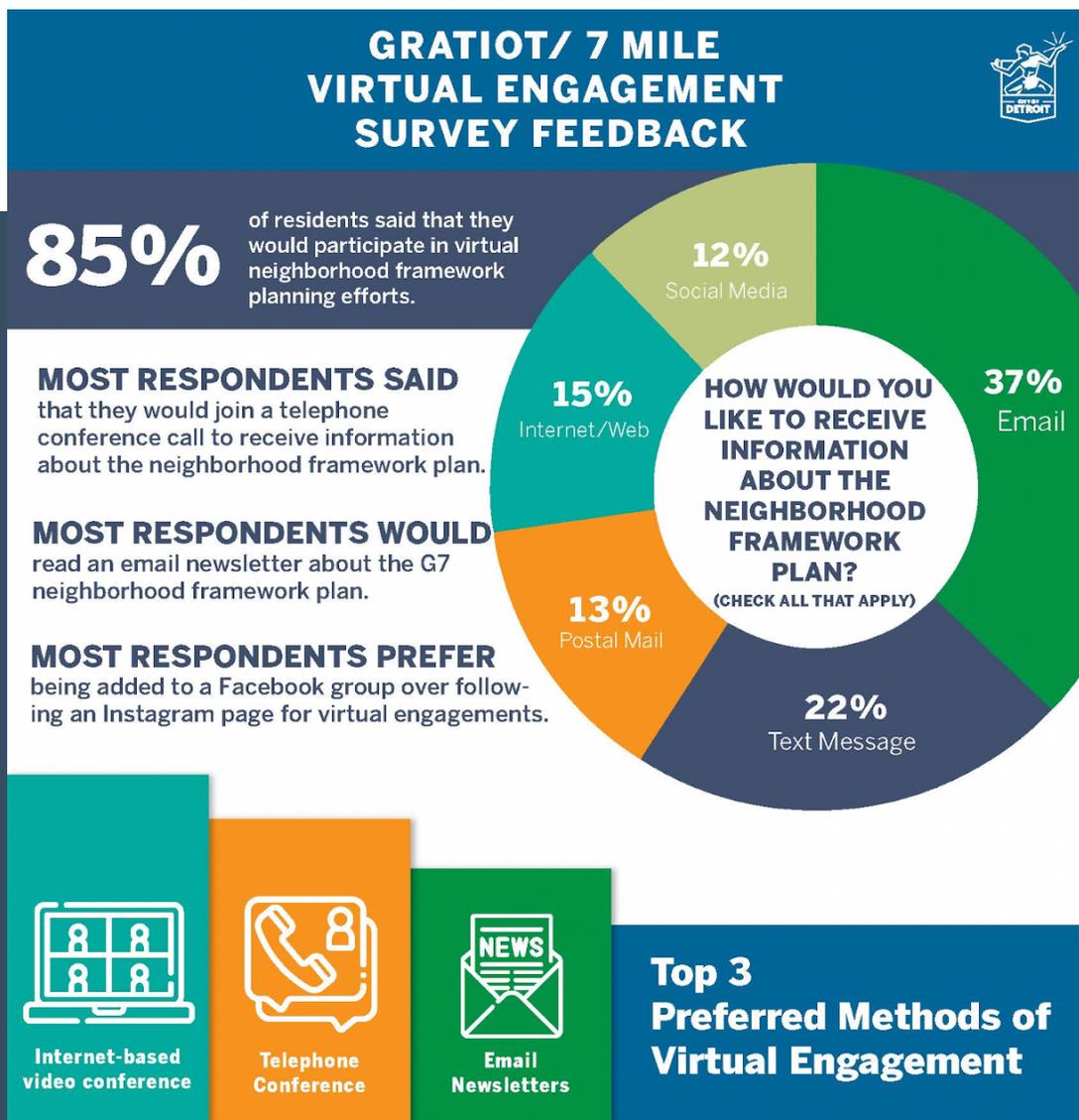


Figure 3: results from Planning and Development Department’s virtual engagement feedback survey (City of Detroit Planning and Development Department 2020)

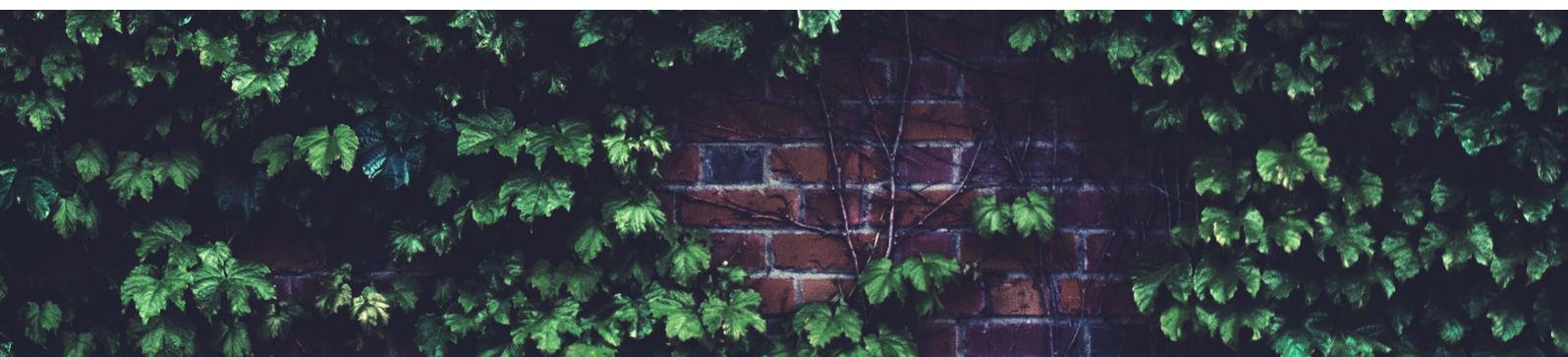
METHODOLOGY

To gain an understanding of how the COVID-19 pandemic is impacting residents of the G7 neighborhoods, we decided to structure our research as an oral history project. The Oral History Association, a preeminent cohort of oral historians, describes how oral history research is distinct from other forms of qualitative research: “Oral history is distinguished from other forms of interviews by its content and extent. Oral history interviews seek an in-depth account of personal experience and reflections, with sufficient time allowed for the narrators to give their story the fullness they desire” (Oral History Association 2009). Additionally, oral histories provide a unique insight into social phenomena that cannot be gleaned through purely quantitative data (Maynes, Pierce, and Laslett 2008). While there have been efforts to gather important quantitative data on the COVID-19 pandemic in Detroit, particularly around racial disparities and the pandemic (Ray et al. 2021; “COVID-19 Data Dashboard” n.d.), our aim is for the narratives from G7 residents to contribute to a growing body of qualitative research that bridges the gap between larger, city-wide phenomena and individual accounts of how the pandemic has changed residents’ lives (Maynes, Pierce, and Laslett 2008). The Detroit Planning and Development Department, as well as University of Michigan researchers, have conducted extensive quantitative data collection and analysis in the G7 neighborhood as part of the G7 Neighborhood Framework Plan (Peterson et al. 2020; “Gratiot / 7 Mile Framework Plan” n.d.). The qualitative data collected through this oral history project expands and builds on this quantitative data, illuminating how individual residents are interacting with public space in their neighborhood and examining how COVID-19 has affected how neighborhood residents use public space and connect with each other.

Another strength of oral history as a research method is how it can add a plurality of voices into the historical record. Oral history and personal narratives have often been used to introduce “counternarratives” or reveal “hidden histories”, allowing for a richer, more complex understanding of historical or social phenomena (Maynes, Pierce, and Laslett 2008). Through the stories shared in this project, we hope to contribute in-depth resident narratives as another piece of the G7 Neighborhood Framework Plan. Additionally, oral history can allow researchers to weave individual narratives into larger socio-historical events in “micro-macro linkages”: “oral history allows researchers to make links between micro-level experiences and the macro-level environments that shape and contain those experiences” (Leavy 2011, 16). Exploring and identifying these linkages is particularly relevant during periods of socio-historical upheaval (Leavy 2011). This project has allowed the research team to investigate how the larger consequences of the pandemic—physical distancing, the economic recession, and lock-down orders, to name a few—have shaped G7 residents’ individual lives. As the pandemic unfolded, oral history researchers began to discuss how to effectively and ethically conduct research in the midst of political and social turmoil, government inaction, and personal and collective loss (Cramer 2020; Faulkenbury 2020; Sloan 2020). There were additional considerations that we had to face and address as we conducted our own research; in compliance with federal, state,

and university guidelines, we conducted our interviews virtually. The remote format was challenging; as other researchers have expressed in recent publications, it can be difficult to read body language and pauses remotely, a loss of an important element in interpreting narratives (Sloan 2020). We moved forward with the understanding that many of the events that we discussed with residents were both recent and traumatic (Cramer 2020); we attempted to progress, as one recent publication recommended, by “relying on our skills for listening, empathizing, asking broad questions, and loosening our grips on the steering wheel” (Faulkenbury 2020, 257).

This project was conducted in collaboration with the City of Detroit Planning and Development Department. However, scholars have warned against treating personal narratives as full and formalized neighborhood history (Perkiss 2014). While we would like these oral histories to assist the City Planning and Development Department in incorporating resident feedback and learning how to build a planning response to the pandemic, we would urge caution in using these narratives as any kind of definitive guide. There are many more stories to be told in the G7 neighborhoods, and a diversity of voices is necessary to understand this complex historical moment and how the pandemic continues to shape how G7 residents are engaging with neighborhood spaces.



RESEARCH DESIGN

The research team coordinated with the City of Detroit Planning and Development Department to recruit storytellers to share their personal narratives of the pandemic. Two digital recruitment posters—one targeting adult participants, and one targeting youth participants—were sent out in three separate City of Detroit Planning and Development Department email newsletters (see **Figure 5** for adult digital recruitment poster and **Figure 6** for youth digital recruitment poster). Additionally, a digital recruitment poster was shared during virtual meetings between City of Detroit Planning and Development Department staff and G7 neighborhood residents and stakeholders (see **Figure 7** for virtual meeting digital recruitment poster). Potential storytellers would then coordinate over email with the research team to set up an hour-long interview over the video-conferencing platform Zoom. Participants received a consent form and email explaining the project and gaining their informed consent to participate (see *Appendix A* for consent forms and *Appendix B* for initial email template).

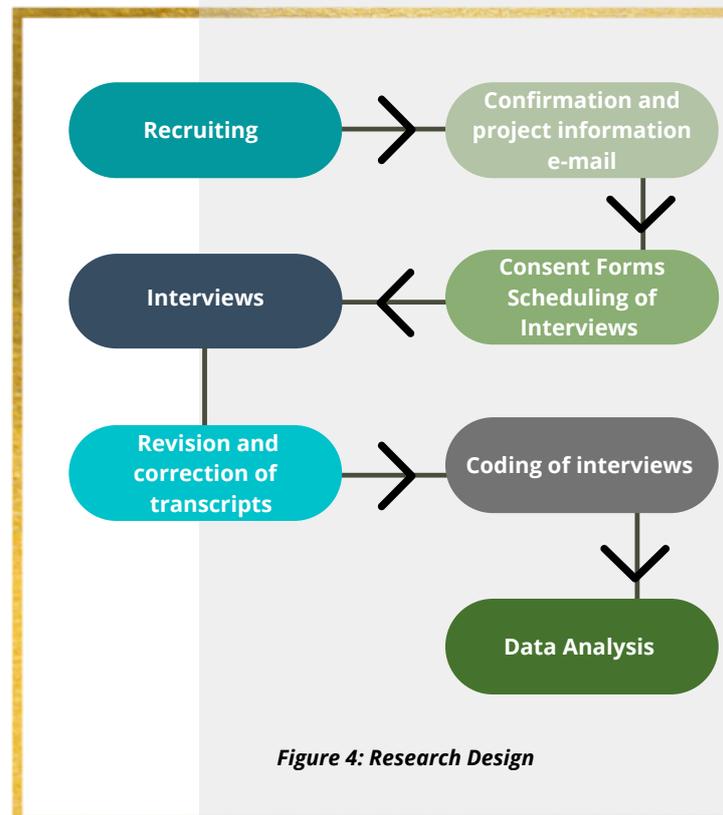


Figure 4: Research Design

Storytellers would participate in Zoom interviews with their web cameras on, if interviewees felt comfortable doing so. Questions for the storytellers were divided into four sections: COVID-19 Household Situation, Connection to Neighborhood Space, Connection to Neighborhood Community, and Risk Assessment (see *Appendix C* for Interview Guides). The questions were constructed to be “open-ended, allowing for a multiplicity of findings,” following best practices for oral history research (Leavy 2011, 30). The interviews were recorded, and the video or audio recordings and transcripts sent to storytellers for review. Once the transcripts were corrected, the researchers utilized the qualitative research coding software NVIVO (version 12.6.0.959) to code interviews. The research team pursued a data analysis process based on “grounded theory analysis” of coding, with particular emphasis placed on creative insight and an iterative data review process; as one research team explained, grounded theory analysis “requires constant and meaningful interaction between the researcher and the data” (Maher et al. 2018, 2). As we coded one storytellers’ transcript, we would revisit another transcript, tracing connections and finding narrative similarities. Our analysis resulted in eight emergent themes, discussed in the Results section, below.

There were restrictions on our recruiting effort that introduced biases into who we were able to interview. Due to COVID-19 stay-at-home restrictions, and as both researchers were working remotely, the research team was only able to recruit participants digitally. This recruitment method may have made it difficult for residents with limited internet access or without an email address to participate in the project; in particular, this may have restricted neighborhood elders from participating in the project. Additionally, neighborhood residents that do not receive emails from or are not in regular contact with the City of Detroit may not have been aware of the project.

Additionally, the research team had some technical issues with Zoom. Occasionally, it was hard to hear storytellers' voices, or a call temporarily cut out. There was sometimes background noise that distorted the sound clarity of a storyteller's response. However, as videoconferencing was the only available option for interviewing storytellers, the research team worked around technical issues and utilized the transcription software Temi when necessary to mitigate some of the disruptions from sound quality problems.



Oral History Project

WE'RE LOOKING FORWARD TO HEARING YOUR STORIES

University of Michigan researchers, in partnership with the City of Detroit Planning and Development Department, want to listen to what Gratiot/7 Mile residents have to say.

We want to learn about your life experiences and your connection to your neighborhood during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Participate in building your neighborhood's future through your story.

Interested? Email or call us!
734 325 4020 | g7stories@umich.edu

Figure 5: General Recruiting Poster



Oral History Project

WE WANT TO HEAR YOUTH STORIES

University of Michigan researchers, in partnership with the City of Detroit Planning and Development Department, want to listen to what Gratiot/7 Mile youth have to say.

We want to learn about your life experiences and your connection to your neighborhood during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Participate in building your neighborhood's future through your story. TikTokers are welcomed!

Interested? Email or call us!
734 325 4020 | g7stories@umich.edu

Figure 6: Youth Recruiting Poster



Oral History Project

University of Michigan researchers, in partnership with the Detroit Planning and Development Department, would like to collect oral histories of Gratiot/7 Mile residents experiences with COVID-19.

In conjunction with the Gratiot/7 Mile Neighborhood Framework Plan, UM researchers will explore how residents are interacting with neighborhood spaces during the novel coronavirus pandemic.

If you or someone you know would be interested in participating in this research project, please contact g7stories@umich.edu.

Figure 7: Recruiting Poster presented at community meetings

PERSONAL NARRATIVES

The storytellers we spoke with range from high school students to retirees; some are parents assisting children with virtual learning; many are professionals who have experienced drastic workplace change since the onset of the pandemic. Below, we introduce the residents who shared their experiences, highlighting how their lives have transformed since the beginning of the pandemic.

We want to invite you to read these stories with an open heart and mind, recognizing that the people who shared their stories with us were generous enough to share pieces of their lives during their interviews. Names indicated with an asterisk have been altered to protect the privacy of the storytellers. For full interview transcripts and audio, please contact the research team at g7stories@umich.edu. We will release them at our discretion.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF STORYTELLERS

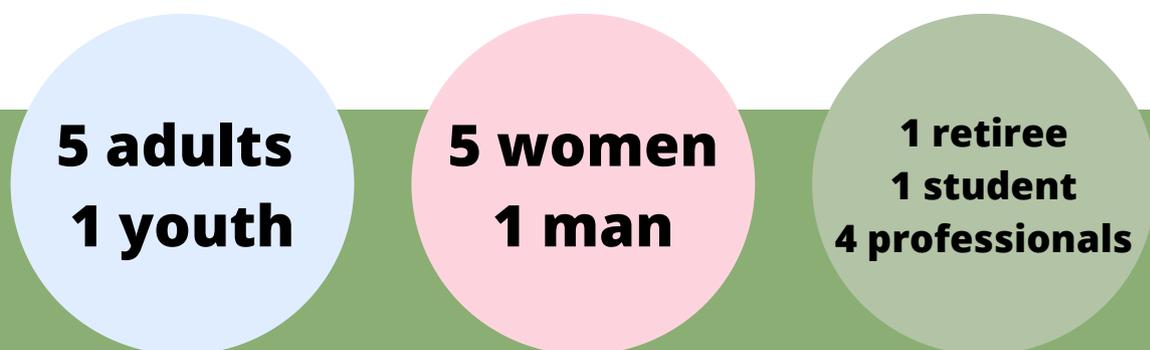


Figure 8: Summary of demographics of storytellers

— “ —

THERE IS BEAUTY IN ALL THE MADNESS

- Amanda* -

— ” —

Amanda* had just retired in January 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic began to impact Detroit. Having returned to the G7 neighborhood two years prior from her long-time home in DC, she had recently begun the process of opening her own business in the area. In addition to renovating her business property and applying for a business license, Amanda had to navigate the increasingly difficult process of getting operations up and running during a pandemic. To make matters worse, the house next-door to her primary residence in the neighborhood had recently burned down. Luckily, Amanda and the other members of her household--her

daughter, son-in-law, and six cats--were unharmed; however, the fire destroyed some of Amanda's personal property, including important paperwork. Despite the damage, Amanda was still able to enjoy her residential space, growing flowers in her yard and hosting neighborhood pop-up events.

Mary* is a long-time G7 resident, an attorney, community advocate, and a mother to a kindergartener and first-grader. As a single working parent, the pandemic complicated both Mary's professional and home life. To accommodate and support her children through their new, virtual learning environment, Mary began to turn away cases and adjust her workload and daily schedule, with cascading impacts on her income and free time. Mary has been relying on her family support network when needed and has both organized and participated in virtual mental health events with other Detroit parents coaching their children through

virtual learning. Mary feels an obligation to assist other parents in the neighborhood and uses her role as a community advocate to support families struggling with the challenges of online education.

Mary is an avid gardener, and along with her children and dog, has been enjoying her backyard space containing raised garden beds, a playscape, picnic table, and dog pen. Mary doesn't feel safe using many of the parks in the G7 area, and has been taking her children to Harper Woods to visit neighboring public parks.

— “ —

...AS A VIRTUAL PARENT MYSELF...I KNOW HOW HARD IT IS...

-Mary*-

— ” —

— “ —

**...IT'S BEEN TIRING
AND EXHAUSTING
AND
OVERWHELMING...**

-Stephanie*-

Stephanie* is a long-time G7 resident, public health professional, and mother to four children. Stephanie lives next-door to her oldest child; she owns both properties. Three of Stephanie's children are still in school--in third, fifth, and eleventh grades--and switched to virtual learning at the onset of the pandemic. Stephanie's work as a lactation consultant was primarily online prior to the pandemic; however, with everything completely virtual during the pandemic, she has needed to adjust how she works with clients and has lost the opportunity to participate in, and earn income from, speaking engagements.

Additionally, with everyone in her household working virtually, Stephanie feels as if she has lost vital personal time to manage household chores and her own mental health.

Stephanie has found joy in connecting and visiting with a close friend during the pandemic. While all church services were suspended at the beginning of the pandemic, she has also been able to attend service with her family in a socially-distanced setting since July 2020, although she expressed some trepidation at taking her third- and fifth-graders along due to COVID safety concerns.

Sophia* was in the second half of her ninth grade year when the pandemic hit, with major consequences for her learning environment. Sophia finished her ninth grade year virtually, and has spent most of her tenth-grade year in online classes from her home in the G7 area, living with her grandfather, uncle, and aunt. Sophia is active, and has been dispirited by how the pandemic has limited her interactions with the outside world. While she used to play sports recreationally in neighborhood parks almost daily, she has not been to a public outdoor space since the beginning of the pandemic, and has had a frustrating experience with virtual extracurriculars. The pandemic, Sophia says, has taught her how to be alone:

"I learned how to like, be at home and do things at like, by myself. Cause you know, I can't really go visit friends. So I was learning how to spend time alone in like, you know, individual setting."

Sophia has many good friends that she grew up with in the neighborhood, and while she cannot see them in-person, they have a group chat that has been very active. She has also been learning how to cook new recipes from the social media platform TikTok.

— “ —

**...I WAS
LEARNING TO
SPEND TIME
ALONE...**

-Sophia*-

— ” —

Sarah* is a long-time G7 community member and community advocate. She has been engaged with community youth activists, participated in the Detroit Future Cities Framework, and is a proponent of safe outdoor community spaces. She currently works on community engagement and outdoor spaces in a professional setting with an organization based in Lansing, although she has not been able to be out in the community since the beginning of the pandemic and misses her interactions with other community members.

Sarah's household also changed during the pandemic; her granddaughter, a frontline worker, contracted COVID (she has since recovered), and Sarah took her great-grandson into her household while her granddaughter recovered. Sarah assisted her great-grandson with virtual education:

"So I had to pivot and take my great-grandson and cause I'm the one that doesn't play about education. Grandma don't play when it comes to school. And so I had to virtually learn how to do school along with him, found out I wasn't as smart as he is when it comes to technology. Uh, and that school has changed a lot. They got new math. Um, so I had to bring him and I had to go through this school thing and learn how to do, you know, school online."

Sarah has also been busy during the pandemic taking care of a community garden, where she grew a variety of vegetables to share with the community.

— “ —

... I HAD TO GO THROUGH THIS SCHOOL THING AND LEARN HOW TO DO, YOU KNOW, SCHOOL ONLINE.”

— ” —

-Sarah*-

— “ —

**...BECAUSE IT'S
HARD, YOU KNOW,
JUST BEING IN THE
HOUSE ALL DAY...**

-Robert*-

— ” —

Robert* had been a community activist and advocate long before the onset of the pandemic; however, COVID-19 has made his work feel even more vital. The organization where he is employed has provided families with rental assistance due to the housing crisis caused by the pandemic, and his regular duties involving workforce training and employment readiness have continued full steam. However, some of Robert's side gigs have dried up during the pandemic; an avid biker, Robert's growing bike tour business shut down at the beginning of the pandemic, and he has lost a few other sources of income due to pandemic restrictions.

Robert has been spending a lot of time with his nephew, who had entered preschool in the middle of the pandemic. Robert has enjoyed being outside with his nephew and thinks it's important to make sure that his nephew is not stuck inside all day:

"Yeah, so my nephew, he just started, um, preschool. Um, and so, you know, he's into exploring and, you know, going to different places and stuff like that. I think one of the things that I've tried to do is just to get them out more, you know what I mean? Just in, in, in the, some fresh air, because it's hard, you know, just being in the house all day, you don't want them on a tablet all day. It's fun when you can go over academic, you know what I mean? Things with them, so just reading books or flash cards, but I still think it's important to get them out and, you know, get some fresh air and tap into, to nature."

However, Robert remains cautious when outside of his home and follows public safety guidelines.

EMERGENT THEMES

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted all of our storytellers in different ways, with each experiencing unique challenges in their daily lives and changes in how they interact with their community. However, there were several themes that resonate across storytellers' narratives, which we explore below. These themes allow us to view the similarities and the divergences across storytellers' experiences; for example, all of the participating storytellers had disruptions to their work-life or education. While each storyteller experienced some form of disruption, there were differences between individuals in terms of the impact on income, venue, or schedule changes. Emerging from our analysis there are eight themes which we explore: Pandemic Household Situation; Occupation and Educational Changes; Mental Health; COVID Precautions; Alternative Activities; Connection to Neighborhood Community; Use of Public and Outdoor Space; and Public Safety. The themes below allow us to explore the diversity within the commonalities of storytellers' narratives.

EMERGENT THEMES



Figure 9: List of emergent themes

PANDEMIC HOUSEHOLD SITUATION

All six storytellers lived in multi-generational households during the pandemic. Mary and Stephanie both live with their school-age children; Sarah and Amanda both live with adult children; and Sophia and Robert both live with older relatives--Sophia, with her grandfather, aunt and uncle, and Robert with his mother. Only Robert's household situation changed due to the pandemic, as he moved from his own apartment back to his mother's home in the G7 area. However, while his reason for moving was influenced in part due to the stresses of the pandemic, Robert attributes his main motivation as leaving a problematic housing situation:

"The landlord that I was living with who was racist. So, um, horrible situation I was living at, um...so that was the primary driving force, but, you know, coupled with the pandemic, it definitely didn't help. And so it was obvious decision, you know, it wasn't a healthy environment...my landlord was in my apartment, rummaging through things or leaving my apartment door wide open for any, and everybody that walks past to see my items and, you know, uh, he was just really harassing, not only me, but everybody in that apartment complex...so I decided that, um, I didn't want to go through this battle with him over nothing. And, uh, I figured it was the best decision to make an exit."

Only one storyteller experienced a temporary household change. Sarah took in her great-grandson while her granddaughter, his mother, recovered from COVID-19. Her great-grandson has since moved back in with his mother.

Other than Sarah, Stephanie and Amanda had direct experience with COVID-19. Stephanie was ill between March and May. While she was never officially diagnosed with the novel coronavirus, she received an antibody test in May that was positive for COVID-19. Amanda had close friends that were diagnosed with COVID-19; some of them passed away over the period of the pandemic:

"I do...have a host of friends that have gotten it, and a couple that has passed. And it was devastating because, you know, the funeral, you couldn't go to the funeral."

Amanda lamented the inability to fully and communally mourn her loved ones who died due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

OCCUPATION AND EDUCATIONAL CHANGES

All storytellers experienced some shift in their work or schooling due to the pandemic. Amanda was the only storyteller who retired from her full-time career prior to the onset of the pandemic; all other storytellers worked or went to school full time. All storytellers experienced a move to either virtual workplaces or schools. Additionally, many of the women we interviewed took on additional caretaker roles due to the pandemic, often shouldering the brunt of childcare and other household labor. Mary, Stephanie, and Robert all experienced income loss due to the pandemic. As a lactation consultant, Stephanie lost opportunities to earn income from traveling to speaking engagements:

"Usually from the time of April, from March, April, to like September, I'm traveling a lot especially during the summertime `cause I'm doing...speaking engagements all around the country. And so that has drastically impacted my income because I'm not able to travel and do those things anymore."

Robert had started his own bike tour business in 2019, which had been thriving prior to the pandemic. However, as the pandemic impacted the tourism industry, he has not been able to capitalize on the business as an additional stream of income. He has also lost other side jobs, such as shooting commercials, that he used to supplement his earnings. Unlike Robert and Stephanie, Mary has given up work opportunities and in order to take care of her children:

"I have two small children, a kindergartner and a first grader, a boy and a girl they're 11 months, 11 days apart. And I am, I'm a licensed attorney and unfortunately I'm not practicing as much as I would like to practice because I am virtually teaching my two children. And so I have had to wrap up some of my practice. I have to turn away a lot of cases because it's, it's, it's really, really challenging to virtual school children at that age."

Mary has lost income from her change in workload.

The switch to virtual work and school presented challenges for all storytellers. Sarah and Stephanie both expressed that their jobs were more challenging without the ability to be in-person with clients and community members. Amanda expressed that, as an entrepreneur opening her own business, it has been difficult to communicate with the City of Detroit and fill out necessary business documents during the pandemic. Robert's job in human services and workplace development has shifted due to the pandemic; the organization where he works expanded its services to respond to the rental crisis caused by the pandemic, providing rental assistance in addition to their typical suite of services. Sophia saw both negative and positive changes to her education when her high school moved to virtual learning:

"Hardest thing is definitely communication between me and my teachers. You know, teachers have to make sure that students are getting their work and that they're doing their assignments, but that's also like putting a lot of pressure on the students, including me. So like the communication is very limited with certain teachers, so if there was more communication that would be more helpful, but I do like that they shortened the schedule because of virtual learning. So normally it would be an eight hour school day. Now it's a four hour school day. So that's more convenient."

Mary and Stephanie, both of whom have children in virtual school, also expressed how difficult it has been for their children to be on-screen, daily, for an extended period of time.

Mary, Stephanie, and Sarah all took on additional caretaking responsibilities during the pandemic. Both Mary and Stephanie are single parents with elementary to high school-aged children. Both women's lives have been deeply affected as sole caretakers during the pandemic. Stephanie explains how her daily schedule has shifted:

“So yeah, home life has changed a lot. I'm used to having my work time at home. You know, those hours, those school hours from 7:30 AM to 3:00 PM to myself to work, do chores around the house, go grocery shopping, whatever it is I would normally do over the course of the day or, you know, go to my local agencies and provide support or training there during that time. But now that's changed. So I just was looking at my house yesterday...There is spider webs in the corners of the house I need to attend to that. I really don't have time or energy to attend to because I'm used to doing that on my personal time, my me time. And I don't have any more me time anymore, so what I used to have as a routine and a schedule of no longer a routine and the schedule is just as I have time or the energy to do.”

Other activities that had her children out of the house, such as summer camp, were also inactive over the summer of 2020 due to the pandemic.

Mary echoed Stephanie's sentiments, discussing how prior to the pandemic, the time her children were in school allowed her, as a practicing attorney, to take on a greater number of work projects and a heavier caseload. The pandemic has not only eliminated those “free” hours but has forced her to take on an unofficial role as an educator to her two children:

“It was already challenging prior to the pandemic to manage the commitment of, of work life as a solo practitioner, as well as home life, but the pandemic made it even more challenging because generally when there was seven days, seven hours out the day that my children were being educated in school that afforded me the time to work even with the part-time work that I would do, because I primarily worked part time. I do a lot of community advocacy work...and so, I, it, it afforded me the opportunity to give back to my community, practice at a rate that was comfortable for my family as well as myself, but now, it's pretty much has to dry up, because I I'm, I'm a teacher now, an unofficial teacher. Yeah.”

When Sarah took in her great-grandson while her granddaughter recovered from COVID-19, she had to learn new technologies and brush up on educational material that her great-grandson was learning in order to assist him with schoolwork.

MENTAL HEALTH

All of the storytellers expressed that the pandemic had impacted their mental health, mostly negatively. Stephanie, Sarah, Mary, Sophia and Amanda all discussed how they had struggled with negative emotions, isolation, and feelings of disconnect from their families and communities. Sophia and Mary both describe feelings of burnout. Sophia discussed how her feelings have changed over the course of the pandemic:

“February 2020 before the pandemic started, I was doing much better you know I had like a routine. I had things going, I was going outside in person doing extracurriculars and now a year later it's just more, it's just way more overwhelming, extra, extracurriculars are way harder now to do virtually. And I feel like emotionally it's just a lot. I haven't been able to keep up with everything.”

Mary shared how she began to struggle as the pandemic stretched over the summer and fall months of 2020. She also discussed how pre-pandemic trauma contributed to her resilience during the early months of the pandemic:

“In the beginning, I think when the pandemic happened, I sort of was very optimistic and a lot of my coping mechanisms kicked in right away, it sort of, you know, it was one of those things where you went into fight or flight and being a Detroit native, and having experienced a significant amount of post-traumatic stress from violence and, and, and witnessing my best friend being murdered in 2002, but say that there's that fight or flight that is innate to Detroit citizens. And so we tend to, to come out and, you know, and work really hard to get past whatever may be challenging us, but then I burned out probably about May, from March to May, it was like, all right, I got this, you know, I'm all right, this is just how it's going to be. But around May, I think I, I realized that I was burning out and then I just had to dig deeper and really be open to family and support and to let them know, you know, how I was, you know, being challenged and to ask for support. And then when support was available to, to take advantage of it.”

Mary realized during the early summer that she would have to lean on a family support system in order to cope with pandemic changes to her life.

COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS

When discussing how they implemented COVID-19 health and safety measures, all six storytellers stressed the importance of mask-wearing. Some storytellers took additional measures when they left their homes; for example, Robert, Stephanie, and Sophia discussed using hand sanitizer after being in public spaces such as the grocery store. All storytellers also emphasized how infrequently they left their homes. Amanda expressed her fear at leaving her property:

"I'm scared to go out. I'm, middle-aged, middle-aged, we're like the end of the middle aged. But, it's scary for me. I forget, grab a mask. It's not a habit and I'm out there freaking out."

Many of the storytellers expressed a need to protect other community members by limiting in-person activities. Sophia expressed how she has been limiting her outdoor activities to protect older neighborhood residents:

"Researcher: And it sounds like you guys haven't felt comfortable being in like the same outdoor space as other neighborhood residents. It is. Is that true?"

Sophia: Yes, because even though there's like a lot of kids, there are also a lot of elderly on the block and, you know, that's a big health factor for them."

Amanda explained that she is cautious in her interactions because she cares about other community members' health:



"I don't want to get anybody else sick. That's the main thing. Um, you don't want to get anybody sick...You should care enough about the other person, not yourself, you know, the other person who you may get sick and it's, so it's so, you can't see it. Can't see the enemy. You don't know where it's at."



Many of the storytellers shared that they had limited their in-person interactions with family and close friends in the Detroit area in order to follow safety guidelines.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIVITIES

Mary, Stephanie, Sophia, and Sarah all spoke to the research team about how in-person activities that they participated in outside of work and school pre-pandemic transitioned to a virtual format. Prior to the pandemic, Stephanie and her family regularly attended church in-person. As in-person events were shut down across Detroit, Stephanie's church went virtual. Although Stephanie's church has returned to in-person services, Stephanie still feels nervous about bringing some of her young children to mass.



"Yeah. So before the pandemic all of us were going to service on Sundays together. And then, once a week, like I was having, like Bible study inside my home. So of course, like there's no more Bible study at home. And for a while there was no church service at all. And then we moved to virtual. I mean, we did virtual. I don't remember when we started, but it ended in July. So July was the first time we all went back to service. And so, there, you know, pews are marked off every other row, you can only sit in a row with your family member, so you can't sit with somebody else that's not in your household. And thankfully, like it's a small congregation. So it's not more than 10 to 15 people at service at one time."



In her role as a community advocate, Mary has been holding community meetings for the Regent Park neighborhood virtually, over the videoconferencing program Zoom. She worries that some residents aren't able to attend meetings due to the inability to use videoconferencing technology:



"We host those meetings...so everything is really internet, email, but the unfortunate part is we do have residents that we connected to, seniors who are not online, who are not a part of Zoom. And those are the ones that I really feel, you know, a lot of us...we feel concerned about those residents and those neighbors, because they're not necessarily on Nextdoor, social media sites, or on Facebook. Um, and so what we still try to do is we do still try to hand deliver, and, and do hands hand drives, you know, to get information out."



Sarah has also been reaching out and helping connect neighborhood residents without access to videoconferencing technology with community events and meetings, including G7 Neighborhood Framework Plan meetings:



"I am actually doing phone calls and I'm having them actually like sign into Zoom meetings, you know, and giving them step by step instructions...I'm literally walking them through it because I need, we need their voices. Especially as they're doing these redevelopment projects or leading towards what the G7 is going to do in the community. I need their voices. I need their input. I don't like being a part of decisions where I know a lot of our people that are, are, are very, normally, very involved, are not involved because of technology. So I have one that wants to get on a Zoom. So I call him, he has a computer and I walk them through getting on a Zoom call, but he calls me every time there's a Zoom call. Cause he forgot what I taught him. So I'm, I'm really trying to think of creative ways. And some of them I've written it out, typed it out, printed it out, dropped it in their doors. You know, this is the steps. This is step one, step two and run them through it. It is about just, um, letting them know that I really need to hear their voices or see their faces."



A younger storyteller, Sophia, discusses how she uses technology to stay in touch with her friends, utilizing platforms such as FaceTime and group chats to maintain her relationships through the pandemic.

CONNECTION TO NEIGHBORHOOD COMMUNITY

All of the storytellers are long-time neighborhood residents. Each adult storyteller has lived in or around the G7 area, some contiguously and some non-contiguously, for more than 20 years. Sophia has lived in the G7 area since her infancy--over 14 years. Amanda, Stephanie, Mary, and Sarah are all homeowners in the neighborhood. Amanda discussed how her homeownership is tied to her investment to the community and her legacy for her daughters:

"And I wanted to be here because I owned my home. I didn't own my apartment in DC, it's a sense of feeling and owning something and not having to be subjected to anybody as long as you're protecting your own, you no matter how, what it is, it's my own. And so I've seen a lot of things, I've seen houses disappear in a time back and forth coming back and forth from DC to Detroit. But I've been back a couple of years to try to get...back together. So we'll try and leave something for my daughters. But I have three daughters and, yeah, yeah. I don't know. Eh, I don't know. They're like, Hey, we don't want that mom, but I'm like, yeah, you need it though. You don't know it. You don't know it yet. But, um, I would really like to right now, I don't know if you know, and I get so excited because that's my happiness, the building, what I can do for other people."

All of the storytellers were invested and involved in the G7 area and their neighborhood community. Amanda, Mary, Robert, and Sarah all participated or ran neighborhood organizing efforts. Amanda won a local political position in November 2020, which she was motivated to run for in order to help make changes in her community like she saw occur in her DC neighborhood:

"I just wanted to see some changes before I leave up out of here. I want to see at least somebody trying 'cause I cared that much. I care that much for, uh, and, and, and what is it that ties me here...? Well, you know what, to be honest with you, I lived in DC for 20 years downtown. I watched downtown be rebuilt to brand new and watched those vacant, dirty dusty buildings, just like we have here in Detroit, come back to life."

Both Mary and Sarah both have official roles within community organizations within the G7 area. Other storytellers, such as Stephanie, did not participate in community organizing in an official capacity, but did feel a sense of obligation and investment in the community, particularly as Black businesses suffered during the COVID-19 pandemic:



"I'm involved in the community through my work, doing a lot of community outreach activities and such was that, that's pretty much it, you know, patronizing the local businesses as much as possible to keep that economy going for, especially for the black owned businesses."

...

"Researcher: So I also was really interested in what you said just about patronizing businesses in the neighborhood and Black owned businesses in the neighborhood. What, like what spurs you to do that? Why, why do you feel invested in doing that?"

Stephanie: Cause it was important for...the Black economy that I support the businesses, especially during the pandemic because, you know, folks are losing business, they've lost money, during the pandemic. And so it was important for me to make sure, like I'm putting my money back into the economy and we're recycling that as much as possible."



Stephanie and Sophia also recall attending neighborhood meetings prior to the pandemic.

All of the storytellers explained how their interactions with neighborhood community, organizations, and residents changed during the pandemic. Both Robert and Amanda explained that they actually felt as though they interacted more and were closer with some of their neighbors during the pandemic. Robert discussed how moving back to his mother's home allowed him to see neighborhood residents that he had known from his childhood:



"Researcher: And have you noticed any change in the way that you've interacted with your neighbors and neighborhood community since the pandemic began?"

Sophia: Yeah, normally we would like go visit their houses for barbecues and like block parties, but now we just wave and that's all the interaction there is."



Sophia and Stephanie's children have also ceased participating in activities with other neighborhood children. Sophia lamented the loss of recreational activities with her friends in the G7 area.

Each of the storytellers expressed how they would like to see their neighborhood community change. Robert and Sarah in particular discussed how they would like to see the City of Detroit invest in G7 area residents. Sarah discussed how neighborhood stabilization has to extend beyond built infrastructure:



"People always talk about neighborhood stabilization. And they look at housing and commercial strips and all of that. However, they never look at the people. We need to, my magic wand would stabilize the people in the community, and then they would be able to help stabilize the community. The people would have the skills, they need to get good paying jobs, purchase a home in the community, raise their families in the community and help repopulate the community. Our kids are, their education, uh, would not be in question. It would be well-rounded and something that moves them successfully to their next level of education and or a job. It would that I can walk out of my house and never have to leave my community unless I want to, to be able to purchase the things that I need in order to live. And that's not happening. I have to leave my community to go to a Kroger's or, you know, or go to the mall. I have to leave my community. So my magic wand would stabilize the people who in turn would help to stabilize the community."



Robert also discussed how he believes it is pivotal that neighborhood development centers investments in residents:



"Education and workforce, you know, I think those are the two of the things that I would focus on. You know, part of the issue is you can bring in a lot of glitz and glamour and, you know, oftentimes people can feel disassociated from those changes and it may be simply because they don't know what's happening with those changes, or how is this going to be a benefit to their life based off the lifestyle they've lived for so long, introducing these new concepts and ideas. So, if there was something I would like to see immediately, like I said, it would be something around economics and education. I mean, employment, you know, uh, jobs, but also education. You know, there's a lot of things happening or just don't need to happen just based off of the lack there of knowledge. So those are two of the most immediate things I would like to see focused on."



Amanda explained that she believes Detroit is on the cusp of a transformation. However, she believes part of the challenge post-COVID for the G7 area is continuing to grow through so much loss, particularly in the Black community:



“Detroit is growing and it's growing fast. And I was so excited to hear it, to see it. I believed it. That's why I bought a property and I am just, it's taking its time, but I just believe I did the right thing. I really do. I am so proud of myself it's not just the desire to want to make a change. And whether I finished the goals, I have three daughters, they can take it from here however they want to take it...And one thing about the Black community and I shouldn't get into all of that. But you know, we...We tend to rebuild every generation, it's, it's hard to, hard to get the glue, to stick it. It's more to it than it is about you. There's a fabric that's being woven into the fabric, just breaks and breaks and breaks. And right now the old people that are dying and these, we're losing our history, gone forever. Those old people could tell the story, they're gone forever. That's going to be devastating. I don't think we even really identify with what they really means. They are leaving up out of here. And not all of them, but those would that, uh, that know that real deal they were there. They were part of her story. It's different from somebody else telling the story and they weren't there.”



USE OF PUBLIC AND OUTDOOR SPACE

Many storytellers used private outdoor spaces during the pandemic; Amanda, Mary, Stephanie, and Sarah all spoke about frequent use of private outdoor space. Amanda, Mary, and Sarah are all avid gardeners and spoke about how much they enjoyed cultivating their own garden spaces in their own lots and backyards. Both Mary and Stephanie utilize their backyard space for family activities; both have playscapes for their children. Mary explained how her family's private outdoor space use increased during the pandemic:

"Well I have a, a garden. I have a raised, but I have a raised garden bed. My children have a play area, play escape area. We have a picnic table in the back, so we often through the pandemic, uh, and even before the pandemic we eat outside when the weather permits, we garden together. I have a dog and so I have a dog pen, um, as well in the back where I just laid hay down earlier today for my dog, because she does not like the cold. And we used our backyard. I would say it increased this year because of the pandemic."

Mary expressed how her comfort in her fenced-in private outdoor space stands in stark opposition to how she feels in public outdoor spaces in the G7 area. She has used public outdoor spaces frequently during the pandemic, particularly as an after-school activity with her children, but does not feel like she can safely use parks in the G7 neighborhoods.

"Researcher: You were saying that you don't find the parks in your neighborhood safe...why is that, like what's happening in those parks...what elements in those parks are making you not feel safe?"

Mary: Well, one of the biggest things is that to even get to the park, you have to, you have to traverse then walk through residential blocks that have a significant amount of blight. That's pretty big. We have that issue, in...the G7. And then when you get there, it's not well-maintained, there's trash everywhere. There's sometimes broken glass. There are these little silver pods that I ended up learning where some things that people use to get, that users use to, to get high off of. And they're generally, always around the park. And so it's not something it's, it's almost like, I'm sort of, my family is sort of, our Haven is, is, is our area. And, and I just don't want to expose my kids if I don't have to, to some of the areas that, that are, that we're surrounded by, but violence was, was an issue as well because in the G7 area, there's a very well known gang in this community, who oftentimes will have gang wars and, and you you'll hear gunshots and various things like that. And so, um, getting there and then being there is the issues of safety that are presented."

Instead, she has been visiting a park in Harper Woods with walking trails with her two young children. Stephanie and Amanda also expressed infrequent use of public outdoor space in the G7 area during the pandemic.

Robert and Sophia expressed how their use of public outdoor space has drastically changed due to the pandemic. Both storytellers had frequently used recreational spaces and Heilmann Community Center prior to the pandemic. When COVID-19 limited in-person activities, they were both unable to utilize communal recreational spaces.

While Sarah shared that most of her outdoor activities were restricted to her own home space during the pandemic, she described the excitement of having a community garden during the pandemic:

"I have worked a couple of weeks ago. We got some donation of garden beds. So on one of our streets, we have set up a community garden with 30 more garden beds. And community is really the one working around this project with volunteers. Uh, and we have some fruit trees planted, which we do have at Skinner Park. Also, we have apple trees, but most of them died. We got one, left. So community gardens are very important in this community because we only have three supermarkets. And two of them are very, very high in cost because they know they're like major retailers in the community so they can raise their prices. One is lower in cost, but also lower in quality. So this allows for the community to be able to put in a little sweat equity, but make sure that they have the fruits and vegetables that they really need."

Sarah believes that community gardens can be a positive land use in the G7 area post-pandemic.

The only storyteller who regularly used public and alternate transportation during the pandemic is Robert; the other storytellers all used private transportation (either car or walking) as their sole source of transportation. Robert believes he used the bus twice during the pandemic; prior to the pandemic, he used the bus frequently. However, as an avid biker, Robert spent a significant time during the summer biking in the G7 area. He stopped biking due to non-COVID safety concerns:

"Actually, one of the things that I did all summer was...bike ride...I enjoy riding my bicycle. And it got to a point where I just stopped riding my bicycle because I didn't feel safe riding on the road. So that totally, you know, you know, just changed my whole daily activity. It's something I enjoy doing where I don't, I don't do it, not just because it's cold, but, you know, it's just something I realized toward the latter part of the year that I just didn't feel comfortable riding my bicycle on the road. So, and that was it, you know, knowing riding on Gratiot or certain streets people were pulling in and out of, you know, restaurants and driveways and not necessarily looking or trying to beat you on a bicycle. And it's like, you know, it's just, it's too many hazards."

Robert sees a need for traffic calming efforts in the neighborhood, and public outreach on driving safety. He mentioned that many of the area schools do not have driver's training.

Three of the storytellers shared how public space in the neighborhood has changed over the past few years, unrelated to the pandemic. Amanda shared how she now sees a variety of wildlife in the neighborhood, from birds to larger fauna such as deer:



"I saw a coyote...There's so many vacant houses though. It's beautiful because it becomes like park-ish like, but rabbits around, that's beautiful. The pheasants around, that's a beautiful thing. And you're starting to see things that you've never seen before, like coyotes and wolves and bears, but, no, I did. I did see a coyote, now that was scary."



Amanda expressed ambivalence about the increased wildlife in the neighborhood; she enjoys seeing some of the animals, particularly the birds and rabbits, but said that she feels fear when encountering some of the larger carnivores, especially when she's on foot in her neighborhood.

Both Robert and Sarah discussed how they have witnessed major changes to G7 area parks. Sarah shared the sweeping positive developments she has been part of, including at Skinner Park and Commemoration Park:



"We have a very large park next to the high school that our young people designed. And we were fortunate enough to get the money and have the park built out. And it's a \$1.4 million park that these kids designed. But what it did was it taught them, their voices are heard, you know, and that things can happen. You know, when you work towards them. Then we built another park for the younger kids cause the bigger kids was taken over that to be the two basketball courts. And our little kids couldn't play. So we built our little kids a park up their own, where they have their own basketball court. And normally we have a lot of events for community in those spaces, but because of COVID, we haven't been able to do that."



Robert issued a more qualified statement on the alterations he has seen in G7 area parks:



"The park has been maintained a little bit better as far as grass being cut. I remember, you know, it was a point in time where all the parks had high grass and you just couldn't go to them or doing anything or right. And so that's a positive change that I've noticed, but, um, you know, there's a lot of work that still has to be done."



Many of the storytellers expressed the need for continued City support for the parks and public green and recreational spaces in the neighborhood.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Several of the storytellers shared their discomfort, fear, and anxiety of spending time in public neighborhood spaces. Amanda and Mary both discussed how they felt fear and discomfort walking around the neighborhood. Mary shared that she did not feel like it was safe to be in neighborhood parks and green spaces with her young children. Another storyteller, Sophia shared that she was constrained from using her own private outdoor space due to safety concerns:



"We have an alley right in front of our house. So the alley isn't really that safe, so I mostly spend the time in the backyard."



Several storytellers shared stories of violence that they had witnessed in the neighborhood. Amanda spoke of the violence she has seen in her neighborhood **(NOTE: TRIGGER WARNING: VIOLENCE, GUNS, DEATH)**



I have seen so much, um, I have seen so much. We had a neighbor who went around the corner to buy some marijuana and they threw a firebomb in the house, burned him up. We've seen a lot of changes in this community. It was a time when we would hear gunshots all night at night. Now I don't hear gunshots. I love seeing the wild animals when I wake up in the morning, however, They are still happening. Um, and you don't hear about it. There was a man. I went, I was going to the building, my favorite spot. And I saw police tape one morning, nothing. And laying on the ground car door wide open and the coroner's truck is coming. Okay. Looking on the news. Where is this? None of that. I don't, I think it's drug deals or whatever. Um, that's when I think I shouldn't, I had a really, really, really, really dear friend is I do want to say...His name was Greg. Greg was mentally ill, but he wouldn't hurt a fly. He was a little spooky to be around he'd stop, sigh, walk, twist and turn, but he wouldn't bother anybody. And one this was maybe two months ago, I look for him everyday and he walks up and down the sidewalk. He stands in the middle of the street. You could swear this man is going to get hit, but he would go off way. He knew how to cross that street. He never got hit by a car, but, I looked for him for about a week and found out somebody had shot him. Uh, just trying to be cool for no reason. I don't even think they were looking for the person it's, you know, it can happen time and time and time again, it's never numbing to me, but it becomes repetitive. And just put another stamp on the wound."



Amanda emphasized how she holds space for the neighborhood residents who are harmed by violence, and how she feels a responsibility to help:



"to calm it down a little bit and, you know, embrace, embrace the beauty that we do have here, there is beauty in all the madness. There is beauty in all the madness."



Amanda and Robert discussed how elements of the built environment influenced how safe or comfortable they felt in public spaces, both through the lens of street light maintenance. Robert shared that street lighting was a positive step in the neighborhood, but street light maintenance can be difficult:

“There's at one point Gratiot didn't have street lights, you know, for years we're talking about our neighborhood, didn't have street lights for 10 years. And as soon as they put them up two stolen cars and crashed the to street lights on both sides, and now we don't have any street lights again on both sides of our street, right after 10 years of not having them.”

Sarah explained the positive force of public safety measures in the neighborhood.

“Researcher: Crime in the neighborhood during the pandemic. I think you mentioned that it has gone up. And I know that it's a really hard, it neighborhood trust and, you know, community trust with the neighborhood police officers, neighborhood policing. How do you see a way forward with that? Because it seems that you have a, um, you know, an opinion about that.

Sarah: Yes. In fact, I'm, I'm actually working on that very issue right now with our police chief and our commander over here in the Ninth. And, you know, about how we're going to get this crime under control. Safety is our number one concern in this community, which is bad when we have a community that is so highly vacant and all of that, that we need to repopulate. Our number one issue is we need to get the crime under control first. We can't ask people to move into a community where they have to fear. They have to live in fear. We've lost, uh, one of our very good community leaders. He moved out, he just couldn't take it anymore. And you know, so he moved his family out. Uh, I'm not going to be ran from my home. I live here, I've been here, I'm going to, um, assist our police officers in making sure that we get our community well organized. And they help so much with block setting up block clubs when they get complaints from people, they'll say, my neighbor is playing his music too loud. He got too many people over there. Well, you need to start a block club. How about starting a block club? And so they're helping us to organize the community in order to raise the voices, but also to help support their efforts, you know, to, to be the eyes and ears of the community. And so, you know, that's the way that we're going to help bring this under control. This, that our residents are the eyes and ears and bringing these instances to the attention of our police department, of our precinct.”

Sarah acknowledged that police-community relations in Detroit, and around the country, have been fraught. She also believes that there are other community measures that can alleviate violence in the G7 area outside of policing



“Researcher: Is there anything outside of policing that you think would, you know, assist with lowering crime rates in the neighborhood?”

Sarah: The organization, getting people involved in the community, getting them involved, being involved means that you have concern over what happens in your community. And I think that is going to help because when people see that, you know, on your block, some things are just unacceptable and they speak up about it, you know, and they got the rest of the block to support them. You know, that person's going to be like, Oh, I can't play my music loud. After 11 o'clock at night, we got seniors on the block. I have to be respectful. You know? So it's not about attacking people, you know, in the community. One of the things that I do on my block, because we have a lot of renters now and we still have a bunch of homeowners and they're seniors. And I do a newsletter, a block club letter, and I let them know when their what's the trash days, you know, when the recycling days are, you know, I talk about, we've got a community tools share, if you can't cut your grass. We got tools that you can borrow, you know, and lawnmowers to get, you know, keep your, and I say it in a way that, um, I'm, I'm not saying you got to cut your grass, but we're here to help you, if you can't, you know, and in that I talk about, you know, welcome to the block, there's a lot of seniors on the block and we are very respectful of them, you know, just so that they understand that this block is organized and that it's a block where we respect each other and we help each other.”



DISCUSSION

Caretaking, Gender, and Planning

One of the major recurring narratives that emerged from the storytellers we spoke to was the extent to which they had taken on additional caretaking responsibilities during the pandemic and the impact the additional responsibilities had on their lives. This was especially apparent with the two storytellers who are single mothers with school-age children, both of whom experienced major changes to their work-life balance. Preliminary research has demonstrated that single, working mothers with young children have experienced significant employment disruption, working hour changes, and shifts in childcare responsibilities during the pandemic disproportionate to other sectors of the workforce (Zamarro and Prados 2021; Collins et al. 2021; Alon et al. 2020; Mason, Flynn, and Sun 2020). Additionally, there is emerging data that women with school-age children experienced significantly more psychological distress during the pandemic than either men as a whole or women without school-age children (Zamarro and Prados 2021).

How can planning efforts address the impacts of the pandemic on caretakers, and particularly the economically vulnerable group of single, working parents? The concept of gender-inclusive planning is not new, with calls for a critical reexamination of how urban planners and policymakers incorporate gender considerations into planning efforts spanning decades (Rakodi 1991). Recent research has expanded on earlier analyses, examining how women who hold multiple marginalized identities both interact with urban spaces and participate in planning processes (The World Bank 2020). As cities recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, there is an unprecedented opportunity to engage with caretakers and working parents to better understand the challenges they face and to design spaces that incorporate the needs of this critical urban population. This may entail collecting and analyzing data on gendered uses of public space (Divine and Biquelet-Lock 2021), or centering caretakers in mobility considerations by increasing density and connectivity to ensure that many needs can be met in a small area: “the “city of short distances” allows for the efficient combination of paid work, family chores, caregiving, shopping and service use” (Urban Development Vienna 2013, 25; Divine and Biquelet-Lock 2021). The City of Vienna has been at the forefront of gender-sensitive planning and has incorporated gender-sensitive mobility design by utilizing an “everyday route check” in master planning to explore how different residents travel through their neighborhoods, with the overall goal of ensuring that spaces are accessible to a variety of users (Divine and Biquelet-Lock 2021; Urban Development Vienna 2013; see **Figure 9** for an example of an “everyday route check”). As the G7 Plan is finalized, the Planning and Development Department should consider the gendered benefits of different neighborhood priorities.

Everyday route check to evaluate the suitability of an urban design master plan to accommodate users' everyday needs, shown for aspern Vienna's Urban Lakeside

Source: Gutmann Raimund, Neff Sabine (2006): Gender Mainstreaming im Stadtentwicklungsgebiet Flugfeld Aspern, Salzburg/Vienna

The everyday route check gives a practical overview of the daily distances travelled by various target groups. The method is based on the distribution of uses and the respective siting of residential zones, parks and sports grounds, schools and kindergartens, public transport stops and potential zones for shops/service providers sketched in the master plan. To visualise eight different everyday trip patterns, fictitious biographies with typical daily routines and trip chains are developed (see below). The illustration (right) visualises the trip chains of working adults with caregiving tasks for four different residential locations. The trips necessary from each residential location to reach the kindergarten, the workplace, the nearest shopping outlet and the park are shown.



Target group-specific everyday trip patterns

Working adult, caregiver	Flat – kindergarten – workplace – shopping – flat – park – flat
Working adult, caregiver (night job)	Flat – shopping – flat – park – flat – workplace – flat
Working adult, no caregiving tasks	Flat – Underground (to go to work) – flat – restaurant/café – flat
Young person, interested in sports	Flat – secondary school – flat – park – skatepark – (trendy) sports grounds – flat
Young person, interested in shopping	Flat – secondary school – flat – park – shopping – flat
Student	Flat – university – sports grounds – flat
Child (unaccompanied)	Flat – primary school – flat – park – flat
Retiree	Flat – shopping – flat – park – flat

Figure 9 - "Everyday Route Check" (Gutmann and Neff 2006; Urban Development Vienna 2013)

Green Space, Parks, and Public Safety

Very few storytellers utilized public green space in the G7 area during the pandemic. Many storytellers used private green space adjacent to their properties or used public green spaces in other neighborhoods in Detroit or surrounding suburbs. Emerging public health research has connected access to urban green space with health benefits during the pandemic (Geary et al. 2021). While all storytellers had access to green space during the pandemic, it is worth noting that very few storytellers felt comfortable using *public* green space in the G7 neighborhoods. Some storytellers cited concerns around their ability to physically distance in public spaces; other storytellers did not feel comfortable bringing their young children to parks in the G7 area due to their perception that the parks were not safe. This is an area for continued investigation as the G7 Neighborhood Framework Plan continues to be developed. What changes would residents like to see that would make neighborhood parks feel safe, accessible, and usable post-pandemic?

This question is inseparable from the issue of public safety in the G7 area. Public safety was a critical issue for almost all storytellers. Many of the storytellers had witnessed violence in their neighborhood. Several storytellers discussed how the conditions underlying crimes of poverty in the G7 area have been exacerbated during the pandemic. Violence and crime in the G7 neighborhoods impacted the behaviors and quality of life of almost all of the storytellers. Fear of violence and crime in the G7 area also shaped how the storytellers in this study used public space, limiting their time spent in outdoor spaces in the G7 neighborhoods. This is particularly salient as the Planning and Development Department continues to discuss how to redevelop parks, greenways, and vacant land in the G7 area. A recent study from the University of Michigan highlighted how proximity to “safe” parks is an environmental justice issue: “under a framework of environmental justice...interactional justice—i.e., the quality of interactions that people have in public spaces—constitutes a critical component of park access that should be carefully considered in future planning and research” (Williams et al. 2020, 9). Additionally, the researchers argue that there is a distributional justice consideration in access to “safe” parks, as residents in neighborhoods with “unsafe” parks may have to travel farther to access usable park space (Williams et al. 2020). One of the storytellers in this study traveled outside of the G7 area in order to use what she perceived as safe parkspace; while she lived in closer proximity to other parks, they did not feel accessible to her.

It is important to acknowledge that determining what safety looks like in public spaces, especially for Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), is a pressing, complex, and critical issue. Ninety percent of G7 residents identify as Black (Peterson et al. 2020). In the wake of the murder of George Floyd in 2020, there have been ongoing calls by racial justice activists across the country and in Detroit to reimagine public safety and community well-being, including appeals to defund police forces (Campbell n.d.; “Detroit” n.d.). Public safety measures extend beyond policing, and the planning field has also begun to grapple with the intersection of racial justice and public safety in urban greenspaces and the built environment. One recent study highlighted the need for a nuanced understanding of race, gender, and safety in public spaces: “more focus is needed on how race and gender interact with health and social processes of planning to create and maintain unjust and unseen systems and racialized experiences in the built environment. This includes urban parks and public open spaces

whose significance during the pandemic has increased” (Hoover and Lim 2021, 2). The study suggests a stepwise process for practitioners attempting to address systemic racism in public green spaces: at minimum, understand where parks are located and the distribution of parks across a municipality; identify park design and inequalities between parks; understand how racism shapes how BIPOC residents use parks; and finally, build and design with an awareness of how parks have historically been used as exclusionary spaces and can, today, be tools of displacement (Hoover and Lim 2021). As the Planning and Development Department finishes building and begins to finalize the G7 Plan, continued robust and inclusive conversations with the G7 community about public safety in the neighborhood will be critical in informing neighborhood planning efforts and project implementation and maintenance.

Neighborhood Recovery and Economic Development

Several of the storytellers in this study spoke passionately about the need to invest in the G7 neighborhoods beyond built infrastructure. One storyteller spoke about neighborhood stabilization not simply as a process of investing in the built environment, but investing in neighborhood residents through education and employment support. Another storyteller discussed the importance of workforce development and educational support as a key component of neighborhood development and revitalization. Other storytellers spoke about their commitment to investing in the neighborhood economy and supporting Black-owned businesses in the neighborhood. All of the storytellers had a sustained, dedicated interest in neighborhood economic development.

While the planning literature on workforce development is still nascent, scholars have discussed how important a role planning can play in workforce development: “helping disadvantaged communities and populations build economic assets and power; shaping and responding to the impacts of private investment and disinvestment on communities and regions; and influencing the distributional outcomes of public investments and regulations on places and communities of need” (Schrock 2014, 267). Researchers have explored a variety of approaches that planners can take to shape neighborhood workforce development, including assisting non-profits with workforce development missions in siting their offices in high-need neighborhoods (Chapple 2006); designing spaces that allow for a variety of social connections through “urban density, diversity, and mobility, making more dynamic activity patterns possible” (Chapple 2006, 328); and pursuing “local hire” ordinances that set goals and targets not just for local residents, but often for racial minorities and economically disadvantaged populations” (Schrock 2014, 267).

As cities and communities begin to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, and as the federal government releases stimulus funding and prioritizes infrastructure spending to promote economic recovery, there will likely be novel opportunities for cities to shape community investment (“FACT SHEET: The American Jobs Plan” 2021; Anderson 2021). The City of Detroit should carefully examine how they can direct recovery funds to communities that are most in need of critical investments, including researching and considering negotiated development agreements and local hire ordinances (Schrock 2014).

Green Space and Mental Health

Several storytellers mentioned how the pandemic impacted their mental health, discussing how the reduction in social and recreational activities led to feelings of isolation. There is a significant amount of research that has demonstrated that green space is a mental health aid. For several years, the scientific community has highlighted the relationship between nature and overall well-being. A prominent example of this theory is the Stress Reduction Theory (Ulrich 1983; Berto 2014). This theory supports the role that physical settings play in strengthening coping mechanisms to address physiological stress and mental fatigue (Berto 2014). Along with this theory, research has found that exposure to natural environments can lead to greater social cohesion, increased physical activity, and improvements in self-esteem and mood (Jones et al. 2021). There is a scholarly consensus that adequate time spent in a natural environment can be key to a healthier life (Cox et al. 2018). In addition, there is research that establishes a time frame for achieving benefits from exposure to nature; a 2021 study found that thirty minutes in a natural environment had a positive impact on mental and physical health (Jones et al. 2021).

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

As we have discussed in earlier sections of this study, while we would like this oral history project to contribute to the G7 planning effort, we would urge care to be taken in using this research as a basis for formulating projects and policies. The sample size of this study is small, and our recruiting efforts may have built biases into which residents we were able to interview. Additionally, we emphasize that we are a research team made up of non-neighborhood residents, and we do not want to be presumptive in presenting recommendations from our own interpretations of storytellers' narratives (Hoover and Lim 2021). We believe that there are many more stories to be told in the G7 neighborhoods, and we support the City's sustained efforts to collaboratively engage community residents in building the Neighborhood Framework Plan as a way to prioritize inclusive designs and projects.

However, we believe that there are a few key takeaways from the narratives that we would like to highlight as preliminary recommendations, which we discuss below.

1. Promote robust community conversations envisioning public safety in the G7 neighborhoods

Storytellers' concerns over public safety in the G7 neighborhoods have impacted how they navigate and use neighborhood public space. The Planning and Development Department is only one City agency with a stake in public safety. We would encourage inclusive, substantive, and ongoing conversations between G7 area residents, relevant stakeholders, and City agencies about what would make residents feel protected from violence in public spaces. Public safety is a complex issue, and there are a plurality of resident opinions on what it should look like in the G7 neighborhoods. A collection of many resident voices and opinions is needed to inform any actions the City takes to address safety concerns in public spaces throughout the G7 neighborhoods.

2. Ensure maintenance plans for public greenspace projects

Several storytellers explained that they valued using public green spaces, but did not perceive these spaces as safe--in part due to lack of maintenance. A recent Issue Brief from the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) discussed how the design of a park "can have a direct impact on people's perceptions of safety and their willingness to use a space" and created a list of items to evaluate park design and maintenance (National Recreation and Park Association, n.d., 2). We recommend the implementation of long-term maintenance strategies to increase the perception of public green spaces, engage residents in stewardship activities, and provide potential employment opportunities.

3. Continue to broadly engage neighborhood residents and bridge the digital divide

The Planning and Development Department has been diligently working to ensure that all neighborhood residents are able to participate in neighborhood planning efforts, attempting to engage residents across a wide array of communication platforms (City of Detroit Planning and Development Department 2020). However, several storytellers highlighted the difficulty of virtually connecting neighborhood elders to planning discussions during the pandemic. These storytellers also documented their often extensive efforts to ensure that this set of residents could participate in planning discussions. Innovative initiatives such as the recent “Connecting Seniors” program, which provides tablets and technical support to low-income seniors in southeast Michigan, are a positive step toward making sure that older residents have the tools and resources necessary to virtually connect (“Program Seeks to Shrink Digital Divide Facing Older People” 2020). We recommend the City to both continue to pursue novel funding opportunities and support grassroots efforts to make sure all residents are able to get online.

As the City of Detroit Planning and Development Department finishes developing the Gratiot/7 Mile Neighborhood Framework Plan, we would encourage the City’s planning efforts to reflect and respond to how the pandemic has impacted G7 residents. The pandemic has altered G7 area residents’ professional and personal lives, shifted residents’ use of public space, and changed how residents interact with each other. We hope that the personal narratives in this study prompt continued conversations with the G7 community about the pandemic and their hopes for the G7 neighborhoods, as well as catalyze future engagement efforts.



In this section, we provide a brief profile of the researchers and advisor, of this project, along with their contact information.



RESEARCH
TEAM

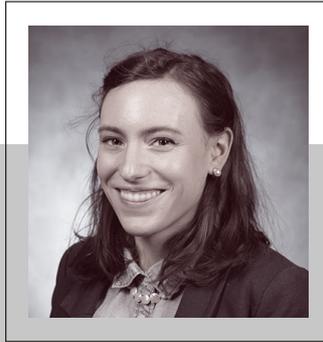
THE RESEARCH TEAM



Maite Elizondo

Researcher
mepmaite@umich.edu

M.S. Environment and Sustainability from the University of Michigan. Bachelor's degree in Psychology with ten years of experience in process and participatory design, development of training programs, creation of educational material, tutoring of young professionals, and vast knowledge in implementation and management of processes. Experienced in research and data analysis. Interested in participatory design, community engagement, environmental stewardship, and environmental education.



Maddie Lane

Researcher
madlane@umich.edu

M.S. Environment and Sustainability from the University of Michigan, B.A. in Political Science from Bryn Mawr College. Experience in qualitative and policy research, data analysis, and project management. Interested in urban policy and politics, climate justice and resilience, and urban sustainability.



Mark Lindquist

Advisor
marklin@umich.edu

Mark Lindquist, ASLA, PhD, is an Assistant Professor of Landscape Architecture. Mark's research and teaching focus on the design and evaluation of high-performance landscapes with an emphasis on multifunctional green infrastructure in urban areas. He is particularly interested in understanding how engaging with computation, data, virtual and augmented reality can transform the design process and inform decision making by stakeholders. Mark uses video game technology and conducts empirical research with the aim of providing an evidence base to support the design and planning of environments that perform ecologically, socially and culturally for more sustainable outcomes.

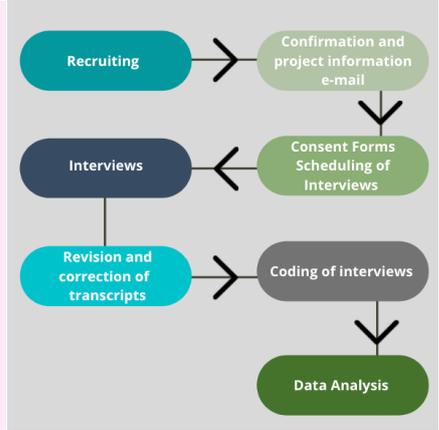
INFOGRAPHIC

STORIES OF A PANDEMIC:

Narratives from Gratiot/7 Mile Residents



The City of Detroit Planning and Development Department and the University of Michigan's School for Environment and Sustainability partner to collect narratives from residents of the G7 area to hear their stories and experiences during the pandemic and gain a better understanding of their connection to their neighborhood.



Six residents of the G7 neighborhood participated in the Oral History project

The demographics of this project were the following:

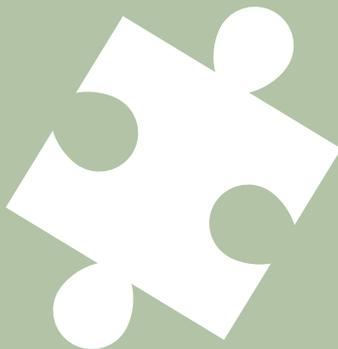
Gender: 05 women | 01 men

Age: 05 adults | 01 youth

Occupation: 01 retiree | 4 professionals | 01 student



We started this project by recruiting residents of the G7 neighborhood through digital posters that were sent through the City of Detroit Planning and Developing Department's digital newsletter and publicized during community meetings. Then we held the interviews and proceeded with analysis of the stories told by the participants



Listening to the stories we found 8 emergent themes:

1. Pandemic Household Situation
2. Occupation and Education Changes
3. Mental Health
4. COVID-19 precautions
5. Alternative activities
6. Connection to neighborhood community
7. Use of public & outdoor spaces
8. Public Safety



The storytellers discussed the complexities and challenges brought about by the pandemic, including the abrupt transition to an online setting. While working and studying from home has not been easy, they believe that social distancing is vital to protect other community members. Additionally, they expressed their frustration with the isolation of the pandemic and the repercussions of the pandemic on their mental health.



Key recommendations from stories:

1. Promote robust community conversations envisioning public safety in the G7 neighborhoods
2. Ensure maintenance plans for public greenspace projects
3. Continue to broadly engage neighborhood residents and bridge the digital divide

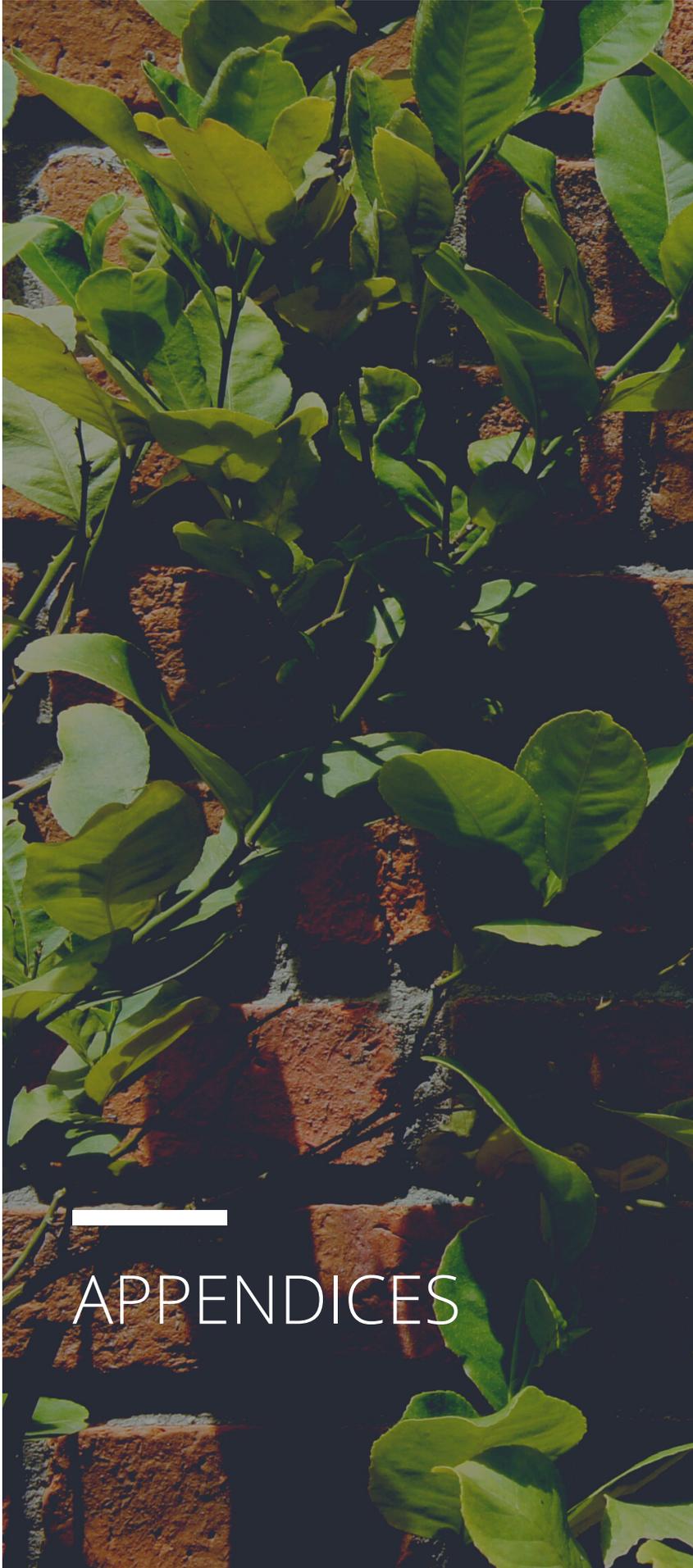
In this section of the report, you will find documents that were used as part of this project.

Appendix A:
Consent Form

Appendix B:
Email Template with project information

Appendix C:
Interview Guides

APPENDICES



APPENDIX A | CONSENT FORM



G7 Planning Area Study (HUM00184377) Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Principal Investigator: Madeleine Lane, School for Environment and Sustainability, University of Michigan, madlane@umich.edu; Maite Elizondo Piñeiro, School for Environment and Sustainability, University of Michigan

Faculty advisor: Dr. Mark Lindquist, marklin@umich.edu, School for Environment and Sustainability, University of Michigan

Overview and purpose

We invite you to be part of a research study to determine how the COVID-19 pandemic has shaped interactions with your neighbourhood.

Description of your involvement

If you agree to be part of the research study, you will be asked to participate in an online, recorded video interview regarding your experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. The interview will have the duration of an hour. We will be collecting a number of details, including name, age, gender, and the area in which you live.

Benefits

You will receive a \$25 Amazon gift card for participating in this study. Additionally, we hope this study will help elevate G7 neighborhood experiences with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Risks and discomforts

We hope to share your story in an interactive online exhibition space as the culminating product of this research. We will be publicly sharing details that you have discussed with us. We will work with you to ensure that all the details in the final product are items that you are comfortable becoming public record. We do not believe that there are any other risks or discomforts from participating in this research.

Confidentiality

We plan to publish the results of this research. We will not be sharing last names publicly but would like to share your first name (or nickname) and age on a publicly available online platform. Additionally, with your permission we would like to include audio and video from your interview on the online public platform. We will keep confidential any information that you share with us that you request to remain private.

Voluntary nature of the study

Participating in this study is completely voluntary. Even if you decide to take part now, you may change your mind and stop at any time.

Storage and Future Use of Data

We will store your answers to use for future research studies. Your first name, age, and gender, as well as some of your responses, will be made publicly available with your permission.

Contact information

If you have questions about the study you may contact Madeleine Lane, madlane@umich.edu, Maite Elizondo, mepmaite@umich.edu, or the faculty advisor Dr. Mark Lindquist, marklin@umich.edu.

APPENDIX A | CONSENT FORM



If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or wish to obtain information, ask questions or discuss any concerns about this study with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact the University of Michigan Health Sciences and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board, 2800 Plymouth Rd., Bldg. 520, Room 1169, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-2800, (734) 936-0933 or toll free, (866) 936-0933, irbhsbs@umich.edu.

Consent

By continuing you are agreeing to be in the study.

APPENDIX A | CONSENT FORM



G7 Planning Area Study (HUM00184377) Assent to Participate in a Research Study (13 - 17 year olds)

Principal Investigator: Madeleine Lane, madlane@umich.edu, School for Environment and Sustainability, University of Michigan; Maite Elizondo Piñeiro, mepmaite@umich.edu, School for Environment and Sustainability, University of Michigan
Faculty advisor: Dr. Mark Lindquist, marklin@umich.edu, School for Environment and Sustainability, University of Michigan

Overview and purpose

We invite you to be part of a research study to determine how the COVID-19 pandemic has shaped interactions with your neighbourhood.

Description of your involvement

If you agree to be part of the research study, you will be asked to participate in an online, recorded video interview regarding your experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. The interview will have the duration of an hour. We will be collecting a number of details, including name, age, gender, and the area in which you live.

Benefits

You will receive a \$25 Amazon gift card for participating in this study. Additionally, we hope this study will help elevate G7 neighborhood experiences with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Risks and discomforts

We hope to share your story in an interactive online exhibition space as the culminating product of this research. We will be publicly sharing details that you have discussed with us. We will work with you to ensure that all the details in the final product are items that you are comfortable becoming public record. We do not believe that there are any other risks or discomforts from participating in this research.

Confidentiality

We plan to publish the results of this research. We will not be sharing last names publicly but would like to share your first name (or nickname) and age on a publicly available online platform. Additionally, with your permission we would like to include audio and video from your interview on the online public platform. We will keep confidential any information that you share with us that you request to remain private.

Voluntary nature of the study

Participating in this study is completely voluntary. Even if you decide to take part now, you may change your mind and stop at any time.

Storage and Future Use of Data

We will store your answers to use for future research studies. Your first name, age, and gender, as well as some of your responses, will be made publicly available with your permission.

Contact information

If you have questions about the study you may contact Madeleine Lane, madlane@umich.edu, Maite Elizondo, mepmaite@umich.edu, or the faculty advisor Dr. Mark Lindquist, marklin@umich.edu.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or wish to obtain

APPENDIX A | CONSENT FORM



information, ask questions or discuss any concerns about this study with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact the University of Michigan Health Sciences and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board, 2800 Plymouth Rd., Bldg. 520, Room 1169, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-2800, (734) 936-0933 or toll free, (866) 936-0933, irbhsbs@umich.edu.

Assent

Your parent(s) said it would be okay to take part in this study, but you do not have to agree to this. By continuing you are agreeing to be in the study.

APPENDIX A | CONSENT FORM



G7 Planning Area Study (HUM00184377) Parent's Permission for Child to Participate

Principal Investigator: Madeleine Lane, School for Environment and Sustainability, University of Michigan, madlane@umich.edu; Maite Elizondo Piñeiro, School for Environment and Sustainability, University of Michigan

Faculty advisor: Dr. Mark Lindquist, marklin@umich.edu, School for Environment and Sustainability, University of Michigan

Overview and purpose

We invite you to be part of a research study to determine how the COVID-19 pandemic has shaped interactions with your neighbourhood.

Description of your involvement

If you agree to be part of the research study, you will be asked to participate in an online, recorded video interview regarding your experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. The interview will have the duration of an hour. We will be collecting a number of details, including name, age, gender, and the area in which you live.

Benefits

You will receive a \$25 Amazon gift card for participating in this study. Additionally, we hope this study will help elevate G7 neighborhood experiences with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Risks and discomforts

We hope to share your story in an interactive online exhibition space as the culminating product of this research. We will be publicly sharing details that you have discussed with us. We will work with you to ensure that all the details in the final product are items that you are comfortable becoming public record. We do not believe that there are any other risks or discomforts from participating in this research.

Confidentiality

We plan to publish the results of this research. We will not be sharing last names publicly but would like to share your first name (or nickname) and age on a publicly available online platform. Additionally, with your permission we would like to include audio and video from your interview on the online public platform. We will keep confidential any information that you share with us that you request to remain private.

Voluntary nature of the study

Participating in this study is completely voluntary. Even if you decide to take part now, you may change your mind and stop at any time.

Storage and Future Use of Data

We will store your answers to use for future research studies. Your first name, age, and gender, as well as some of your responses, will be made publicly available with your permission.

APPENDIX A | CONSENT FORM



Contact information

If you have questions about the study you may contact Madeleine Lane, madlane@umich.edu, Maite Elizondo, mepmaite@umich.edu, or the faculty advisor Dr. Mark Lindquist, marklin@umich.edu.

If you have questions about your child's rights as a research participant, or wish to obtain information, ask questions or discuss any concerns about this study with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact the University of Michigan Health Sciences and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board, 2800 Plymouth Rd., Bldg. 520, Room 1169, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-2800, (734) 936-0933 or toll free, (866) 936-0933, irbhsbs@umich.edu.

Parental Permission

By continuing you are agreeing for your child to be in the study.

APPENDIX B | EMAIL TEMPLATE WITH PROJECT INFORMATION

Hi [Name]!

We hope this email finds you well during this difficult time. Thank you for reaching out and for showing interest in the in Gratiot/7 Mile Oral History Project.

We want you to make an informed decision about whether you want to participate in our project.

This project will be conducted via Zoom, a videoconferencing application. We hope to record the interview, which will last approximately 1 hour. If you don't have access to a device that can host Zoom, we would be happy to work with you to provide you with access.

The questions will revolve around your household's situation during the COVID-19 pandemic; your connection to the G7 neighborhood; and your interaction with neighborhood spaces during the pandemic.

We may request a follow-up interview after our initial session; you are not required to participate, but we would appreciate any time you are able to offer.

We are also interested in any media (photos or videos) that you have collected about the neighborhood and your interactions with it (for example, photos of your favorite places).

If you would like to participate, please share your full name, date of birth, and current address, as well as the best contact number and email address to reach you.

If you would like to participate, we will follow up with a consent form for you to sign and will schedule your interview.

If you have any questions, please contact the two investigators, Maite Elizondo Piñeiro and Madeleine Lane, at g7stories@umich.edu or (734) 325-4020.

Best,

Maite and Madeleine

APPENDIX C | INTERVIEW GUIDES

INTERVIEW GUIDE | ADULTS

Hi, I'm Maite and I'm Maddie and we are graduate students from the University of Michigan's School for Environment and Sustainability. We are working with the City of Detroit Planning and Development Department on the Gratiot/7 Mile Neighborhood Framework Plan. Is this still a good time to talk?

(If no: No worries; do you know when a better time to talk might be? Or, do you prefer not to participate?)

(If yes: Today we want to learn about your experiences during the pandemic and how you have been interacting with your community and your neighborhood. If at any point during the interview you feel uncomfortable or need to stop, we want to accommodate your needs. Is it okay if we record this video interview? Thank you, let's start.)

Section I. COVID-19 household situation

1. Can you introduce yourself? What is your name?
2. Where do you live?
3. Who do you live with now?
4. Who were you living with at the beginning of the pandemic?
5. What is your current occupation?
6. How has your occupation changed, if at all, since the beginning of the pandemic?
7. If you are comfortable speaking about it, how has your income changed, if at all, since the beginning of the pandemic?
8. Have you, or has anyone in your household, been diagnosed with COVID-19?
9. Have you, or has anyone in your household, been hospitalized due to COVID-19?
10. How have you been feeling?

Section 2: Connection to neighborhood space

1. How long have you lived in the G7 neighborhood?
2. Do you rent or own your property?
3. If you rent your property: has COVID-19 impacted your rent in any way?
4. If you own your property: has COVID-19 impacted your mortgage or property value in any way?
5. What, if any, type of outdoor space does your property have?
6. Do you use that outdoor space?
7. How did you use your outdoor space prior to the pandemic?
8. How do you use your outdoor space now?
9. Do you visit public spaces (for example, parks) in your neighborhood?
10. How often did you visit public spaces prior to the pandemic?
11. What activities did you participate in at those public spaces?
12. How often do you visit public spaces since the pandemic began?
13. What activities have you participated in at those public spaces since the beginning of the pandemic?
14. What do you use for transportation?
15. Has your mode of transportation changed since the beginning of the pandemic?
16. Since the pandemic began, how often do you leave your property?

Section 3: Connection to neighborhood community

1. How did you interact with your neighbors and neighborhood community prior to the pandemic?
2. How do you interact with your neighbors and neighborhood community since the pandemic began?
3. Have you noticed a change in the way you have interacted with your neighbors and your neighborhood community since the pandemic began?
4. What are the places in your neighborhood that you enjoy the most, and what elements do you value about them?

Section 4: Risk assessment

1. When you are outside of your home, what health and safety measures do you take?
2. When you are in outdoor spaces, what health and safety measures do you take?
3. Do you feel comfortable being in the same outdoor space as other neighborhood residents?
4. What restrictions or guidance have you followed when interacting with other residents in outdoor spaces?

INTERVIEW GUIDE | YOUTH

Hi, I'm Maite and I'm Maddie and we are graduate students from the University of Michigan's School for Environment and Sustainability. We are working with the City of Detroit Planning and Development Department on the Gratiot/7 Mile Neighborhood Framework Plan. Is this still a good time to talk?

(If no: No worries; do you know when a better time to talk might be? Or, do you prefer not to participate?)

(If yes: Today we want to learn about your experiences during the pandemic and how you have been interacting with your community and your neighborhood. If at any point during the interview you feel uncomfortable or need to stop, we want to accommodate your needs. Is it okay if we record this video interview? Thank you, let's start.)

Section 1. COVID-19 household situation

1. Can you introduce yourself? What is your name?
2. Where do you live?
3. Who do you live with now?
4. Who were you living with at the beginning of the pandemic?
5. Have you, or has anyone in your household, been diagnosed with COVID-19?
6. Have you, or has anyone in your household, been hospitalized due to COVID-19?
7. How have you been feeling?

Section 2: Connection to neighborhood space

1. How long have you lived in the G7 neighborhood?
2. What, if any, type of outdoor space (balcony, backyard, garden, patio) does your house or apartment have?
3. Do you use that outdoor space?
4. How did you use your outdoor space prior to the pandemic?
5. How do you use your outdoor space now?

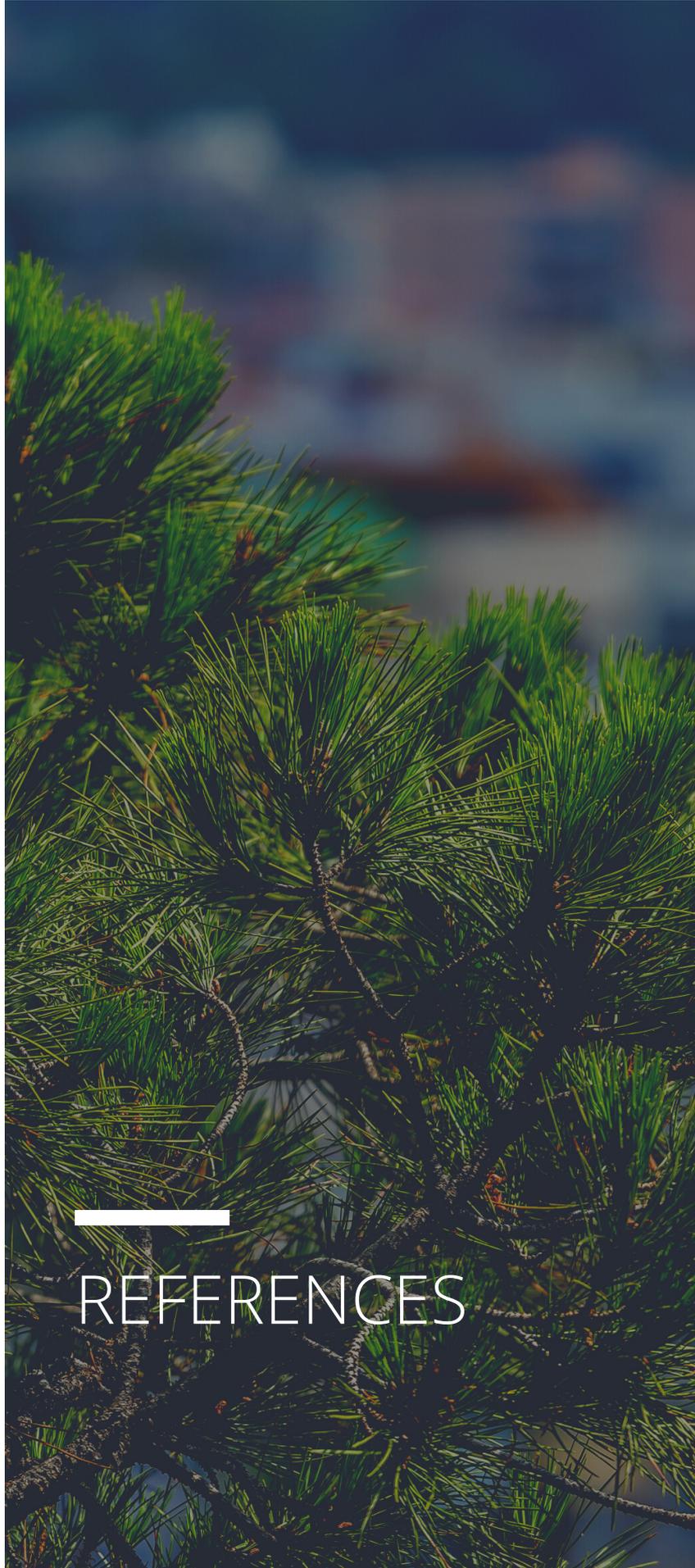
5. Do you visit public spaces (for example, parks, sports fields or courts, playgrounds) in your neighborhood?
6. How often did you visit public spaces prior to the pandemic?
7. What activities did you participate in at those public spaces?
8. How often do you visit public spaces since the pandemic began?
9. What activities have you participated in at those public spaces since the beginning of the pandemic?
10. Do you use social media to connect to your friends in the neighborhood?
11. Since the pandemic began, how often do you leave your house or apartment?

Section 3: Connection to neighborhood community

1. How did you interact with your neighbors and neighborhood community prior to the pandemic?
2. How do you interact with your neighbors and neighborhood community since the pandemic began?
3. Have you noticed a change in the way you have interacted with your neighbors and your neighborhood community since the pandemic began?
4. What are the places in your neighborhood that you enjoy the most, and what things do you value about them?

Section 4: Risk assessment

1. When you are outside of your home, what health and safety measures do you take?
2. When you are in outdoor spaces, what health and safety measures do you take?
3. Do you feel comfortable being in the same outdoor space as other neighborhood residents?
4. What restrictions or guidance have you followed when interacting with other residents in outdoor spaces?



REFERENCES

REFERENCES

- Alon, Titan, Matthias Doepke, Jane Olmstead-Rumsey, and Michéle Tertilt. 2020. "The Impact of COVID-19 on Gender Equality." Working Paper 26947. NBER Working Paper Series. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research. <http://www.nber.org/papers/w26947>.
- Anderson, Bill. 2021. "What the American Rescue Plan Act Means for Local Governments." SEMCOG (blog). March 12, 2021. <https://www.semco.org/blog/what-the-american-rescue-plan-act-means-for-local-governments>.
- Berto, Rita. 2014. "The Role of Nature in Coping with Psycho-Physiological Stress: A Literature Review on Restorativeness." *Behavioral Sciences* 4 (4): 394–409. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs4040394>.
- Campbell, Eric. n.d. "Beyond Policing To Community Peacekeeping." *Riverwise Magazine* (blog). Accessed April 22, 2021. <https://riverwisedetroit.org/article/beyond-policing-to-community-peacekeeping/>.
- Chapple, Karen. 2006. "Overcoming Mismatch: Beyond Dispersal, Mobility, and Development Strategies." *Journal of the American Planning Association* 72 (3): 322–36. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944360608976754>.
- City of Detroit Planning and Development Department. 2020. "Gratiot/7 Mile Neighborhood Framework Plan, Virtual Community Meeting #3." November 19. <https://detroitmi.gov/document/gratiot7-mile-neighborhood-framework-plan-community-meeting-3>.
- Collins, Caitlyn, Liana Christin Landivar, Leah Ruppner, and William J. Scarborough. 2021. "COVID-19 and the Gender Gap in Work Hours." *Gender, Work & Organization* 28 (S1): 101–12. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12506>.
- "COVID-19 Data Dashboard." n.d. City of Detroit. Accessed April 15, 2021. <https://detroitmi.gov/departments/detroit-health-department/programs-and-services/communicable-disease/coronavirus-covid-19/covid-19-data-dashboard>.
- Cox, Daniel T.C., Danielle F. Shanahan, Hannah L. Hudson, Richard A. Fuller, and Kevin J. Gaston. 2018. "The Impact of Urbanisation on Nature Dose and the Implications for Human Health." *Landscape and Urban Planning* 179 (November): 72–80. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landurbplan.2018.07.013>.
- Cramer, Jennifer A. 2020. "'First, Do No Harm': Tread Carefully Where Oral History, Trauma, and Current Crises Intersect." *The Oral History Review* 47 (2): 203–13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00940798.2020.1793679>.
- "Detroit." n.d. Don't Call The Police (blog). Accessed April 22, 2021. <https://dontcallthepolice.com/detroit/>.
- Divine, Jenny, and Aude Bicquelet-Lock. 2021. "Creating Gender-Sensitive Urban Environments Post-Covid-19: Challenges and Opportunities." London: Royal Town Planning Institute. <https://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/7903/wip-ii-final.pdf>.
- "FACT SHEET: The American Jobs Plan." 2021. The White House. March 31, 2021. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/31/fact-sheet-the-american-jobs-plan/>.

REFERENCES

- Faulkenbury, Evan. 2020. "Journalism, COVID-19, and the Opportunity of Oral History." *The Oral History Review* 47 (2): 253–59. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00940798.2020.1791723>.
- Geary, Rebecca S, Benedict Wheeler, Rebecca Lovell, Ruth Jepson, Ruth Hunter, and Sarah Rodgers. 2021. A "Call to Action: Improving Urban Green Spaces to Reduce Health Inequalities Exacerbated by COVID-19." *Preventive Medicine* 145 (April): 106425. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ypmed.2021.106425>.
- "Gratiot / 7 Mile Framework Plan." n.d. City of Detroit. Accessed April 16, 2021. <https://detroitmi.gov/departments/planning-and-development-department/neighborhood-plans/east-design-region/gratiot-7-mile-framework-plan>.
- Gutmann, Raimund, and Sabine Neff. 2006. "Gender Mainstreaming im Stadtentwicklungsgebiet Flugfeld Aspern." <https://www.wien.gv.at/stadtentwicklung/projekte/aspern-seestadt/pdf/studie-gendermainstreaming.pdf>.
- Honey-Rosés, Jordi, Isabelle Anguelovski, Vincent K. Chireh, Carolyn Daher, Cecil Konijnendijk van den Bosch, Jill S. Litt, Vrushti Mawani, et al. 2020. "The Impact of COVID-19 on Public Space: An Early Review of the Emerging Questions – Design, Perceptions, and Inequities." *Cities & Health*, July, 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23748834.2020.1780074>.
- Hoover, Fushcia -Ann, and Theodore C. Lim. 2021. "Examining Privilege and Power in US Urban Parks and Open Space during the Double Crises of Antiracism and COVID-19." *Socio-Ecological Practice Research* 3 (1): 55–70. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42532-020-00070-3>.
- Jones, Marc V., Christopher J. Gidlow, Gemma Hurst, Daniel Masterson, Graham Smith, Naomi Ellis, David Clark-Carter, Mika P. Tarvainen, Elizabeth C. Braithwaite, and Mark Nieuwenhuijsen. 2021. "Psychophysiological Responses of Repeated Exposure to Natural and Urban Environments." *Landscape and Urban Planning* 209 (May): 104061. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landurbplan.2021.104061>.
- Leavy, Patricia. 2011. *Oral History. Understanding Qualitative Research*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ma, Anson T.H., Theresa W.L. Lam, Lewis T.O. Cheung, and Lincoln Fok. 2021. "Protected Areas as a Space for Pandemic Disease Adaptation: A Case of COVID-19 in Hong Kong." *Landscape and Urban Planning* 207 (March): 103994. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landurbplan.2020.103994>.
- Maher, Carmel, Mark Hadfield, Maggie Hutchings, and Adam de Eyto. 2018. "Ensuring Rigor in Qualitative Data Analysis: A Design Research Approach to Coding Combining NVivo With Traditional Material Methods." *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 17 (1): 160940691878636. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406918786362>.
- Mason, C. Nicole, Andrea Flynn, and Shengwei Sun. 2020. "Build(ing) the Future: Bold Policies for a Gender-Equitable Recovery." New York: Institute for Women's Policy Research. <https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Policies-for-a-Gender-Equitable-Recovery-Finals2.pdf>.

REFERENCES

- Maynes, Mary Jo, Jennifer L. Pierce, and Barbara Laslett. 2008. *Telling Stories: The Use of Personal Narratives in the Social Sciences and History*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Mell, Ian, and Meredith Whitten. 2021. "Access to Nature in a Post Covid-19 World: Opportunities for Green Infrastructure Financing, Distribution and Equitability in Urban Planning." *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 18 (4): 1527. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18041527>.
- National Recreation and Park Association. n.d. "Issue Brief: Creating Safe Park Environments to Enhance Community Wellness." Ashburn, VA: National Recreation and Park Association. <https://www.nrpa.org/contentassets/f768428a39aa4035ae55b2aaff372617/park-safety.pdf>.
- Oral History Association. 2009. "Principles and Best Practices." Oral History Association (blog). October 2009. <https://www.oralhistory.org/about/principles-and-practices-revised-2009/>.
- Perkiss, Abigail. 2014. "Reclaiming the Past: Oral History and the Legacy of Integration in West Mount Airy, Philadelphia." *The Oral History Review* 41 (1): 77–107. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ohr/ohu006>.
- Perrin, Andrew, and Sara Atske. 2021. "7% of Americans Don't Use the Internet. Who Are They?" Pew Research Center (blog). April 2, 2021. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/04/02/7-of-americans-dont-use-the-internet-who-are-they/>.
- Peterson, Sarah, Alison Rauss, Yiran Shen, and Chuyi Yin. 2020. "Vacant Land Adaptation in Detroit's G7 Neighborhoods." Ann Arbor: University of Michigan. <http://hdl.handle.net/2027.42/154883>.
- "Program Seeks to Shrink Digital Divide Facing Older People." 2020. AP NEWS. November 1, 2020. <https://apnews.com/article/technology-business-virus-outbreak-seniors-michigan-44a1264915fe36779fbcc38309feb50e>.
- Rakodi, Carole. 1991. "Cities and People: Towards a Gender-Aware Urban Planning Process?" *Public Administration and Development* 11 (6): 541–59. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pad.4230110603>.
- Ray, Rashawn, Jane Fran Morgan, Lydia Wileden, Samantha Elizondo, and Destiny Wiley-Yancy. 2021. "Examining and Addressing COVID-19 Racial Disparities in Detroit." Brookings Institute https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Detroit_Covid_report_final.pdf.
- Schrock, Greg. 2014. "Connecting People and Place Prosperity: Workforce Development and Urban Planning in Scholarship and Practice." *Journal of Planning Literature* 29 (3): 257–71. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0885412214538834>.
- Sharifi, Ayyoob, and Amir Reza Khavarian-Garmsir. 2020. "The COVID-19 Pandemic: Impacts on Cities and Major Lessons for Urban Planning, Design, and Management." *Science of The Total Environment* 749 (December): 142391. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2020.142391>.

REFERENCES

- Sloan, Stephen M. 2020. "Behind the 'Curve': COVID-19, Infodemic, and Oral History." *The Oral History Review* 47 (2): 193–202. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00940798.2020.1798256>.
- The World Bank. 2020. "Handbook for Gender-Inclusive Urban Planning Design." Washington, D.C., United States: The World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/33197/145305.pdf>.
- Times, The New York. 2021. "Michigan Coronavirus Map and Case Count." *The New York Times*, April 18, 2021, sec. U.S. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/us/michigan-covid-cases.html>.
- Ulrich, Roger S. 1983. "Aesthetic and Affective Response to Natural Environment." In *Behavior and the Natural Environment*, edited by Irwin Altman and Joachim F. Wohlwill, 85–125. Boston, MA: Springer US. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4613-3539-9_4.
- Urban Development Vienna. 2013. "Manual for Gender Mainstreaming in Urban Planning and Urban Development." Vienna, Austria: City of Vienna.
- Williams, Tim G, Tom M. Logan, Connie T Zuo, Kevin D Liberman, and Seth D Guikema. 2020. "Parks and Safety: A Comparative Study of Green Space Access and Inequity in Five US Cities." *Landscape and Urban Planning* 201 (September): 103841. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landurbplan.2020.103841>.
- Witsil, Frank. 2021. "Coronavirus in Michigan: A Timeline of How the Pandemic Unfolded since Last Year." *Detroit Free Press*. March 9, 2021. <https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/2021/03/09/coronavirus-timeline-michigan/4633483001/>.
- Zamarro, Gema, and María J. Prados. 2021. "Gender Differences in Couples' Division of Childcare, Work and Mental Health during COVID-19." *Review of Economics of the Household* 19 (1): 11–40. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11150-020-09534-7>.

STORIES OF A PANDEMIC:
NARRATIVES FROM GRATIOT/7
MILE RESIDENTS