

The Rematriation of Design: Nurturing the Emergence of Generative Production Networks  
using Design for Generative Justice

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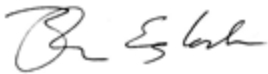
B.A., Media and Information, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI, 2000

Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of Master of Design in Integrative Design

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May 6, 2021

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Date Degree Conferred: May 2021

# **The Rematriation of Design: nurturing the emergence of generative production networks through design for generative justice**

Thesis by Keesa V. Johnson  
MDES 2019-2021

## **abstract**

The food system in the US has supported growing dominance of industrial agriculture, corporate distribution chains, and other means by which power is exerted at the expense of environmental sustainability, citizen health and wealth inequality. The impacts have been most damaging to under-served and racialized communities. Online purchasing creates new opportunities--particularly in the context of the covid epidemic--but barriers may arise that are also along race and class divisions. This thesis examines an initial data set for two Black led collaborative Food System projects, two urban farms and a mobile farmers market initiative. All are primarily staffed by African American leadership, and serve a diverse set of community members with marginalized consumers being of the majority. I contrast the experiences in the shift to online sales for these groups with other online food networks for primarily white and middle class producer/consumer relations. While issues such as EBT and SNAP benefit payments constitute formal economic barriers, other challenges are better illuminated through the lens of the extraction of value: the loss of community connections and increased dependency on modes of production that do not return value to the community. I define "generative production networks" as those which maximize unalienated value return rather than value extraction. I utilize this framework to examine alternative online systems to overcome these barriers.

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## 1. Acknowledgements

To all the many human and non human systems that have lighted my path to completion. I am so grateful to be at the end of this journey. All of you have pushed me to be a better person through every interaction we have had. You have supported this work and the work that has yet to come. I am because you are. - Ubuntu

- To the divine creator of all things, thank you for allowing me to find my purpose
- To my mother and father who are my sun and moon. Thank you for your continuous support and encouragement.
- To my 3 seeds (children, Janan, Sahlah, and Nuri) you teach me so much about the world I need to build.
- To all my Jench<sup>1</sup>: Dr. Ron Eglash for pushing my thinking forward all the time in his own unique way, Audrey G. Bennett, my program director who taught me that I am here to stand on the shoulders of giants as a design researcher, Joseph Trumpey, you help me appreciate design implementation as I work within the margins, Jeremy Moghtader who continues to teach me how ecology and economics go hand and hand. Peggy Vaughn-Payne (Executive Director of NorthWest Initiative and community design partner) you continuously grace me with your strategic leadership, Jerry Hebron (Executive Director of Northend Christian and Oakland Avenue Farm, Community design partner) you have given me the true definition of what Food Access really is about, Malik Yakini (executive director of the Detroit Black Food Security Network/D-Town Farm, Community design partner) you teach from your heart and thank you for your life giving energy.
- To Rackham Graduate school, CEW, and Services for Students with Disabilities: So many students would not be able to maneuver the rapid currents of graduate school without the resource support given through your departments. If I needed counseling, a listening ear, financial support, as well as life navigation, you were there.

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### Notes

1. "JEGNA or Jench (plural form) is an Amharic term that defines the master teacher as one who has been tested in struggle or battle, has an extraordinary and unusual fearlessness, has determination and courage in protecting her/his people, land and culture, shows diligence and dedication to our people in everything that is done, produces an exceptionally high quality of work and is dedicated to the protection, nurturance and development of our young by advancing our people, place and culture." - Wade W. Nobles

## 2. Introduction

“Generative justice frames identity as an inherently valuable aspect of the human experience –whether that is a dissident casting off of oppressive traditions or a traditionalist passing the torch to the next generation” - Audrey Bennett

As the COVID-19 pandemic shifted consumers away from in-person food sales, economic impacts have been most damaging to low resourced and racialized communities. While these communities considered the online alternatives, barriers arose that underscored the precarity of living under race and class divisions. This thesis examines an initial data set for two Black led collaborative Food System projects, two urban farms and a mobile farmers market initiative, all of which are primarily staffed by African American leadership and serve a diverse set of community members with Black consumers being of the majority. I contrast the experiences in the shift to online sales for these groups with other online food networks for primarily white and middle class producer/consumer relations. While issues such as EBT and SNAP benefit payments constitute formal economic barriers, other challenges are better illuminated through the lens of the extraction of value: the loss of community connections and increased dependency on modes of production that do not return value to the community (and stem from a long history of colonial domination). Is it possible to restore those functions lost to an extractive economy? To develop a system that does return value, and to do so without the alienation and extraction that modern food systems exemplify?

I define “generative production networks” as those which maximize unalienated value creation, and maximize its circulation back to producers. In doing so the networks must minimize value extraction, despite being located in a society structured and dedicated to extraction. I focus on three forms of value: ecological, labor, and social. For example, extraction of ecological value occurs when farming shifts from traditional agroecology to industrial farms that deplete soil of its nutrients and life-sustaining microbial ecosystem (Altieri et al. 2017). Extraction of labor value occurs when a worker is moved from enriching mastery of their craft--doing work you love--to an assembly line where they don't even know what product is being made (Sennett 2008). And an example of the extraction of social value is the way that our cultures, communications and lifeways are colonized by social media corporations (Zuboff 2015).

Below I review some of the literature that illuminates this distinction between extractive and unalienated value, and its relevance to food justice. Following that I describe my field sites and methods for data collection. My data indicates that if we are to develop a system that includes unalienated consumption, it needs to allow for more thoughtful and socialized interactions during the online purchasing experience. Thus the system I propose will create a virtual communal space for developing both individual and collective behaviors, experiences and decisions regarding food understanding and purchases. By linking these more thoughtful approaches to consumption, and creating links to less alienated forms of production in Detroit's urban farms, I hope to facilitate a general set of strategies for moving society from an extractive economy to one that enjoys the decolonizing benefits for generative production networks.

### 3. Literature review

#### A. Generative Justice

The literature on generative justice (GJ) frames the problems of inequality, racism, environmental damage and health damage in similar ways. All of these, according to Eglash (2016) are the result of economies of extraction. As value is extracted from the land, environmental damage occurs. As value is extracted from labor, wealth inequality and alienation from ourselves occurs. As value is extracted from society, our social networks are colonized in ways we hardly notice: online social media are essentially attention mines for corporations. The GJ literature contrasts this system of extraction with Indigenous cultures: “Many African societies had Indigenous traditions in which economic, ecological and creative capital was generated and circulated in a bottom-up fashion, offering a more egalitarian and sustainable approach than either the capitalist or socialist traditions of today” (Eglash 2015).

Much of the literature on GJ examines how to restore Indigenous traditions, or hybridize contemporary contexts and technologies with inspiration from these unalienated practices. Kuhn (2016) for example provides an analysis of GJ in fiber arts. She surveys the original Indigenous system of Navajo weaving, where sheep created biodiversity in plants, plants were used in dyes, and dyed blankets created value that supported sheep. And she examines contemporary attempts to recover that kind of circular economy: for example the use of invasive plant fibers in crafting baskets in Africa, which reduces the plants and provides income.

In his Rensselaer PhD thesis Science and Technology Studies (STS) scholar Dan Lyles examines the intersections between GJ and food production systems. He found that there were many “sticking points” in attempting to create localized circular economies for food. Either the participants rooted themselves entirely in an Indigenous-oriented farming system (his example was the famous Soul Fire farm in Albany, NY), or they only achieved a quasi-generative status, as unalienated value would tend to “leak” or become extracted. For example, engaging youth in urban farming can be beneficial, but if not done in an authentic way--merely to trick them into some science lessons--the value is being extracted.

Speaking in the common language used to discuss things at the kitchen table, “unalienated value” means “keepin’ it real” or being authentic. If you are a musician or cook or farmer, and you are doing work you love, that is unalienated labor value, because it is authentic, beloved, enriching for your sense of self. If you are soil, and farmers are putting in compost full of nutrients and microorganisms, that is unalienated ecological value, the stuff that is enriching for the soil. And if you are a society, and your friends gather around the kitchen table to cook and share and eat, that is unalienated social value, enriching for the communal soul.

#### B. Food Justice

“The struggle for food justice has to be tied to the struggle for economic justice” – Malik Yakini

As noted above, generative justice depends on the circulation of unalienated value, and is inspired by Indigenous systems. In the domain of food justice, these same themes emerge, especially in the intersection of racial justice activism and food systems critique. For example in *Black Food Matters: Racial Justice in the Wake of Food Justice* (Garth and Reese 2021), the anthology authors note that traditional Black food culture--originally in the African Indigenous context--encompasses both what I eat and what ways I eat it as individuals, families, and communities. Even as members of a broader diaspora, I still struggle to reclaim that heritage (pg. 111). Such foods as cooked greens are nutritionally dense foods that give us life and allow us to practice sustainment: Sukuma wiki (Swahili); Callaloo (Caribbean); Collard greens (African American) are all the similar foods yet with distinct nutrients for black and brown people. Other foods shared across the diaspora include red rice, pepper pot, barbeque, and peanut soup.

Part of this struggle to recover unalienated forms of food production and consumption has to do with the narratives that attach to the foods. Watermelon and chicken have been stigmatized as food of enslavement. The authors of *Black Food Matters* point out that there are collective tension between the narratives of Black food and other culture's foods. So the foods of others are often positively linked to their culture, while Black food is linked to slavery, explicitly deligitimized or passed by for unhealthy eating that feels "more modern". Resisting the pull of the extractive economy that wants to trade our money for our health, reclaiming that past is a struggle. For us, those overlooked or degraded aspects of an Indigenous past and past of resistance are about memory; it is connected to stories passed down through the generations, which link the present to one's ancestors. (pg. 193).

Alkon and Agyeman (2011) examine food justice as a social movement. They point out that the environmental movement of the 1970s was largely white. It was not until the environmental *justice* movement of the late 1970s that it was linked explicitly to issues of racism and poverty (Bullard 1983). The food justice movement grew out of the environmental justice movement in the mid 1990s, emerging from a growing desire for equality and justice within neighborhoods. Dorceta Taylor's work on the Food Access in Michigan Project locates a defining moment in the social call from the 1982 Warren County protests against the siting of a toxic landfill for PCB's in a largely poor, African American county in North Carolina. However she extends that back even further, noting that the US civil rights movement made explicit connections between racism and the environment via efforts to improve sanitation workers' rights. Even when we look at 1960s movements around ending the Vietnam War, eliminating racially-based housing and education discrimination and more, there were ties to health and the environment (Taylor 2000).

In her work *Farming while Black* (from the same Soul Fire Farms described in Lyles 2016), Leah Penniman states:

Racism is built into the DNA of the US food system. Beginning with the genocidal land theft from Indigenous people, continuing with the kidnapping of our ancestors from the shores of West Africa for forced agricultural labor, morphing into convict leasing, expanding to the migrant guestworker program,

and maturing into its current state where farm management is among the whitest professions, farm labor is predominantly Brown and exploited, and people of color disproportionately live in food apartheid neighborhoods and suffer from diet-related illness, this system is built on stolen land and stolen labor, and needs a redesign (2018,5).

In other words, systems of extraction are not limited to pulling labor value from workers or soil value from nature. They are also powered by mechanisms for systemic racism. If you want to extract value, colonialism and slavery are powerful starting points. Here I can see the relationship between the GJ framework and the ties that food justice critiques apply to US and colonial history.

Not all food movements are based in social justice foundations. Williams (2013) writes a history of “the good food movement” starting with Julia Child’s French cookbook in 1961. The good food movement was really just a popularization of haute cuisine for the masses. It was not until much later that it adopted the needs of food security efforts and emerged from collaborations between academics and activities interested in understanding the global and local dimensions of food systems and issues of access (Gottlieb and Joshi 2010, xvii). Yet history has revealed that co-optation is a two-way street. The term “organic” once signified a radical stance; now it is commonly used as advertising all sorts of dubious products (Giannakas 2002). There are fragmented approaches to equity resulting in varied definitions and applications of Food Justice. What Food Justice does share with us is the growing needs of a global and local approach to the eradication of all systems of oppression.

### **C. Online consumption**

The literature on online consumption varies across a broad range of ideologies. For example, early works such as Kiang et al describe in glowing terms the wonderful possibilities for “product customization, availability, logistics, and transaction complexity”. However as the damaging effects of extractive economies were amplified by electronic accessibility, scholars increasingly documented the negative impact of online consumption.

The shift to online purchasing is just one element in the larger context of systems of food economies. As physical structures and transportation systems shift, race-based and income-based privilege is both amplified and made more invisible. One impact has been the loss of grocery stores in city areas where racialized populations are most concentrated. Grocery stores in the sense of large supermarkets, with extensive availability of reasonably priced fresh fruits and vegetables, are the major source of healthy food for most of the US (Horowitz et al. 2004). Since inner-city families have to purchase more food at small convenience stores, where fresh food is rarely available and typically over-priced, the higher risks of obesity, diabetes, and other health problems related to diet for racialized populations are directly linked to this lack of appropriate fresh food markets (Clifton 2004). A 2005 Detroit study (Taylor) found that in poor neighborhoods a high



percentage of Blacks residents lived an average 1.1 miles further from supermarkets than poorer neighborhoods with a low percentage of Blacks.

Taylor (2019) notes that the attempt to summarize these phenomena in ecological terms (“food deserts” or “food swamps”) may be done with good intentions, but ultimately backfire as they naturalize what is clearly a social process of racialized oppression. It is no different, from her view, than derogatory terms such as “the savage inner city”. Thus food deprivation is not addressed as a need, but weaponized as a means to discredit Black communities as locations worthy of development and self-directed agency.

Giere and Kumanikay, 2008, tie racialized food consumption to targeted marketing practices—including but not exclusive to online--centered on high-calorie, high-processed, low-nutrition foods and beverages to ethnic minority populations. These clearly contribute to ethnic disparities in obesity and other diet-related chronic conditions. They note a feedback loop in which excess consumption of food discourages physical activity, which then may contribute to behaviors and environments that predispose people to gain weight.

Studies of value, attitude and norms towards online shopping is another area of study within online food consumption. McFarlane (2013) notes that “customers choose products that offer the best-perceived value, and price is a critical element that influences customers’ value perceptions”. According to Lien, Wen and Wu (2011) “value represents a trade-off between give and get components in a sale transaction”. They identified the reputation of the product--in particular brand--as a major element in the decision making process that balances perceived value against monetary price. However, users of online grocery shopping services are typically highly educated, affluent and technically adept. “While online grocery shopping can create numerous societal opportunities such as improved equity” (Dillahunt et al. 2019), it is unknown how beneficial these services are or could be among users who are traditionally underrepresented in such services. Because “online grocery delivery services provide access to a wider variety of food and do so digitally, technical interventions may be necessary to bridge the gap between perceptions of food access and healthy-food intake” (Dillahunt et al. 2019).

In their system-wide analysis of online food purchasing, Khandpur et al. (2020) note that whatever the contributions that online markets can make to equity, one would need to take into account: “the acceptance of SNAP benefits for online food purchases would first require a favorable state-level policy context (e.g., states need approval for use of EBT test cards), before retailer policies can be implemented.”

While such barriers are certainly central issues to address, we cannot afford the illusion that there is a simple fix that a few tweaks to the system will address. We live in an anti-Black world where that identity is devalued and treated with little to no compassion. African Americans’ consumption is determined by the location of it’s communities to super markets; income; the seduction of fast food; and legacies of colonialism and class oppression. Within these many

layers of oppression is where the food breakdown is not aligned with the nutritionally dense foods that bring our bodies comfort.

#### **4. Merging Generative Justice, Food Justice, and Online consumption**

As we can see from the literature review, economies based on the circulation of unalienated value--ecologically and physiologically sustainable, rewarding labor, and egalitarian social relations--are possible. They were well established in Indigenous societies of the past, and the potential for recovering them exists in our present. But the means for that recovery, if it is to exist in the modern context, will have to include modern technology. That means designing modern technologies through an anti-racist, democratizing, and empowering framework.

My research, as noted in the introduction, seeks to develop such a system for restoring unalienated value circulation to our food system. In *Rematriating to the wombs of the World* Dr Shakira Tyler grounds food justice and related efforts to the Combehee River Collective's Black feminist statement, which remains one of the most fundamental assertions for emancipatory practice (Eisenstein, 1978, p. 264). They defined this stance as one "actively committed to struggling against racial, sexual, heterosexual, and class oppression and see our particular task as the development of integrated analysis and practice based upon the fact that the major systems of oppression are interlocking" (Combahee River Collective 1977). So it is my responsibility as a designer to link unalienated forms of production, such as the Black owned urban farms of Detroit, with unalienated forms of consumption, as we see in the Black food justice movement. Can an online system be designed that facilitates this value flow? That is my central research question. To answer it, I investigated two sites, one on the consumption side, and one on the production site. Using that data, I then designed an online system to embody some of the values and functionalities that had been lost to our extractive economy.

#### **5. Chronological description of the research**

The two case studies are a pair of collaborative, community-driven urban farms in Detroit, and a food club serving senior living apartments in Lansing, MI. By working with both groups in a design-based research process, my goal is to develop a vision for both sides of the consumption-production system, such that it evolves towards a generative economy as defined in the previous section.

##### **A. Description of the two Detroit farms**

D-Town Farm and Oakland Avenue Urban Farm are two of the top urban farms in the city of Detroit. Farming in Detroit resonates with the flow of the many musical sounds that have been created there such as motown soul, funk, and techno music. The Black agrarian scene located within the city of Detroit has been on a constant rise since its origins in the 1980s. Here forging, growing, educating, and creating self determining economies is what makes "by detroit for

detroit” unique in ways that are poorly represented in most promotional depictions. I’d like to take a tour of both farms briefly so you can understand the vital nature of this partnership.

Oakland Avenue Urban Farm is the nation's first “agri-cultural” urban landscape, and is located in Detroit's North end. It is a program of North End Christian Community Development Corporation, which is a non-profit, community based organization dedicated to cultivating healthy foods, sustainable economies and active cultural environments. The North end of Detroit is well known for the richness of its soil. They grow organic foods and offer their own line of products such as AfroJam Jams & Jellies, Sweet Sticky Thing Honey, and Bissap Hibiscus Cooler, as well as farm fresh items like produce and eggs. Oakland Avenue Urban farm has a 10 person staff and operates with over 300 hundred volunteers annually.

Jerry Heborn is the executive director and is often seen working in the 4 acre field with her husband who is the farm manager. Jerry speaks often of why she came back to live in the north end due to a call of action put forth from her mother, Pastor Reverend Elder Betha L. Carter, who she speaks highly of as her inspiration. Elder Carter was a pastor in the North end Christian church, and she challenged her congregation to address the neighborhood’s need for food security by establishing the Oakland Avenue Farm. So Jerry moved on from her real estate job to run her family’s business and created Oakland Avenue Urban farm. Jerry came from a family of educators from Tennessee who desired that their children have a good education in order to advance in life. Her mother wanted the same for every child that lived in the northend to be in a community of like minded people with good homes and a community where children can play and be safe. In 2006, Oakland Avenue was created from a 4-acre lot and a building. Current plans include The Landing, which is envisioned as an event space, plus a 12 room hostel which will give visitors to Detroit an urban agricultural experience.

D-Town Farm was created in 2008, out of the need to have healthy and sustainable food for city of Detroit residents. The farm is a 7-acre organic farm located in rouge park which is Detroit’s largest park in the city. There are over 30 different fruits, vegetables and herbs that are sold at farmers markets and to wholesale customers. The farm features four hoop houses for extended-season growing and a solar tower, as well as facilities for bee-keeping, rainwater retention, large-scale composting, farm tours and an annual harvest festival. The farm also maintains a children's area with a small playscape and a clay pizza oven. Community building is an important part of the farm's mission.

In addition to bringing crops to local farmers’ markets, they educate youth about healthy eating and exercise through their Food Warriors Development Program, and is currently breaking ground this summer with the Detroit’s city Food Coop. Their parent organization, The Detroit black food security network, helped to establish Detroit Food Policy Council, a group committed to establishing and maintaining a localized food system and ensuring food security in the city.

As I will detail below, the data collection and design process eventually evolved into Shop Detroit Farms. This collaborative network of Detroit growers and producers is aimed to provide

food that is environmentally and socially just. But it is also one that is conscious of the ways that generic, universal forms of social justice must be accompanied by processes and practices that recognize how certain populations will require a more in-depth understanding than what has been learned through the academic lens. The organizations represented by Shop Detroit Farms are proud to offer nutritious options for their local community. The farms' job is raising food, but their aspirations are *to uplift and celebrate Black leadership, Black self-determination, and Black joy.*

## **B. From two farms to many: Shop Detroit Farms**

In May 2020, I began working with two urban farms in Detroit, MI as an urban agriculture internship offered through the University of Michigan Sustainable Food Systems Initiative in collaboration with the UM Campus Farm. The goal of the internship was to work five days between three farms: D-Town Urban farm, Oakland Avenue Urban farms, and the University of Michigan Campus farm where I worked as the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Manager. Due to the nature of COVID and its effects upon food production for growers during the summer, the nature of the internship changed dramatically. I was now the intern that would explore and implement an online ordering system as a partnership between D-Town and Oakland Avenue Farm. Both farms operate within a cooperative structure and are close siblings in their fight for food access within the Detroit Community.

In June of 2020, I began conducting a feasibility study of existing Direct Marketing systems using the National Young Farmers Association guide as a starting point. The goal of the feasibility study was to find the best system for each of the two farms. In July, the feasibility study concluded.

My findings from the feasibility study revealed several potential challenges: many of the sites required credit cards; did not accept EBT (electronic benefits transfer) or SNAP (supplemental nutrition assistance program) common supplemental food funding for low-income communities, were not designed for people with disabilities; assumed laptop or tablet rather than smartphone access; and did not put any emphasis on purchasing from local sources or for healthy diets. This was echoed by other researchers; for example Dillahunt et al. (2019) note that current online shopping technology is designed for the "typically highly educated, affluent, and technical adept" person. I shared with my community partners that many of the current online ordering systems may not fit the needs of the community we are serving. While true based on the finds from my feasibility study, it doesn't have to be this way. In reality they are created based upon able bodied individuals; those who can complete certain tasks within a certain time frame. They are only usable for those who can afford the benefits of having a credit card, a computer or tablet with internet connectivity, and the ability to use them.

As I began to work directly with the farms and organizations, it became clear that the online ordering systems that I had researched were not adequate to provide the communal connections that these Black urban farmers utilize within their farm practices, things such as

gardening education, recipe/seed sharing, sharing ideas on how to garden, or even if you would like to order as a guest and not wanting to register within the system which brings eaters into a transactional loop of a consumer. Black farming is a spiritual connection that helps Black and brown people have deeper connections to the earth and the universe. My feasibility research uncovered severe equity and access questions. I wanted to find answers too. The process of gathering data on their needs, and developing an online solution, was at the center of my job description as an intern. *At the same time, as a design researcher I want to use this opportunity to raise questions about the relations of race, power, economy and food production, and to see if this endeavor could address these longer-term issues of extraction and alienation of value.* I also wanted to explore design methodologies that I wouldn't normally be exposed to within an academic setting.

COVID 19 has impacted agriculture practices and the way both farms connect with their consumer demands for safe food delivery. The creation of an online marketplace allows for reimagining how the market and delivery of food safely to the community. It is to help support Detroit farmers who are rooted in racial justice, community self-determination and sustainable, regenerative practices.

Small scale regenerative farming is the wave of the future. The current corporate-owned industrial farming system is dangerous to the environment, exploits workers, compromises human health and creates inequities. So through this partnership they will continue to build upon their existing relationships (Oakland Avenue Farm and D-Town Farm) have developed over the years through mutually supportive mechanisms that support our communities using online purchasing that will help build the community food chain.

### **C. Online Grocery Delivery: Lansing MI**

In fall of 2020 I was approached to help create an online grocery delivery pilot for senior communities by a local Lansing nonprofit organization called North West Initiative (NWI) that works to strengthen the city's area bounded by the Grand River on the north, east, and south sides.

The pilot project was created to address the problem of how low income people living in Lansing's urban core have experienced serious barriers to food access for the past 30 years, but it was greatly amplified during the COVID 19 pandemic, especially senior citizens who utilize the EBT (Bridge) card to purchase their groceries. The only stores in the Lansing area who mid-way through the pandemic began accepting online grocery ordering for those with an EBT card were major grocery outlets (Walmart (W. Saginaw & I-96) and Kroger stores), but they did not provide delivery of the groceries at that time. Each of these stores are 5-7 miles from the center of downtown Lansing which makes it very difficult for our most vulnerable populations to access food during the pandemic. And, the Capital Area Transportation Authority also shut down which left people without the only less expensive public transportation option. Since the summer of 2019, NWI has been surveying low income residents to get their input on food access barriers, and the data collected has been overwhelming with responses. I heard stories

about how most seniors were too afraid to go to the store or even to free food distribution program sites since the pandemic started.

In the fall I started gathering data on existing grocery shopping and delivery services (GSDS), such as Shipt, Instacart, and Go-Go Grandparents to find out their rates and how their programs operated, as well as sharing information about this unique population of EBT users. But Shipt and Instacart were not interested and Go-Go Grandparents charged a very high fee for their service. Their responses were not surprising: they had been inundated just trying to fulfill the orders of the thousands of people who had credit cards and who were placing online orders during the height of the pandemic. The NWI goal would be to pilot a grocery shopping and delivery service for low income seniors and determine if it can transform into a viable and affordable alternative to ensuring that our most vulnerable populations can also equally participate with the online grocery shopping and delivery service platforms during the pandemic and beyond. They were seeking food equity and food justice for all the low income people who live in the six identified “food apartheid” neighborhoods in Lansing, MI.

## **5. Summary of data sets and methods**

The methods for gathering data included online surveys, in-person interviews, rapid prototyping, a wall board, and a focus group. These were conducted separately for the two case studies, as detailed below.

### **A. Data gathering for agricultural production in Detroit**

Both farms (D-town and Oakland Ave Urban Farm) partnered with us to facilitate the following data collection:

- Document collaborations: these were bi-weekly meetings in which I facilitated ideation, structure and crafting of two documents
  - Sustainable agreements
  - Partnership documentation
- Process mapping: inventory of systems to map production and labor process, customer service, infrastructure management, and other fundamentals
- Participant observation: with producers/customers I walked through the process of ordering in the system and picking up at both farms.
- Rapid prototyping: using rapid iterative testing and evaluations (RITE) an initial Graphical User Interface (GUI) for the online shopping system was created, and users provided feedback that allowed for a gradual evolution towards greater utility, capability and satisfaction.
- Survey: a survey was sent to 265 prospective users from the online system created by D-town farm; 60 responded (appendix B).
- Focus group: yet to be conducted, this will allow remote moderated research (remotely observing users completing tasks on their own devices in context).

### **B. Data gathering for Northwest Initiative**

In Fall 2020, I began working with Northwest Initiative to begin the design of a grocery delivery pilot. Timeline description

- Positionality wheel: this was a workshop based on (Noel and Paiva, 2021) in which participants share the aspects of their identities (ethnicity, gender, language, labor etc.) they feel might be relevant for others to know.
- Table of collaboration: using Creative Reaction Lab (Creative Reaction Lab, 2018), I developed a table of stakeholders and potential outside contributors
- Initial Surveys: In appendix C I show the survey I developed to determine user needs and experiences around food consumption on and off line. The respondents were selected by using locations along a Lansing MI mobile food truck route. Since the food truck is known for accepting SNAP and EBT payments, this allowed us to focus on low-income and Black community members. 18 respondents from 3 apartment buildings spread across the Lansing mobile food truck route filled out paper-based forms. In addition, a similar set of questions were mounted on poster boards in one building lobby; an additional 26 respondents filled out these forms. Of the 44 total respondents, the demographics were as follows: 60% were white and 40% minorities, there were more women coming to the market (80%) than men. The average income is below \$25,000 and are dedicated EBT users.
- Food Chats, In appendix D following the initial surveys, I asked followup questions by phone. These yielded “food stories” in which respondents offered more richly detailed information about the challenges, fears, and hopes of their dietary worlds.
- Experience Prototype: Based on the initial surveys and food chats, I found that many participants were nostalgic about in-person shopping; this was especially important for elderly participants. The experience prototype was essentially a role-playing interaction which tested 3 touch points in a larger process (intake, ordering, delivery). Each respondent looked at an existing online store (Kroger or Meijers), and sent a screenshot of their selection (\$30 participation stipend, plus free groceries). The study, carried out over 3 weeks, yielded 8 participants (15 orders total), and revealed both user needs and failures of current online experiences (expensive or unwanted substitutions, etc.).

## 6. Data analysis

One of the most important goals was to reveal the ways in which unalienated value generation exists, and is still circulated, despite the context of extraction, exploitation and colonial legacies. The data revealed the following forms of unalienated value and its circulation from current literature as well as from external analysis of my findings.

Value form	Example
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Heritage recipes	<p>An example recipe that is used in the community is <i>Roasted Squash Salad with Fonio and Warm Vinaigrette</i>.</p> <p>Squash is a traditional plant across many Indigenous cultures. The African calabash is a squash, used in food as well as instruments and ladles. "Follow the drinking gourd" is a Black song advising plantation escapees to follow the big dipper which points to the North (Detroit was codenamed "Midnight," because it was one of the last "stops" on the Railroad before attaining freedom in Canada.). This recipe is also highlighted due to its infusion with an african "super grain" called Fonio. While apples are not Indigenous, vinegar is a staple in Southern Black soul food. And it's delicious.</p>
Cooking	<p>Cooking goes beyond recipes: for example the broth from one dish can be used in another. Sharing kitchens, techniques, utensils and so on are all examples of how this unalienated value form circulates.</p>
Sharing	<p>Sharing between farms is commonplace. For example, seeds are shared; finances; and so on. Customers are also shared: if one farm lacks a product, and the other has it, they will take pains to redirect the customer.</p>
Urban farming and growing traditions	<p>There are a variety of farming practices being utilized within the urban agriculture scene and an example is the no-till technique, which was created by George Washington Carver. At both farms, they are using the silage tarps as a form of method to stop the germination of weed seeds. It is used to block off light and keep the environment warm and moist.</p>
Sense of community	<p>The following are examples of how community shaped and formed within the farming sites, where the emphasis is on persevering our ancestral memory:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Harvest festivals</li> <li>2. Opening ceremonies</li> <li>3. Language and artifacts that reflect African culture</li> </ol> <p>During harvest festivals they focus on celebrating the harvest season and fellowship which makes our communities abundant. These are two day events based on live music, learnshops, vendors, children's activities, farmers market and farm tours.</p> <p>Opening ceremonies acknowledging the Anishinaabe land that is farmed are increasingly common, and speak to the need for inclusive forms of emancipation (see section 8c).</p>
Making do	<p>DIY construction is a common phenomenon among urban farmers. Examples include harvesting honey from bee hives; constructing solar</p>



	panels; making hoop houses, and so on.
Language and conceptualization	Language usage is of extreme importance between both field sites. For example, during COVID social distancing advisories are disseminated on the internet, public signage, and restrictions applied throughout the country. But at my field sites they use the phrase, “physical distancing through the act of social solidarity” to allow us as a people to remember our deep social connection, and the need to sustain that value as we seek new ways to commune while sheltering in place.

Table 1: Unalienated value from urban farming communities

Also evident from the data was forms of value extraction. For consumers these included:

<b>Value Form</b>	<b>Example</b>
Seduction of unhealthy foods	Due to both field sites being in urban areas, access to grocery stores require a 5-10 mile commute for most families in the communities that they serve. And the local convenience stores are a poor substitute: they sell unhealthy, seductive foods. At every checkout there are sweets, carbonated beverages, and ultra processed foods that offer brief moments of pleasure, but for the price of health and well being.
Seduction of convenience	The very nature of food apartheid in urban areas is gravitational pull of convenience. If you work a grueling job for low pay, stopping for groceries (a long trip) and cooking food is perhaps not even feasible.
Healthy food apartheid	Prices of healthy food become too expensive to urban communities. Many of the informants reported shopping in the suburbs to buy foods due to the lack of access to affordable fresh food in their own communities. Economically this means money is drained from poor neighborhoods, and delivered to wealthy ones.
Low-income jobs	Due to extreme levels of white flight to the suburbs as high paying jobs are left with it, many urban areas are subjected to low wage jobs. These low wages do not provide a sustainable income for families.
Corporate grocery stores	Corporate grocery stores have the tendency to mark up their prices in urban areas. An example: Capital City Market, in Lansing Michigan, a subsidiary of Meijers. Informants complained that the fresh foods sold there are at higher prices than the suburbs. One tenant of the Riverfront apartments described the market using the following phrase, “if it’s white then it’s right. This store isn’t for my people.”
Fast food	Fast food restaurants are the main attraction in urban areas. It is promoted as a convenience. Urban youth report using McDonalds internet to do homework; so the unhealthy nature of these corporate

	foods are driven by the lack of many services, not just grocery stores.
Corporate farm production methods	Large scale agriculture is responsible for “9.3% of total U.S. greenhouse gas (GHGs) emissions in 2018. Methane (CH <sub>4</sub> ), nitrous oxide (N <sub>2</sub> O), and carbon dioxide (CO <sub>2</sub> ) are the main GHGs emitted by agricultural activities” [EPA sources of Greenhouse Gas Emissions Data]

Table 2: Alienated value from large scale urban food practices.

Finally the data also showed “leaks” of value for urban farmers by online fees:

Value form	Example
Consumer and producers both pay fee for online market (like Amazon)	There are usage and transactional fees that the producer and consumer takes on when using online grocery/produce ordering systems.
Consumer loses fee to online payment system (like paypal)	When consumer signs up there is 3% transactional fee
Bank takes a fee from the producer for allowing credit card transaction	Producers lose money from the fees occurring using a payment gateway and merchant accounts that transfer money to the bank from online transactions.

Table 3: Alienated Value from Online Ordering Systems.

Of course real life is not divided up into discrete categories: consumers are also producers (often the term “prosumer” is used). Some forms of value generation blur or hybridize various categories, as do some forms of extraction.

In the case of the Northwest Initiative project, two commonalities stood out. One was a complete lack of online food delivery usage (100% of 44 respondents), despite the fact that this was the peak of the covid epidemic. Given the frequent comment that they enjoyed the social aspects of physical shopping, one could view this as resistance to an extractive practice that would diminish sociality and conviviality. The other commonality was relatively unhealthy diets, heavy in fats and processed foods. In that case it seems like capitulation to extraction, endangering health in ways that produce profits for large corporations. The kind of online marketing system I envision here would allow these two tendencies to modify each other: making locally produced, healthy farm products more available would improve diets, and if the online system was designed to encourage sociality (in-person meet ups, online chatting, sharing, buyers clubs etc.)



localizations of unalienated value flow can survive. Normally these are in an uneasy relationship. I might have a beloved, healthy, heritage-based recipe cooking in my kitchen, and share such things with a community of like-minded people. But that circular value flow exists *despite* the seductions of fast food, long distance drives, social media distractions, low paying jobs, food apartheid, and dozens of other “leaks” by which value is drained to extractive systems. The goal in figure 1 is to show how we can arrange hybrid forms of production that create a positive feedback loop for unalienated value.

At the intersections of the extractive system and the unalienated value circle lies the GUI. The simplicity of this box is deceptive. It is standing in for a vast sub-network (figure 2) by which our urban farms find customers, customers find marketing and delivery, community members share recipes, conviviality, growing tips, buying collectives, food clubs, and other forms of sociality from collective purchasing to (what I hope will be) a generative form of social media.

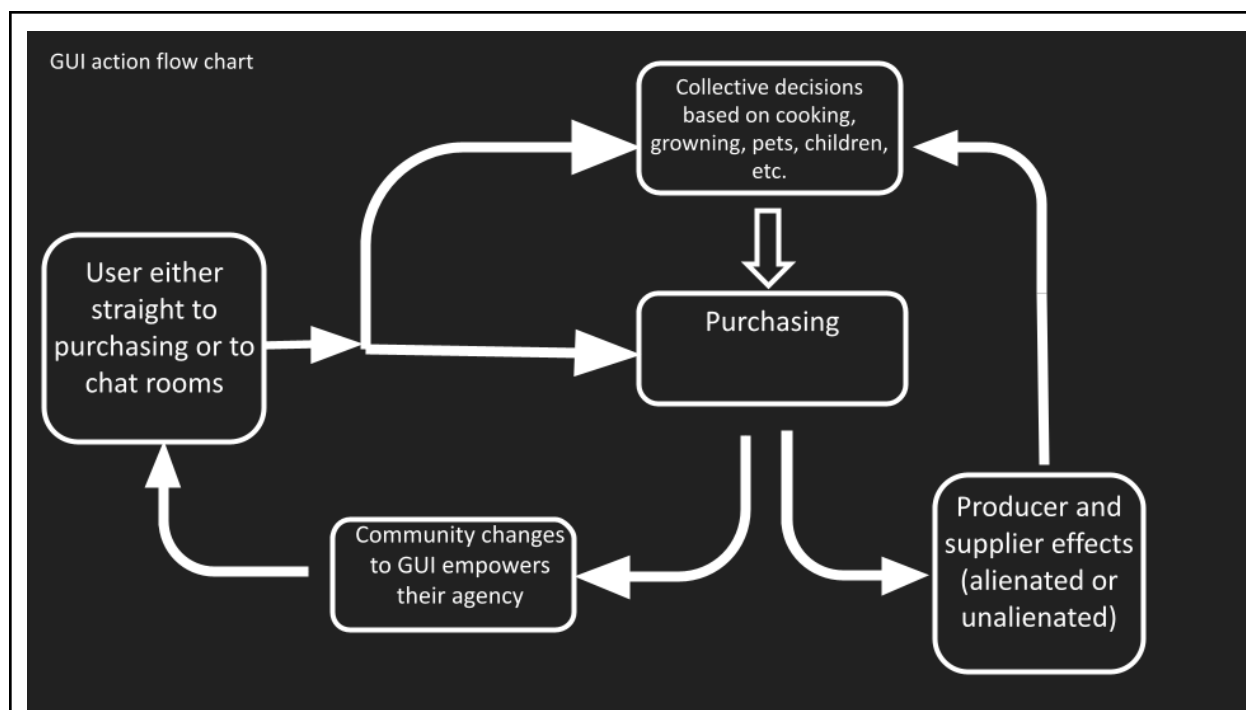
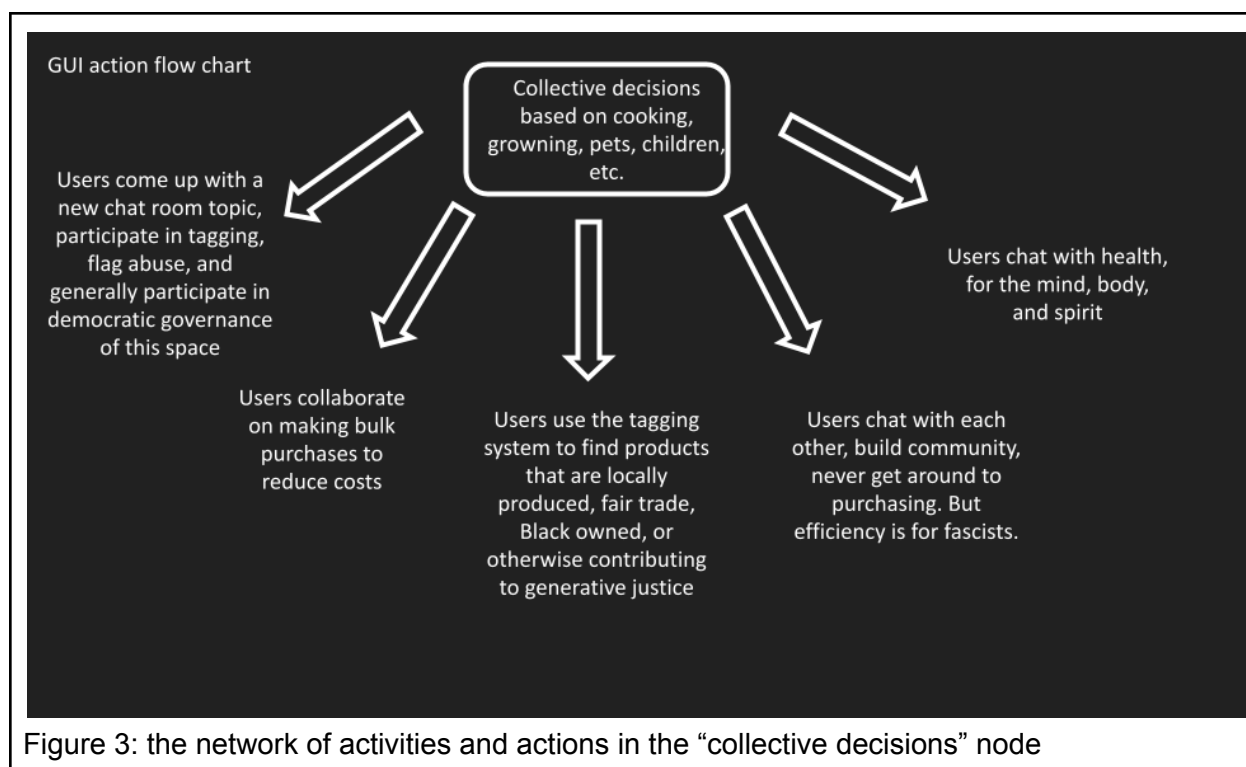


Figure 2: user flow chart as they navigate the online market

In Figure 2, I expand that GUI box to map out what might be the flow of user experience. Users start from an opening screen that provides them with the option of going straight to purchasing, or stopping by one of the chat rooms. This is in keeping with caveat 3, offering options rather than dictating that they must engage in generative forms. Even after entering the chat rooms, it is possible, of course, that users will demand unhealthy choices. Note the box on the lower right: unhealthy foods from corporate sources extract health, creating alienated value. But that is simply the price one pays for maintaining a democratic system. We need to offer choices, not force them upon users, or we risk destroying the human agency that is the foundation of generativity.

We have labeled those chat rooms “collective decisions” but that too is deceptively simple. It is shorthand for a vast array of activities that could include informal chatting, media sharing, recipe sharing, cooking meet-ups, collective buying practices, gaming or other potential features (Figure 3). Some of these collective decisions may affect the design of the system itself. The more user preferences inform the design, the more it will democratize its role in the community. But there will also need to be balance between meeting the needs of consumers, and meeting the needs of producers of these goods. These top level decisions will need to be decided by collective action between different stakeholders: farmers, civic groups like Northwest Initiative, and some representation from the community of users.



## 8. Outcomes

### A. Online market for Detroit urban farms.

Initial testing of the online marketing prototypes for the urban farms began in late summer of 2020. I conducted a rapid prototyping and user testing session with potential community users. I began with a small group of known users, and used snowball sampling to find more. One of the design methods I stressed was “learning from extremes” (Leadbeater and Wong 2010). Learning from extremes deliberately includes demographics from the far ends of the bell curve (youngest and oldest, etc.) to ensure that population averages are not skewing the results such that we fail the most vulnerable populations. This allows a more balanced view of what is

needed (and possible), and minimizes the influence of researcher assumptions and constraints (knowing they will always be present in some sense). In addition to diverse community users, I solicited feedback from a food designer, a teacher, a farm manager, as well as a stocktrader to incorporate different forms of expertise and insight needed before we (urban farms and researchers) launched.

A “wireframe” prototype is shown in Figure 4. I begin with options for shopping, learning, and becoming a vendor to indicate three levels of interaction:

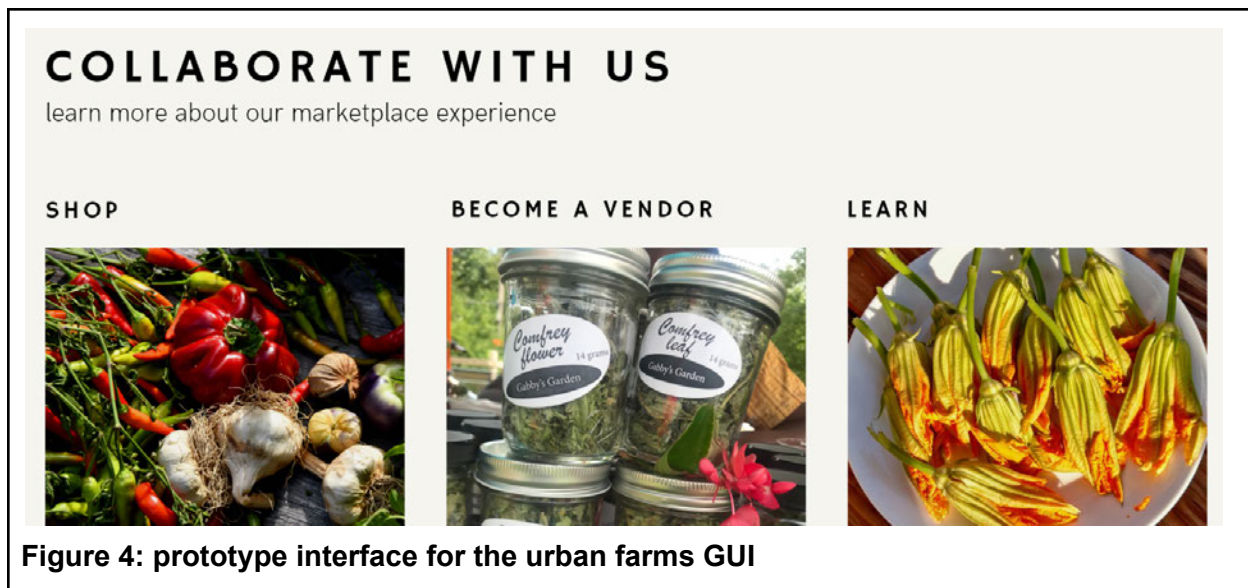
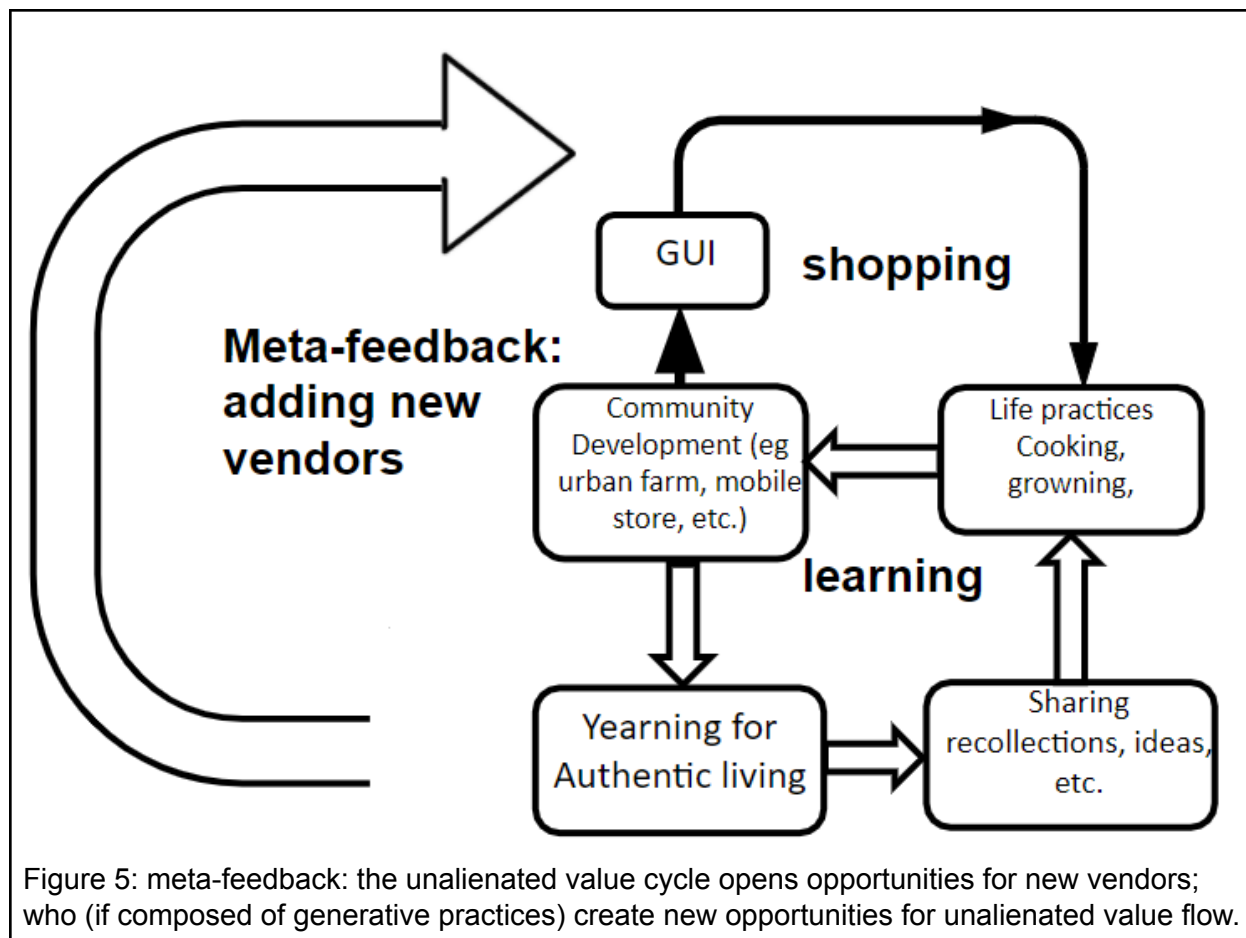


Figure 4: prototype interface for the urban farms GUI

1. **Shopping.** No matter how “generative” the goals, the system has to be financially sustainable in the context of our present capitalist economy.
2. **Learning.** Sharing all the unalienated forms of value serves, at least in theory, two goals. First, there is positive feedback with the generative community (cooking, growing, celebrating, sharing tools and seeds, organizing, planning, etc.). Second, we strive to achieve secondary or meta-feedback between this loop and that of level 1’s ordinary shopping. That is to say, the more we can develop a platform for freely sharing unalienated value, the more opportunities to expand generative activities that can be sustained in the for-profit side of the interface.
3. **Becoming a vendor.** Here is where the previously described metaloop is formally enabled (figure 5). If the system is able to grow and evolve, gradually absorbing more customers, localized sustainable vendors, and learning/sharing/organizing opportunities, a generative economic ecosystem could be enabled. This cannot simply be any vendor: the local McDonalds or Walmart would need to be excluded on the basis of their non-local corporate nature and unsustainable practices. More subtle distinctions would need to be applied to ensure that vendors meet standards for “generativity” as defined by the group.



## B. Online market for Northwest Initiative

A finalized website has yet to be launched for the online market supported by Northwest Initiative. Indeed its very existence is still somewhat controversial within the project management. The mobile food truck is still very much in service, and questions arise as to whether an online market would detract from food truck usage. On the other hand, the food truck does not run all year, and currently of the 44 respondents, zero reported using an online food delivery system. One solution currently under consideration would be free courses training users, perhaps with a free food delivery for first time tryouts.

## C. Designing for inclusive emancipation

The visual symbolism of the Detroit Farms GUI is a kind of embodiment of the intentions toward a design that is both emancipatory, in the sense of responding to histories of colonialism and oppression, and simultaneously inclusive, opening its doors to all willing to participate in a path towards just and sustainable futures. For example, I have forefronted images of Black farm

owners and consumers, as well as their favorite products, but avoided the use of Pan African colors and symbols that one sees on individual farm websites in Detroit. This strategy is quite old. Frederick Douglass, for example, rejected the “back to Africa” movement of his time, and promoted the idea that nations accomplish the most when they promote hybridity and cross-cultural collaboration (Eglash 2019).

### **9. Conclusion: evolutionary paths to just and sustainable futures**

There is an obvious evolutionary path for these kinds of endeavors. One can imagine their expansion to entire community economic networks, perhaps empowered by blockchain or other means of securing both privacy of transactions and public sharing of opportunity (Eglash et al 2019). But such efforts must be guided by equity and access from the beginning. Otherwise a more inclusive design will fail to evolve; it will be designing for the core and not taking into account the many contexts of those who operate within the margins of society. Inclusion must consider those who are disabled, who have cultural values and economic class perspectives different from those who are designing, who are in touch with the social and ecological values that give the world its vibrancy. Asking, collaborating, and co-investigating in ways that are fundamentally based upon equity and access from the beginning is the only way that emergence of a new world can be formed through design.

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## Appendix A: IRB

### **IRB Protocol**

Evaluating Online Food Systems Technologies for racial and social Inclusion

#### **Researcher:**

- **Principal Investigator:** Keesa V. Johnson (Muhammad), MDes Integrative Design Candidate Penny W. Stamps School of Art and Design, University of Michigan Ann Arbor
- **Faculty Advisor :** Ron Eglash, Professor in the School of Information Systems and Penny W. Stamps School of Art and Design, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

#### **Hypothesis:**

Data on user needs and experiences with online food consumption and services will help create a more accessible and equitable online ordering system.

#### **Background & Objectives:**

During summer 2020 I was employed as a research intern at the University of Michigan Sustainable Food Initiative to help develop an online food market for two urban farms in Detroit. I was also in conversation with a group in Lansing that has a similar goal. It became apparent that more information regarding user needs (types of food, payment methods, etc.) and supplier services (linking purchasing to inventory, etc.) would improve our ability to design and deploy these proposed online markets. My study involves the following organizations:

- D Town Farm - <https://www.dbcfsn.org/educational-youth-programs>
- Oakland Avenue Farm - <http://www.oaklandurbanfarm.org/>
- NorthWest Initiative of Lansing - <http://nwlansing.org/>

#### **Specific AIMS:**

The aim of this study is to gather data on the experience of the users and producers using online food ordering systems, and to utilize this data to create design recommendations for a more accessible and equitable system that promotes an inclusive environment while shopping online.

#### **Methodology:**

The study will use two methods. First, a survey that will allow me to amass aggregate data on a series of standardized questions. Second, I will conduct a focus group lasting 30 minutes to one hour using a semi structured interview guide.

## Data Collection Methods:

### Phase I: Perspectives from NorthWest Initiative Food Club 1.0

- **Setting:** online virtual sessions, participants are located in Lansing MI
- **Eligibility:** Participants must be 18 yrs or older and participate in the NWI Mobile Food Market Program
- **Sampling and Recruitment:** I will use a purposive, convenience -based sampling strategy. Sampling will be facilitated via the organization communications avenues (they have requested my help in gaining more information; the surveys, interviews, and focus groups are as much for their benefit as it is for my own). We will recruit participants until data saturation is reached, which will be identified based on the saturation of themes.
- **Instruments:** a semi structured survey and interview guide for focus groups.
- **Data collection:** I will conduct in-depth interviews lasting 30 minutes to one hour using a semi-structured interview guide. Prior to interviewing, informed consent will be obtained from all participants. Participants will not be required to provide a written signature documenting the informed consent, as the participant's signature would otherwise be the only record linking the participant to the study. Focus groups may also be conducted, which will follow the same study procedure.

### Phase II: Perspectives from D-Town Farm and Oakland Avenue Online Marketplace

- **Setting:** online, participants are located in Detroit MI
- **Eligibility:** Participants must be 18 yrs or older and participate in the D-town and Oakland online marketplace
- **Sampling and Recruitment:** I will use a purposive, convenience -based sampling strategy. Sampling will be facilitated via the organization communications avenues (they have requested my help in gaining more information; the surveys, interviews, and focus groups are as much for their benefit as it is for my own). We will recruit participants until data saturation is reached, which will be identified based on the saturation of themes.
- **Instruments:** a semi structured survey and interview guide for focus groups.
- **Data collection:** I will conduct in-depth interviews lasting 30 minutes to one hour using a semi-structured interview guide. Prior to interviewing, informed consent will be obtained from all participants. Participants will not be required to provide a written signature documenting the informed consent, as the participant's signature would otherwise be the only record linking the participant to the study. Focus groups may also be conducted, which will follow the same study procedure.

## Data Management & Analysis

Upon completion of the interviews and focus groups, audio/video recordings will be analyzed for themes by the study team. Survey data will be collected using an interactive survey tool, typeform. UM IT staff have already evaluated 12/3/2020 for security and found it to be acceptable for use given the institution's standards. Audio/video recordings may be recorded

using online methods such as umich zoom or audio using personal recording devices. Files must be deleted from personal devices and uploaded to a secure umich drive, such as MBox, within 24 hours of the interview. Notes will also be recorded during both interviews and focus groups.

Themes and pertinent quotes will be identified and transcribed for use in affinity mapping. Any and all identifying information will be omitted from the transcription. Audio/video files will be kept for 1 year after the study end date for reference purposes, after which the files will be destroyed. All files will be kept in a secure umich drive, such as MBox, with only study team members having access to the files.

**Effects on Subjects:** Participation in the survey will take approximately 30mins minutes.

**Measures to Minimize Risk:** No identifying information will be collected in the survey other than email addresses to move on to the focus group. All information will be deleted from the survey tool within two weeks of collecting and therefore not published in the survey results or papers and presentations contributed to scholarly venues unless given permission for the dissemination of research findings.

The investigator will do everything possible to maintain the anonymity of the subjects and the confidentiality of their identity. Digitized versions of the observations and survey responses will be kept in a password-protected Google account of the primary investigator. Survey data will be kept for a period of 5 years.

**Likelihood of Harm:** No adverse effects are anticipated as no identifiers will be collected in the survey, and no questions are asked regarding sensitive subjects.

**Documentation of Risks:** N/A

**Benefits to Participants:** The participants will receive no direct benefits by participating in the survey. This overall study is to help gauge the current usage. If they choose to participate, they will have the satisfaction of knowing that they contributed to a study that aims to build upon an equitable and inclusive environment.

**Qualifications of Researcher:** Keesa V. Johnson is a current Master of Integrative Design Candidate for the Penny Stamps School of Art and Design. She is currently studying Equity and Access in Food Systems while obtaining a professional certificate in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion through the Rackham Graduate School. Keesa has done co-PI work on various studies including MDining Exploration study, Measuring Equity and Access at the UM Campus farm, and human interactions within Serious Gaming and MOOC development at Michigan State University. She has also served as the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion lead for the University of Michigan Center for Academic Innovations.

## Appendix B:

### D-Town and Oakland Avenue Urban Farm Online marketplace (DOAUF) Customer Insight Survey



This online survey is intended for customers of the D-Town and Oakland Avenue Urban Farm online marketplace. I am a University of Michigan design researcher assisting in the data collection in partnership with DOAUF. This survey is an important opportunity to share your needs as a purchasing community member of our online site. We would like to also know about the strengths and weaknesses of the current site we are using from your insights.

It should take no more than 10-12 minutes to complete, and all answers are confidential and anonymous unless you would like to participate in our focus group discussion. We thank you in advance for participating in this important survey.

#### Market and Site

1. Are you a registered member of the D-town and Oakland Avenue Online Marketplace?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
    - i. if no why not?
  - c. No, I would like to register, please send me information.
    - i. If not I would like to register end after questions 2.
2. How did you first hear about the D-town and Oakland Avenue Online Marketplace?
  - a. Article
  - b. Instagram
  - c. Facebook
  - d. Recommendation from a friend
  - e. Oakland Avenue social media
  - f. D-Town Social Media
  - g. Taste the local difference
  - h. Search Engine
  - i. Other \_\_\_\_\_
3. What type of produce or value added product did you purchase?
4. Did you purchase anything from the online site or at the inperson markets? (multiple selection)
  - a. D-Town and Oakland Avenue Online Marketplace
  - b. D-Town Farm market stand (in-person)
  - c. Oakland Avenue Urban Farm Farmer's Market (in-person)
5. What vegetable or value added item would you like to see us grow next year and have available on the site?

6. How would you rate our online store, based on:
  - a. Design of the site: 1-5
  - b. The range of products: 1-5
  - c. Finding what you needed: 1-5
  - d. Product descriptions: 1-5
7. Could you tell us from where you placed your online order?
  - a. Computer
  - b. Smartphone
  - c. Laptop/desk
  - d. Email
  - e. Phone call
8. Please enter your current zip code: (Format is 5 - 9 digits long)
9. What type of transportation do you use?
  - a. Car
  - b. Bus
  - c. Friends car
10. Thanks, and would you recommend us to your friends?
  - a. 1-5 from not at all, hmm maybe, 100%
11. Any Suggestions for us?
12. Finally would you be interested in participating in a small focus group to give feedback on the redesign of the site? You will receive a \$30 gift card for your participation. Share your email.





## Appendix C:

NorthWest Initiative (NWI)  
Grocery Delivery Pilot: 1-1 Interview Guide

Welcome and thank you for being here today. The purpose of this gathering is to get your feedback about how we can best design an online grocery delivery pilot for your apartment complex. This project is a partnership between D-Town and Oakland Avenue Farm to bring healthy, fresh, sustainable food to our communities within the city of Detroit.

My name is Keesa V. Johnson and I am a University of Michigan Design researcher from the Penny Stamps School of art and design where I am studying equity and Access issues within the Food System. I am currently partnering with Northwest Initiative on the design research for this project and I will also be your moderator.. I will guide the conversation by asking questions that each of you can respond to. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. Just be honest. If you wish, you can also respond to each other's comments, like you would in an ordinary conversation. It is my job to make sure that everyone here gets to participate and that we stay on track.

Before we get started, I want to let you know two things. First, you do not have to answer any questions that you do not feel comfortable with. This focus group today is anonymous and confidential. "Anonymous" means that we will not be using your names and you will not be identified as an individual in our report of this project. "Confidential" means that what we say in this room should not be repeated outside of this room. Second, I will be compiling all the information we learn today into a final report. That report will ensure that no one is named, but that your ideas and preferences get passed on to the people designing the system, including the NorthWest Initiative as well as with the Lansing Food Policy Council.

So I ask each of you to respect each other's privacy and share only valuable wisdom that you take from each session. As you can see, we will be recording this focus group. The recording will only be used to make sure our notes are correct and will not be heard by anyone outside of this project.

Are you ready to proceed? Let's start off with a call and response to give our session a place. When I say, "FREE THE LAND" you say "FREE THE PEOPLE". We will say it 3 times together. Now let's begin with introductions.

Please share with us your name, favorite food and why?

Getting to know one another

1. How have you been able to shop for groceries during the pandemic?
2. What food or non-food items have been most difficult for you to get/purchase/find/buy during the pandemic?
3. Has the pandemic interfered with your income causing you to not afford groceries?

### Household Demographics

4. How many people live in your household?
5. What senior services, if any, do you use within the city to help?

### Transportation

6. Do you have access to transportation?
7. Can you share how you use transportation with us?
8. How has the NWI mobile market benefited you and your eating habits?

### Technology

9. How often do you use your phone?
10. What do you do to create a healing space for yourself during these times?
11. Are you active on social media? If so, would you be interested in following our facebook page for updates on what we are doing in the community?
12. What about technology stops you from shopping online?

### Shopping Habits

13. Do you get your own groceries or does a family member help with this?
14. Are you able to get groceries delivered to your home?

### Connection To Food

15. Do you remember the first time you ever went to a grocery store? Can you share that memory?
16. What does food mean to you?
17. Do you like to go grocery shopping?
18. How often do you cook meals for yourself?
19. How important is sustainability to you?
20. What is your favorite meal/dish to cook?
21. Do you use recipes a lot?
22. What is your favorite recipe you would like to share with others?

### Pilot Questions

23. Would you feel comfortable letting someone else select your produce if you could tell them how you prefer it? For example, green bananas, hard avocados, etc.
24. If there is a pilot, how often do you think you would order groceries?
25. If we delivered groceries, would you prefer to meet the delivery person at the front door or have them delivered to your apartment?
26. From your opinion, what is wrong with the way you are currently accessing food?
27. Where do you want to go?
28. How do we get there?

Thank you so much for participating in the Food Chat immersion so that we can create a grocery delivery service that meets your needs. It has been so nice talking with you. Also, if you have friends or family who would like to talk to us or participate in the program, please have them call us at **517-649-6237**. Thank you again!



## Appendix D:

### NorthWest Initiative (NWI) Grocery Delivery Pilot Food Chat Questions

Date:

Surveyor:

Food chat conducted by: phone / video

#### Opening:

My name is Keesa V. Johnson and I am a University of Michigan Design researcher from the Penny Stamps School of Art and Design where I work on equity and Access issues within the Food System. You left your name and number for us to contact you about participating in a Food Chat regarding our Grocery Delivery Pilot Program. We are trying to determine if there is a need for an online grocery delivery service and what those needs are. Is this a good time to chat?

It should take no more than 20 minutes to complete, and all answers are confidential and anonymous unless you would like to participate in our focus group discussion. We thank you in advance for participating in this important survey.

If you feel uncomfortable answering any of the questions below you are free to say I have no answer.

#### Connection:

Are you familiar with the NorthWest Initiative?

If not, It is a non-profit organization working to strengthen and sustain healthy communities in northwest and downtown neighborhoods in Lansing and Lansing Township.

#### Ice-breaker:

How are you feeling during this time with the pandemic?

or

During the pandemic, have you been able to do a lot more home cooking/baking?

Or

What have you been doing to stay connected with friends and family?

#### Questions:

1. Has the pandemic changed how you get your groceries?
  - a. Yes.
    - i. How did you get them before the pandemic?
    - ii. How have you been getting your groceries during the pandemic?
  - b. No.
    - i. How do you get your groceries?
  - c. If you go yourself, how do you get there?

- d. If friends or family help you, do you go with them or do they deliver the groceries to your home?
2. How often do you get groceries? (daily / weekly / bi-weekly / monthly)  
Comments/Notes:
    - a. Has this changed because of the pandemic?
  3. What grocery store do you currently buy your groceries from?
  4. What are your most common food or beverage purchases each week? (top 5 things?)
  5. What non-food items do you regularly purchase? (for example, toilet paper, medications)
  6. Are there any food or non-food items that have been difficult for you to find during the pandemic? If so, what?
  7. How much do you usually spend on groceries each week? (\$ \_\_\_\_\_ )

Comments/Notes:

- a. Has that amount changed at all because of the pandemic?
- b. What form of payment do you use? (cash / credit / debit / EBT)
- c. Do you normally use coupons? Yes / No

### Technology:

- d. Do you have access to the internet? Yes / No
- e. Do you have an email address? Yes / No

Comments/Notes:

- f. Do you have a computer or access to a computer?
  - g. Do you have a smartphone? (You may have to explain.)
8. Have you ever shopped online before?
    - a. Yes
      - i. If yes, what things do you buy online?
    - b. No
      - i. If no, why?  
Note: It's OK if you haven't shopped online before or don't have a computer. We're hoping to be able to place the order for you or help you learn how to place online orders if that is what you would prefer.
  9. Have you ever purchased groceries online?
    - a. No
      - i. If no, why?
      - ii. Would you be interested in purchasing online? If yes, Skip to question 12
    - b. Yes

- i. From which grocery store?
- ii. Did you pick it up or have it delivered?
- iii. How much did you pay for pick up or delivery?
- iv. Did you use an EBT card to order your groceries online?
  1. If yes, did you use it for delivery, for pick up, or for both?
  1. If no, what form of payment do you use?  
(cash / debit / credit / senior market fresh coupons)

10. Would you be interested in participating in an online grocery delivery program if we are able to create one?

- a. If no, skip to question 15
- b. If, yes go to question 13

11. How much would you be willing to pay for weekly grocery delivery?

Comments/Notes:

12. If you're interested in this program, would you:

- a. like us to call you if the pilot is started? Yes / No
- b. be interested in volunteering for the program? Yes / No
- c. If yes to A or B, do we have permission to contact you in the future?
  - i. If yes, what is the best method of contact? (email, phone, mail)
    1. Name:
    2. Phone number (verify):
      - a. What time of day is best for us to call you?
    3. Address:
    4. Email Address:

13. Just a few remaining questions.

- a. Are you over the age of 60? Yes / No
- b. How many people are there in your household?
- c. Do you receive SNAP benefits?
- d. Do you receive Meals on Wheels?
- e. Would you be interested in receiving a cookbook that has healthy recipes for one to two people?

14. Do you have questions for me about this pilot program?

**Closing:**

Thank you so much for participating in this Food Chat so that we can create a grocery delivery service that meets your needs. It has been so nice talking with you. Also, if you have friends or family who would like to talk to us or participate in the program, please have them call us at **517-649-6237**. Thank you again!

## Appendix E:

D-Town and Oakland Avenue Urban Farm Online marketplace (DOAUF)

Focus Group Questions



Welcome and thank you for being here today. The purpose of this gathering is to get your feedback about how we can better our customers on the D-town and Oakland Avenue Online Marketplace. This project is a partnership between D-Town and Oakland Avenue Farm to bring healthy, fresh, sustainable food to our communities within the city of Detroit.

My name is Keesa V. Johnson and I am a University of Michigan Design researcher from the Penny Stamps School of art and design where I am studying equity and Access issues within the Food System. I am working in partnership with D-Town Farm and Oakland Avenue. I will be your moderator for today's discussion. I will guide the conversation by asking questions that each of you can respond to. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. Just be honest. If you wish, you can also respond to each other's comments, like you would in an ordinary conversation. It is my job to make sure that everyone here gets to participate and that we stay on track.

Before we get started, I want to let you know two things. First, you do not have to answer any questions that you do not feel comfortable with. This focus group today is anonymous and confidential. "Anonymous" means that we will not be using your names and you will not be identified as an individual in our report of this project. "Confidential" means that what we say in this room should not be repeated outside of this room. Second, I will be compiling all the information we learn today into a final report. That report will ensure that no one is named, but that your ideas and preferences get passed on to myself, D-Town Farm, Detroit Black Food Security Network, Oakland Avenue Urban Farm, and -----.

Obviously, I cannot control what you do when you leave, but I ask each of you to respect each other's privacy and share only valuable wisdom that you take from each session. As you can see, we will be recording this focus group. The recording will only be used to make sure our notes are correct and will not be heard by anyone outside of this project.

Are you ready to proceed? Let's start off with a call and response to give our session a place. When I say, "Food is " you say "the first economy". We will say it 3 times together.

Now Let's begin with introductions.

Please share with us your name, favorite food and why?

How are you feeling during this time with the pandemic?

During the pandemic, have you been able to do a lot more home cooking/baking? Or

What have you been doing to stay connected with friends and family?

#### Demographics Questions

1. Are you a youth or an elder?
2. What part of Detroit do you live in?
  - a. West
  - b. East
  - c. North
  - d. Downtown
  - e. Up River
  - f. Metro Detroit
3. How do you choose to eat?
  - a. Vegetarian
  - b. Vegan
  - c. Pescatarian
  - d. Mostly meats and vegetables
  - e. Some meats and vegetables
  - f. Flexitarian
  - g. Vegan before 6pm.
4. What is your gender identity? (Mark all that apply)
  - a. I identify as: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Race/Ethnicity (Mark all that apply)
  - a. I identify as: \_\_\_\_\_
6. How do you feel when asked about race and gender on surveys?
7. Do you believe race has a lot to do with food preferences or food choices?

#### Definitions

8. What is Food sovereignty?
9. What is Food Justice?
10. What is Food apartheid?

#### Produce

11. How important is it for you to see your groceries before you buy them?
  - a. This is an opinion scale, great for getting quantitative data
  - b. 1-10 - from not important to very important
12. Do you enjoy buying food online or buying food in person?
13. What do you receive or give from both experiences?
14. What is missing from them?

#### Culture stories

15. What is your favorite fruit and vegetable?
16. Do you enjoy cooking?
17. Do you garden or grow plants?
18. What is the most healthy dish that you cook?
19. Are you familiar with ancestral foods?
20. What is your first memory of going to the grocery store?

21. How often do you buy groceries?

Access

22. Do you have a visible or invisible disability that substantially affects day to day activities?

- Yes, visible
- Yes, non-visible disability
- No
- Prefer not to answer
- Do you

Website

23. When you think about the D-Town and Oakland Avenue online marketplace what comes to mind?

24. Think back to when you first heard about the THINK TANK. What was your first impression?

25. What do you like most about purchasing from the site?

26. How did you feel when you registered for the site?

27. What were you looking for?

28. Did you get what you were looking for?

29. What led you to visit our website?

30. Did you like the design?

31. What parts of the design you don't like?

32. What are some suggestions?

33. What type of information would you like to receive from the online marketplace?

- a. Recipes
- b. Ancestral food studies
- c. Educational opportunities
- d. Tips on how to shelter in place during the pandemic
- e. Sales on produce
- f. Online Marketplace information

Closing: Thank you so much for participating in this focus group to learn about your produce needs and online shopping needs. It has been so nice talking with you. Also, if you have friends or family who would like to talk to us or participate in the program, please have them call us at 517-649-6237. Thank you again!

I see our time is up. Thank you so much for sharing this useful information with us. We will keep you abreast of the changes through our marketplace email listserv.



## Appendix F: Language Setting

1. Food Justice definition - is a process whereby communities most impacted and exploited by our current corporate controlled, extractive agricultural system shift power to re-shp, re-define and provide indgenous, community based solutions to accessing and controlling food (including the means to produce food) that is humanizing, fair, healthy, accessible, racially equitable, environmentally sound and just - National Black Food Justice Alliance
2. Food apartheid - The systematic destruction of Black self determination to control our food (including land, resource theft and discrimination), a hyper-saturation of destructive foods and predatory marketing, and a blatantly discriminatory corporate controlled food system that results in our communities suffering from some of the highest rates of heart disease and diabetes of all times. Many tend to use the term “food desert,” however food apartheid is a much more accurate representation of the structural racialized inequities perpetuated through our current system.
3. Food colonization - The process of colonization not only deteriorated our bodies, but also our knowledge of food. Children that were forced into boarding schools were fed greasy, salty, sugary foods, none of which had been in the native diet before. Knowledge about medicinal food, agricultural techniques, seed perservations, and blessings that corresponded to planint, growin, and harvesting was deliberately suppressed.
4. Food Sovereignty - entails a shift away from the corporate agricultural system and towards our own governance of our own food systems. It is about our right to healthy food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, with the right to define and ultimately control our own food and agriculture systems. Shifting from an exclusively rights based framework to one of governance puts the needs of those who work and consume at all points of the food chain at the center rather than the demands of corporations and markets. \*Courtesy of the National Black Food & Justice Alliance
5. Generative Justice: The universal right to generate unalienated value and directly participate in its benefits; the rights of value generators to create their own conditions of production; and the rights of communities of value generation to nurture self-sustaining paths for its circulation.
6. Generative Production Networks: as those which maximize unalienated value creation, and maximize its circulation back to producers.
7. Rematriation: refers to reclaiming ancestral ways of life, spirituality, culture, knowledge and resources, instead of the more Patriarchally associated Repatriation.
8. Culturalecology: is a cultural realignment (eg.shift from Individualism and selfishness to collective worth and mutual responsibility).
9. Design Values: Are principles or beliefs that are adopted by a designer to guide their work.
10. Alienated value: Marx’s theory where he contrasted the meaningful work of traditional skilled artisans, taking pleasure in their craft and earning respect from their community, with the dull repetition, low pay and enervating conditions of factory labor under capitalism.

11. Unalienated value: “keepin’ it real” or being authentic it is authentic, beloved, enriching for your sense of self

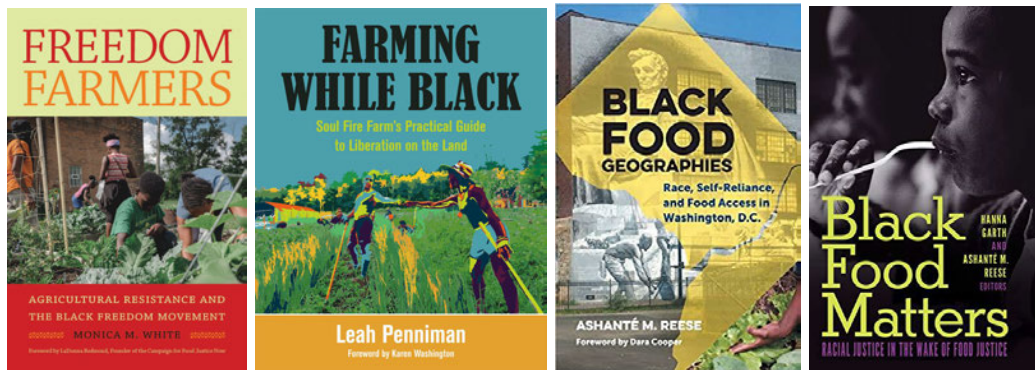
## Appendix G: Exploratory Research Process

My exploratory research began in the Summer of 2021 in the high midst of the Covid 19 pandemic. Exploratory research is defined by user and product studies, intended to forge an empathetic knowledge base, particularly when designers may be working in unfamiliar territory. During this time I was working with D-Town and Oakland Avenue to establish the online marketplace and I was then approached by NorthWest Initiative pertaining to their online grocery delivery pilot project. Before I started along my journey I utilized the [Critical design alphabet](#) created by Dr. Leslie Ann Noels to help define some parameters (language, positionality, and identity) of my project:



The design cards also help to increase critical awareness, identity and inclusivity.

I utilized various secondary research based upon the BlackAcademics which is a group that supports the National black Food Justice Alliance that is composed of Dr. Monica White, Dr. Ashante Reese, Leah Penniman, Dara Cooper, Jessica of the University of Michigan and many more.



Expert interviews:

- National Young Farmers Association
- Various Online Marketplace operators (Ypsilanti, Pittsfield, and Marquette)
- Former Riverfront Apartment store operator
- Executive Director of Community Food Club Store
- Online shopper since 2017
- Dara Cooper - National Black Food Justice Alliance
- Collective wisdom of the group with online grocery and purchasing

Initial feasibility study of Online grocery delivery and Produce delivery systems

Utilized an existing data set from the National Young farmers association and my own personal research with my partner organizations:

Type of System	Year created	Who owns it	Name	Description	Website	Cost	Vendor name	Features	Mobile version	Forms of payments accepted	Does it accept EBT?	Notes
Direct Marketing Software Application	in-commerce and logistics platform	2015	Accelerator/Inc.	Local Line	Local Line is the best way for your food business to keep operating and selling during COVID-19. Use Local Line to set up an online store and offer home delivery to your customers.	Annual, Semi-Annual, and monthly billing options	Local Line	https://www.localline.com/	no	We accept all major credit cards including Visa, MasterCard and American Express. For annual plans we also accept checks and e-transfers.	no	There are two companies under them other than local line... generate and shipping and receive produce from them out of their footprint. They work with a vendor in California that works with Farmers, Food hubs, and Veterans.
Direct Marketing Software Application	vertical commerce solution	2016	Ban2Door Inc.	Ban2Door	Ban2Door emerged from the idea that Farmers should profit more from the products they sell... instead of a middleman taking up profits. We now operate an online 6+ hours a day and prefer self service ordering. In as few clicks as possible we allow you to order. Further, we believe food should be as convenient to buy direct from local Farmers as it is to go to the grocery store or buy from an online grocer. We are passionate about connecting Farmers and their business, including one click access for their customers to purchase anytime across web, social, and mobile.	Monthly or 1/3rd of Yearly billing	Ban2Door	https://www.ban2door.com/	still in development since 2017	can pay online with credit card (Visa, Mastercard, Discover, Seneca Club, and American Express) or ACH (direct bank-to-bank transfer), pay by cash or paper check	no	They are brand focused organization that focuses on brand being experience. Offers integrations with other vendors such as onigiri.
Direct Marketing Software Application	sales and distribution platform	2008	Simon Hartley Founder & CEO	Harpie	Our mission is to connect farmers and artisan food producers with their local community. We support long-term commitments to fresh, sustainable, locally produced food.	3000	https://www.harpie.com/	https://www.harpie.com/	no	We accept all major credit cards including Visa, MasterCard and American Express. For annual plans we also accept checks and e-transfers.	no	Can't recall if prepared to allow New York will require the profits.
Direct Marketing Software Application		2009	Arny McCarroll	Local Food Marketplace	Robust, flexible sales and distribution software for farms, food hubs, and markets.	Price of Sell	FoodMkt	https://www.foodmkt.com/	YES	We accept all major credit cards including Visa, MasterCard and American Express. For annual plans we also accept checks and e-transfers.	no	Solution for markets, CSA, Farms, Food hubs.
Direct Marketing Software Application				Open Food Network	Our open source platform enables new, ethical supply chains. Food producers can sell online, wholesalers can manage buying groups and highly produce through networks of food hubs and shops. Communities can bring together producers to create a virtual farmers market, building a resilient local food economy.	Free	Open Food Network	https://www.openfoodnetwork.com/	no	We accept all major credit cards including Visa, MasterCard and American Express. For annual plans we also accept checks and e-transfers.	no	Requires tax and invoicing

		1000EcoFarm	Barn2Door	Cropopolis	CSA-Aware	EarthFromFarms	Farmers & Web	Farmigo	Food4All	GraceCaret	GrowMy	HarvestHand	Harvie	Local Food Marketplace	Local Line	Local OnIt	MyRealFoods	Open Food Network	Online Farm Markets	WhistleGood
<b>E-commerce storefront</b>	Post individual items for sale in an online shop	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>CSA / subscription management</b>	Offer subscription products ("farm shares") and manage CSA members			✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							
<b>Order forms</b>	Create availability lists to send to customer list and customers can order directly from list		✓		✓								✓	✓	✓					
<b>Multi-farm / Food hub features</b>	Facilitates multiple farms selling through one storefront or availability list				✓	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Process credit card payments</b>	Customer can purchase products online with a credit card	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Offline payment options</b>	Customer can pay offline with cash, check, EBT/SNAP, or other in-person payment		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Accounting tools or integration</b>	Data automatically exported to Quickbooks, or other significant accounting reporting features	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Marketing tools or integration</b>	Email or SMS customers through platform, or customer data integrates with third-party CRM, or other significant marketing features	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Distribution management</b>	Facilitates logistics tasks, such as delivery route planning and packing lists	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

## Online Delivery Options Through Third Party Services




### Shipt

- Annual subscription \$100 or \$15 per month
- Delivery fees are free with purchases over \$35
- Upcharge items vs in-store prices
- Senior pilots for limited time.

Cons

- Limited service area
- On rare occasions, the total cost can add up higher than with other companies

### Fresh Direct

- Offered only in Northeast US. Food comes straight from Fresh Direct.
- Subscription fee is required on top of delivery fees for each order.
- Offers their own coupons and sales for customers and high quality produce

Cons

- Limited service area
- Random website glitches when creating an account
- Unlike some competitors, offers few household products or drugstore items

### Amazon Fresh

- Prime membership required
- Amazon Fresh is additional \$15/month on top of Prime membership
- Delivery is free for orders of \$50 or more
- Same-day and next-day delivery options

Cons


- Limited delivery range
- Not cost-effective for those who do not order extensively from Amazon
- Higher delivery fee than competitors


### Instacart

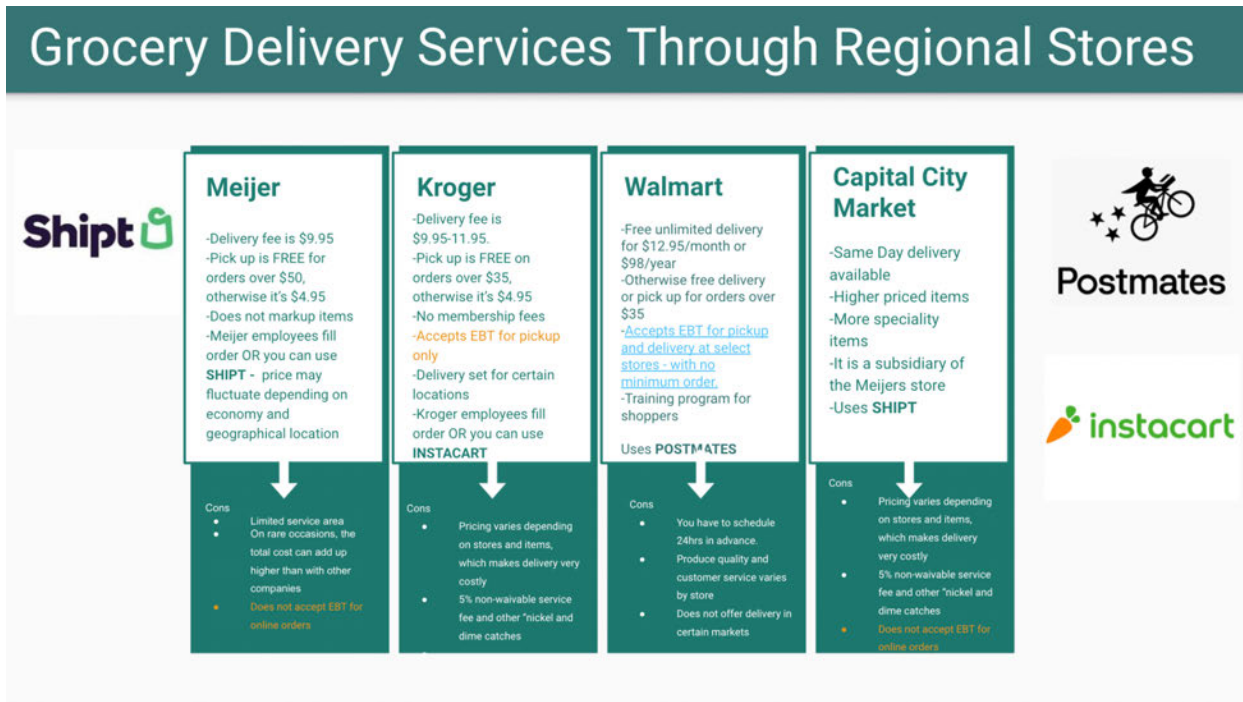
- Users pay for in-store prices plus a delivery fee
- \$7.99 for 1hr delivery
- Optional \$149 membership includes free delivery
- Widespread service throughout United States
- Senior pilots for limited time.

Cons

- Pricing varies depending on stores and items, which makes delivery very costly
- 5% non-waivable service fee and other "nickel and dime catches"



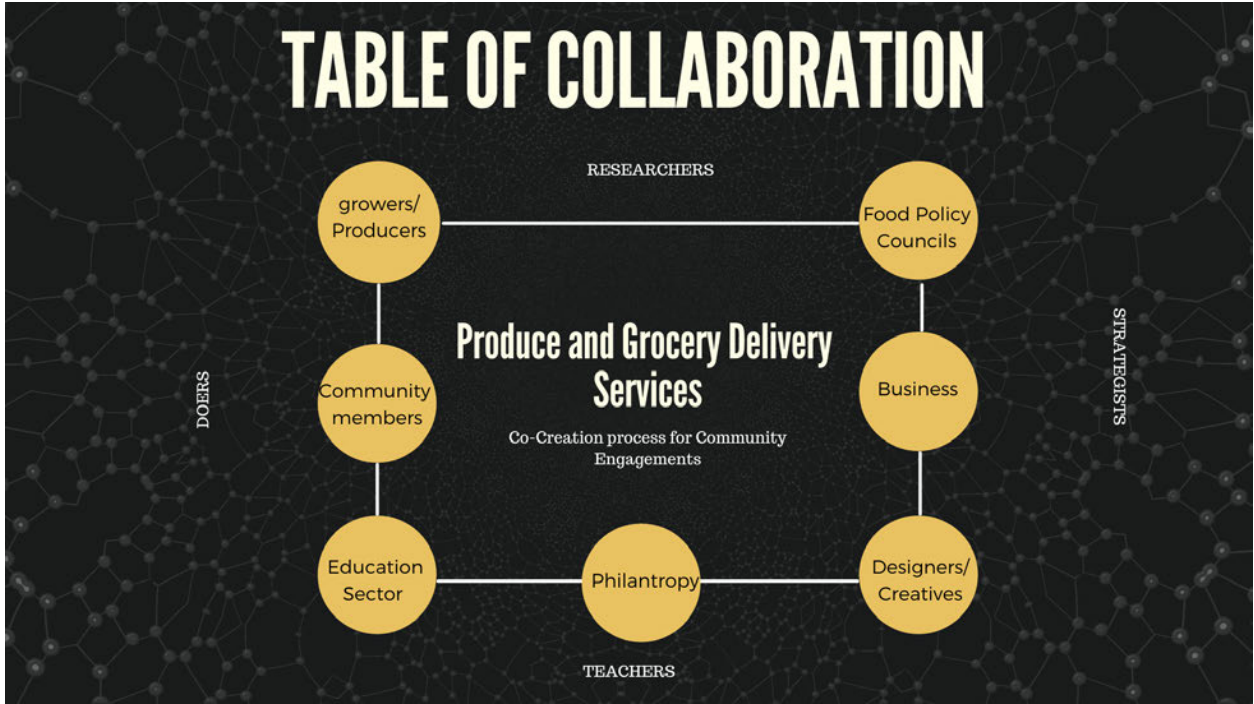




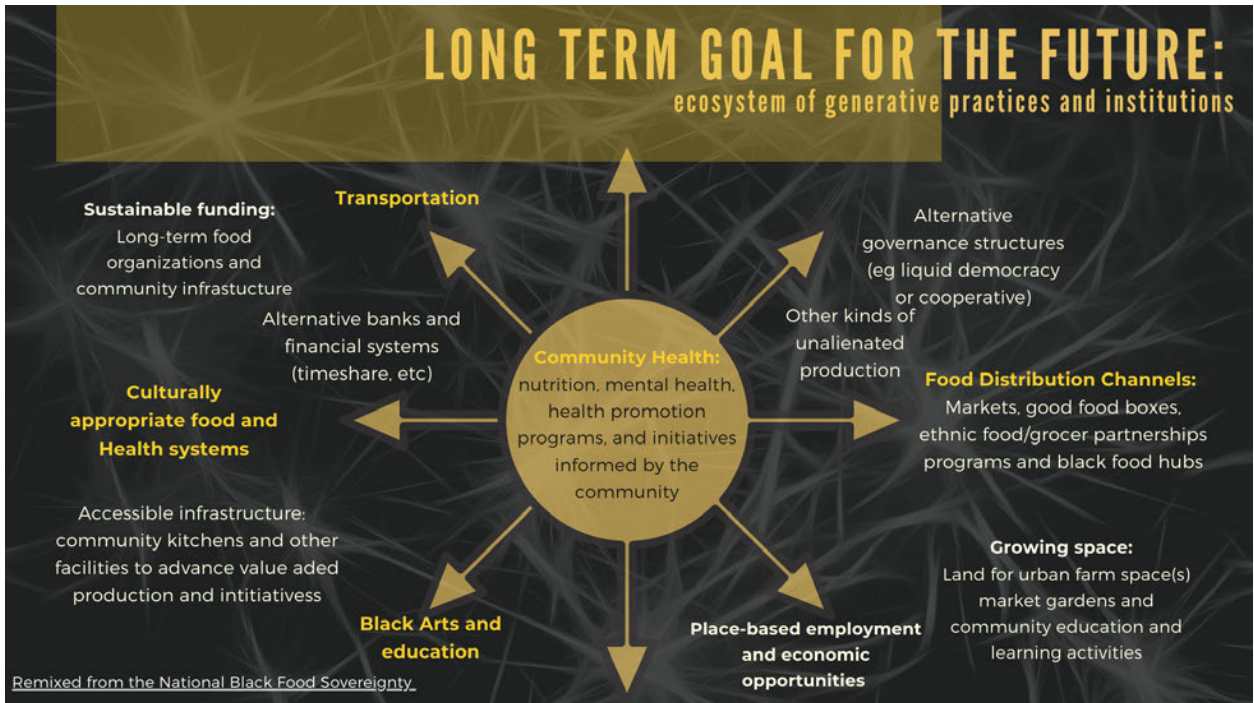
From the analysis of current data, I created my Design Strategy Document which helps outline my next steps within the project. It includes the following:

1. Purpose of your Design Strategy
2. Project Values
3. Research Lens
4. Design Research Questions
5. Design Theories
6. Assumptions
7. Methodology
8. Methods
9. Designerly Questions
10. Risk using said methods
11. Toolkits to get started
12. Stakeholder mapping/Project Opportunities
13. Timeline

Initial Table of collaboration for both projects:



Result: ecosystem (show)



ECOMMERCE



ONLINE ORDERING SYSTEMS



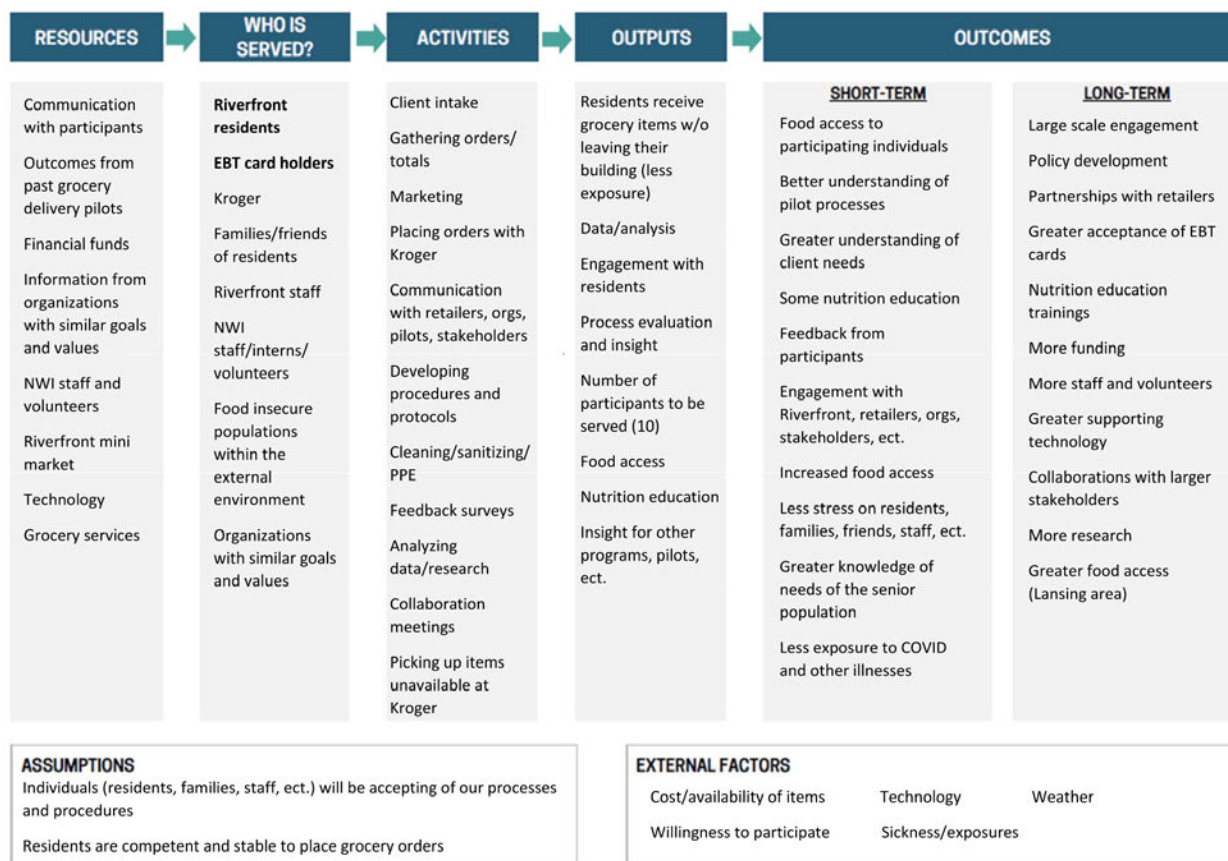
Software platforms that support direct sales to consumers specifically designed for farmers and producers

DIRECT SALES SOFTWARE PLATFORMS



- Shared these plans with both teams so as the path is charted their comfortable
- Wrote out assumptions
- IRB was created with my advisor (as seen below).

After the assessment, I looked started building our project plans  
 Participant observation: with producers/customers I walked through the process of ordering in the system and picking up at both farms and making adjustments to the process.



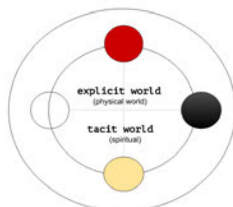


## Appendix F: My Design Process

My design process is centered within community discovery as a 21st century designer embedded within a known wicked system. The discovery phase is tied to the many questions you ask of yourself personally then you ask per your relationships, community, then of society.

A sense of discovery allows the process of change to take place. So it is very important to build relationships with communities you plan on serving and not as a community with problems that you can solve. Black and Brown communities are relational human beings who believe in communal actualization vs transactional processes. Commitment is not shown through words nor actions they are demonstrated through the patterns of behavior demonstrated by the individual or group. It takes time to engage and build trust within a non linear framework due to the high value association with what humanity really means. It involves all living systems and it is not compartmentalized to a level where it doesn't revivibrate waves and patterns through what is created in the natural world within a design process. It is cyclic, hexagonal, and ever evolving.

Each stage of the process helps to cultivate values, interests, principles, ethics, morals, and lays a good solid foundation to evolve as a designer. The process of transformation is the result of this change. Change only happens through design.



The four phases of the design process

1. Holding space (Listening to the system)
2. Remembering (Understanding the system)
3. Creativity (designing/defining an ideal system)
4. Letting go (design implementation)

@2021 keesa v Johnson

# MY DESIGN PROCESS

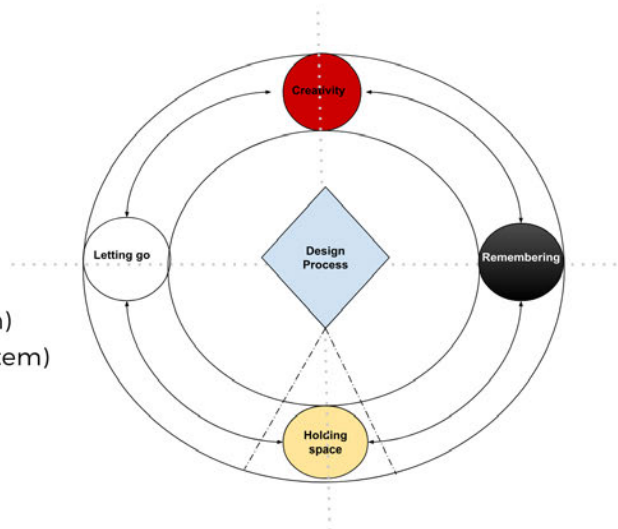


Figure 1. generative design process created by Keesa V. Johnson

### **Holding space (Listening to the system)**

Holding space is a black agrarian technology that creates a container for liberation to occur within a project. In this step, as a designer you show community members that you are willing to walk alongside another person in their journey without the need to change or impact an outcome of what has been learned.

Within this method and stage is where you get to know yourself better as well as your community design partners. Your team will start to form within this process. Some people may drop off during the process if their values do not align with the needs of the projects.

#### **High level steps within Holding space:**

1. Listen to the concerns of the community you seek to serve.
2. Listen for the needs they identify.
3. Listen to what didn't work, what is working, where do they want to be
4. Listen for collective values.

During this phase you take the time to learn, unlearn, and relearn against your incoming assumptions. For my two projects, I attended meetings with my community partners, watched lectures, attended virtual or in person events, and reviewed past data shared with community partners to understand their needs. This is an alignment activity which helps your facilitation of the design process become grounded in the community needs and not your own. As a master facilitator of the design process it's our focus to see the needs of the community carried out. We are the keeps of their visions. We have a responsibility to be the master storyteller of a new world taking shape.

#### **Methods used within process**

Due to the nature of my project, utilizing two case studies, across three organizations, each business entity has its own personality or ethos. Understanding their ethos helps to self identify hidden values that are not read within their value statements. Identifying an organization's values is an extremely important component of building trust and creating a just and equitable space. What is done in the design process is revibrated to every experience you are creating within the movement you are contributing to for the people you serve.

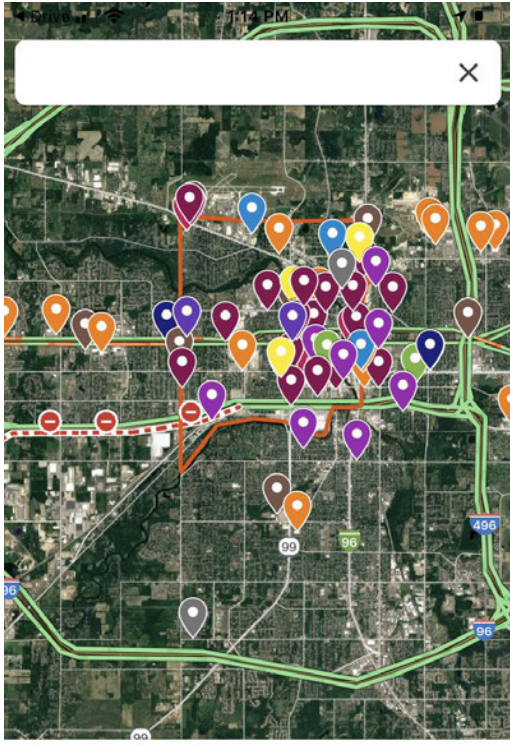
Lansing Area Food Relationship Landscape

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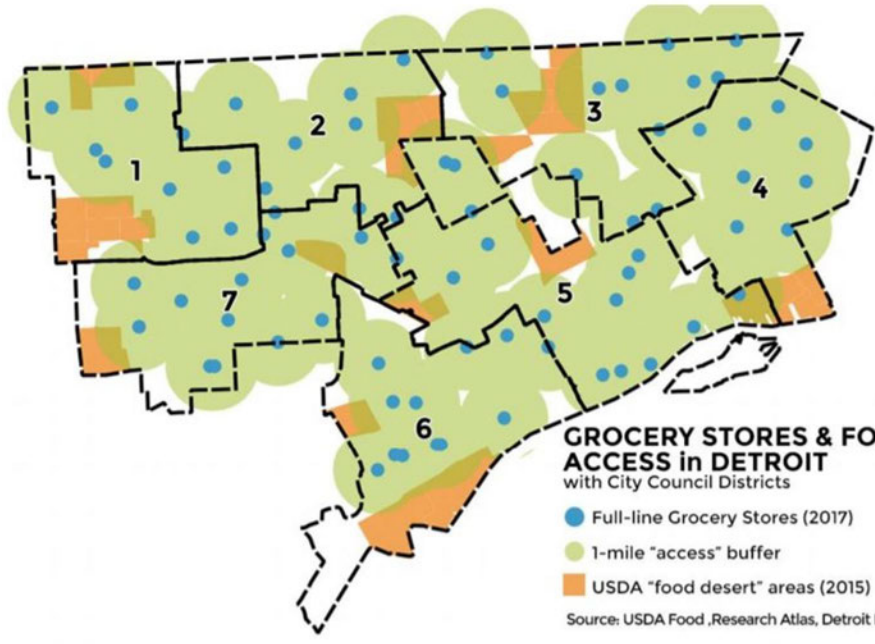
Food processors

A	B	C
110	Magnolia Farms	
111	ANC Veggie Box	
112	Monroe Family Organics	
113		
114	Partners	Peggy
115	Tri County Office on Aging	
116	Capital Area Food Council	
117		
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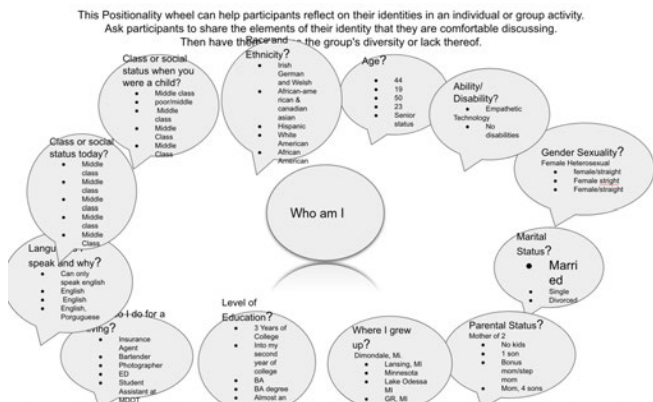
4200 Forest Rd, Lansing, MI 48910



 NWI Area Food Landscape




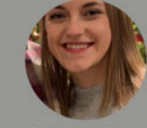




Next steps, I used team building as a method where both teams took creativity tests, specifically the adobe creative test, to reveal the working style of each team member. With Northwest Initiative I utilized a positionality wheel, which was created by Dr. Lesley Ann Noels to this was a workshop based on (Noel and Paiva, 2021) in which participants share the aspects of their identities (ethnicity, gender, language, labor etc.) they feel might be relevant for others to know. At D, Town I was working with the leadership team while with Northwest I needed to level the playing field due to it being a mixture of leadership and students from Wayne state, Lansing Community College, Michigan State University and University of Michigan. The positionality wheel allowed all of us to understand that we -----




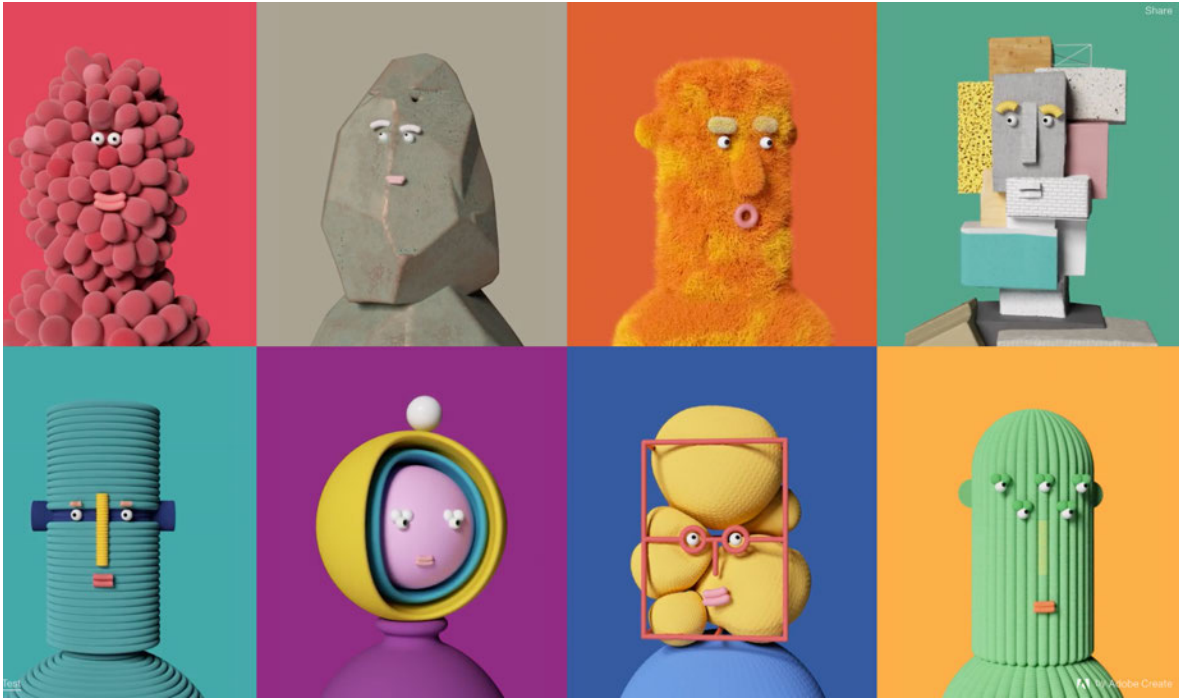
We also created biweekly check-ins on both teams and I shared my beginning equity and access questions along with my assumptions as I collected their responses as well.

**NORTHWEST INITIATIVE DESIGN TEAM**  
ADOBE CREATIVE TYPES TEST

 <b>Peggy Vaughn Payne</b> Executive Director of Northwest Initiative <b>VISIONARY</b>	 <b>Jane Kramer</b> Michigan Advocates for Healthy Checkouts <b>DREAMER</b>	 <b>William Verchereau</b> Wayne State University School of Social Work, NWI Intern <b>DREAMER</b>
 <b>Brianna Rose</b> Michigan State University School of Social Work Intern <b>ADVENTURER</b>	 <b>Bailey LiverMore</b> Lansing Community College Human Services, NWI Intern <b>DREAMER</b>	 <b>Stephanie Whitby</b> NWI Board Member <b>THE THINKER</b>

**D-Town and Oakland Avenue Urban Farms**  
ADOBE CREATIVE TYPES TEST

 <b>NATOSHA TILLMEN</b> Program Manager of North End Christian CDC <b>DREAMER</b>	 <b>NAYOMI CATHROWN</b> D-Town Farm Manager <b>DREAMER</b>	 <b>CONSTANCE KING</b> North End Christian CDC Board Member <b>PRODUCER</b>
 <b>JERRY HEBRON</b> Executive Director of Northend Christen and Oakland Avenue Urban Farm <b>ADVENTURER</b>	 <b>MALIK YAKINI</b> Executive Director of Detroit Black Food Security Network and D-Town Farm <b>ADVENTURER</b>	



### Remembering (Understanding the system)

Remembering is a black agrarian technology that is grounded in heritage, stolen pasts and aspired futures. It is knowing the past opens up the door to the future. In this step you have to unlearn, relearn, and learn a new reality from the eyes of your community members. You will hear stories, axioms, proverbs, affirmations, and cultural transmissions that settler colonialism deems wrong through their values. There is no more powerful force than a people stepped in their history. It is important that designers break with the “hegemonic ways of seeing, thinking and being that block our capacity to see ourselves oppositional, to imagine, describe, and invent ourselves in ways that are liberatory (bell hooks, *Black Looks: Race and Representation*).

High level steps within Remember:

1. Listen to stories, proverbs, axioms, and myths shared from community experts
2. Listen for things you don't know.
3. Be extremely curious.
4. Move between holding space and here, to be what is needed as a storyteller you have to be in the community's moments.

Questions:

What have we forgotten and what do we need to forget? Which destructive values expressed plainly and which soul-killing values hidden in everyday messages are we and our community subject to? Which positions, unhealthy values, do we embrace and refuse to interrogate? What values and principles do we amplify and carry on as stealthily and as efficiently as the subversive resistance strategies of our ancestors' past? How might our designs not only

fascinate and netrain, inspire and intrigue, but also help our communities simultaneously envision incremental changes, radical transformations?

### Methods used within process

1. Facilitating
2. Feedback Looping
3. Rapid prototyping
4. Designing in real time
5. Platforming

Initial Surveys: In appendix B I show the survey I developed to determine user needs and experiences around food consumption on and off line. The respondents were selected by using locations along a Lansing MI mobile food truck route. Since the food truck is known for accepting SNAP and EBT payments, this allowed us to focus on low-income and Black community members. 18 respondents from 3 apartment buildings spread across the Lansing mobile food truck route filled out paper-based forms. In addition, a similar set of questions were mounted on poster boards in one building lobby; an additional 26 respondents filled out these forms. Of the 44 total respondents, the demographics were as follows: 60% were white and 40% minorities, there were more women coming to the market (80%) than men. The average income is below \$25,000 and are dedicated EBT users.

Food Chats: following the initial surveys, I asked followup questions by phone. These yielded “food stories” in which respondents offered more richly detailed information about the challenges, fears, and hopes of their dietary worlds. I




**GROCERY DELIVERY PILOT PROGRAM SURVEY**

NorthWest Initiative's Mobile Farmers Market is looking for senior citizens who are interested in taking a short survey for a grocery delivery pilot program in Lansing.

**CALL #517-492-2816 FOR INFORMATION**

 510 W. Ottawa St., 2nd Floor  
Lansing, MI 48933  
peggyenwlansing.org



**SIGN ME UP TO PARTICIPATE! GROCERY DELIVERY PROGRAM**

**STAY HOME WE DELIVER**

**Hello Riverfront residents**

The Riverfront apartments and Northwest Initiative is creating a grocery shopping delivery program specifically designed for the residents at Riverfront.

Please take a short moment to tell your story by filling out this short survey and return it to Lynette — at the front office.

I would be interested in participating in this program.  YES  NO

How often would you order groceries if you participated in this program?  Daily  Weekly  Monthly  Other

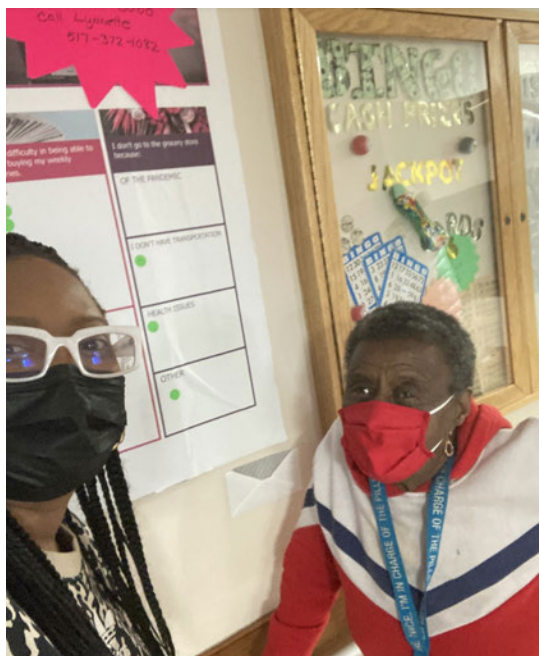
### Graffiti Board:

#### Graffiti Wall for Riverfront Apartments

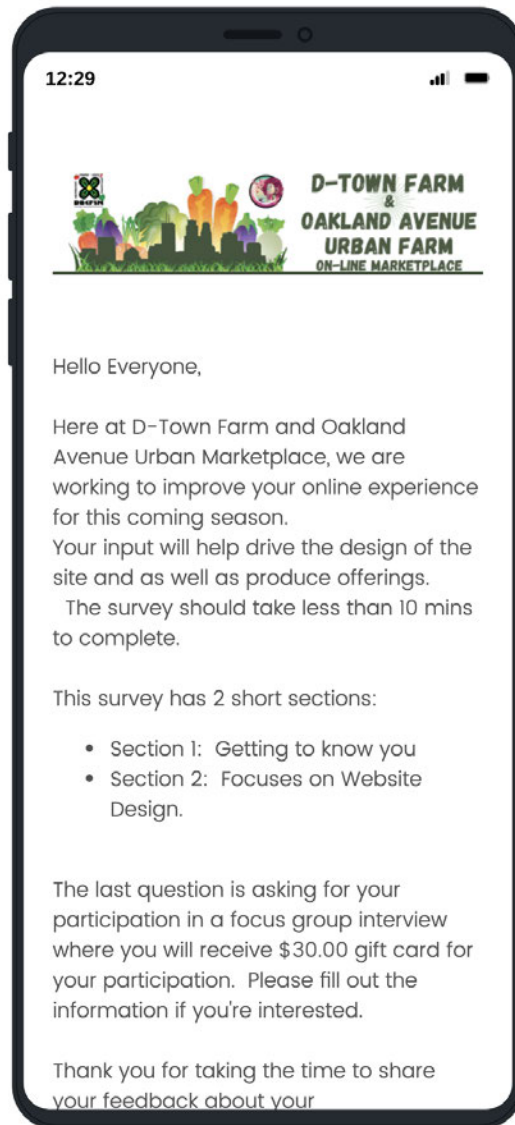
Hello Riverfront residents! Northwest Initiative is creating a grocery shopping delivery program specifically designed for the residents at Riverfront apartments. Please place a checkmark or a sticker in the below statements if they apply to you. If you would also like to participate in a discussion group to help create the program, please fill out the sign-up sheet on the clipboard or call us at #517-649-6237

New grid

I would be interested in participating in this program.	How often would you order groceries if you participated in this program? (once a day, once a week, twice a week, once a month)	I have a landline telephone?	I have a mobile/cell phone?	I have difficulty in being able to afford buying my weekly groceries.	I don't go to the grocery store because:	
	Daily				of the pandemic	
	Weekly				I don't have transportation	
	Twice a week				health issues	
	Monthly				other:	



Survey: a survey was sent to 265 prospective users from the online system created by D-town farm; 60 responded (appendix A).



Document collaborations: these were bi-weekly meetings in which I facilitated ideation, structure and crafting of two documents

- Sustainable agreements
- Partnership documentation

Rapid prototyping: using rapid iterative testing and evaluations (RITE) a initial GUI for the online shopping system was created, and users provided feedback that allowed for a gradual evolution towards greater utility, capability and satisfaction.





## WELCOME TO YOUR MARKET!

Your Market is an aggregator and online marketplace of locally grown and produced food. We make it possible for farmers to work together to meet the growing demand for local, sustainable food in the Your Market area. Farmers benefit from the marketing, selling, packaging and delivering of their produce and prepared foods. Our marketplace brings fresh, healthy, locally grown and produced food to you, the buyer, in a cost-effective manner on a weekly basis.

Ordering from Your Market helps to build and support our community, and to preserve our precious agricultural land for future use.

## WHAT'S NEW THIS WEEK?

Visit our [Product List](#) page to see what is available. We're growing and so is our product list. Check the website weekly for new items.

## GETTING STARTED

**PRODUCERS!** Are you a local farmer looking for an opportunity to reach out to our community? [Register as a Producer](#) and let us know what you are interested in selling through the Market.

**CUSTOMERS!** Would you prefer to buy fresh healthy food from local farmers? Are you interested in reducing your carbon footprint? If you're ready, [Register as a Customer](#). And join our [Email List](#) to stay informed about Your Market.



**D-TOWN FARM  
&  
OAKLAND AVENUE  
URBAN FARM**  
ON-LINE MARKETPLACE



## WELCOME TO THE D-TOWN FARM AND OAKLAND AVENUE URBAN FARM ONLINE MARKET!

Welcome to our online marketplace, your first stop for a locally grown food experience! This is a generative collaboration between D-Town Farm and Oakland Avenue Urban Farm rooted in the contribution to a racially just, local food system. This is a one year pilot that will soon feature other local area farmers and food producers.

Detroit features a growing number of urban farms and gardens sprouting up all over the City landscape. Urban farming is inspiring city-grown fresh food, supporting environmental stewardship and bringing access to fresh locally grown affordable foods that would otherwise be unavailable and we're here to bring this experience to you.

Vendors include:

- D-Town Farm
- Oakland Avenue Urban Farm

*Support Your Neighborhood Farmers Market and get to Know Your Farmer!*

## REGISTER HERE

**CUSTOMERS!** Would you prefer to buy fresh healthy food from local farmers? Are you interested in reducing your carbon footprint? If you're ready, [Register as a Customer](#), choose a pick up location, and join our [Email List](#) to stay informed about all the amazing things happening with the D-Town Farm and Oakland Avenue Urban local online food marketplace!

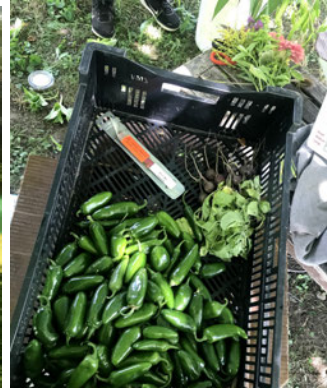


**We accept EBT at Oakland Avenue!**

The Oakland Avenue Urban Farm pickup location is able to process EBT/SNAP and [Double Up Food Bucks](#). With Double Up Food Bucks, when you spend \$1 in EBT, you get \$1 worth of FREE fruits and veggies!



Venmo and Cashapp payments are available at both locations. Choose your payment option at checkout and follow the instructions.



## Creativity (Designing with the system)

### High level steps

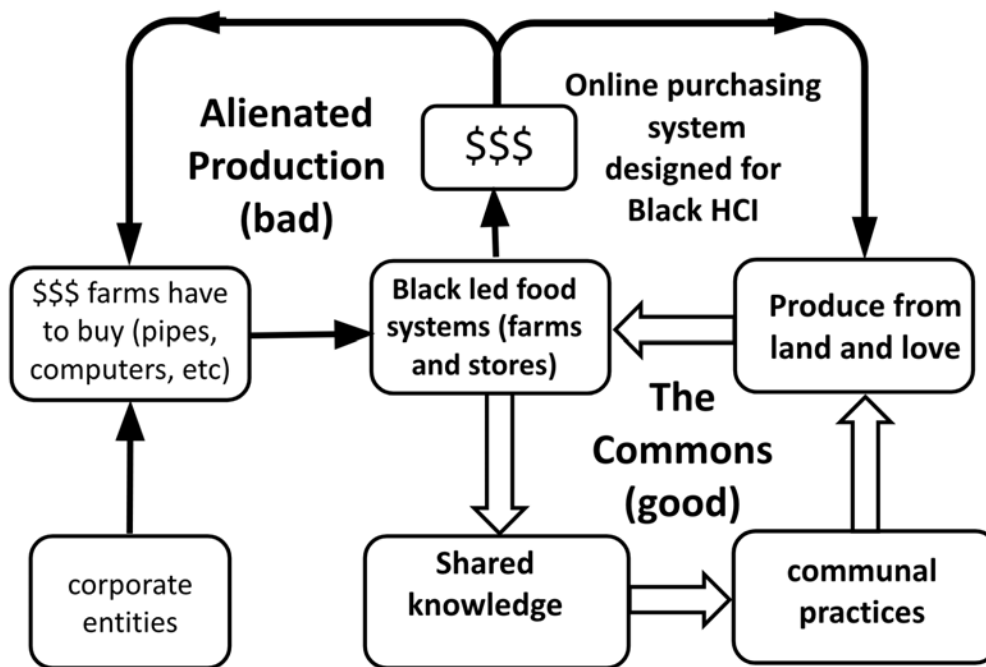
1. Understand yourself and who you are as a designer at this moment.
2. Become the change you seek to create.
3. Be humble and make things you want to see in the world that are healthy, culturally dense, and sustainable.
4. Find your flow (glow).

### Questions:

Whose research is this? Who owns it? Whose interests does it serve? Who will benefit from it? Who has designed its questions and framed its scope? Who will carry it out? Who will write it up? How will the results be disseminated? Am I causing harm when I enter into this spaces Will the research give voice to both the individual and shared experiences of people Will the choice of research methods be determined by the needs of the participants.


### Methods used within process

- Holding space
- Facilitating
- Positive/Negative Feedback Looping
- Designing in real time
- Platforming



Food Ethnographies with Senior residents at Riverfront Apartments





## NorthWest Initiative Grocery Delivery Pilot Intake & Onboarding Form

Please fill out the form below when onboarding new participants to the NWI grocery delivery pilot. This will ensure we have proper contact information and key demographic information to inform the program's ongoing development.

**\* Required**

**Name \***

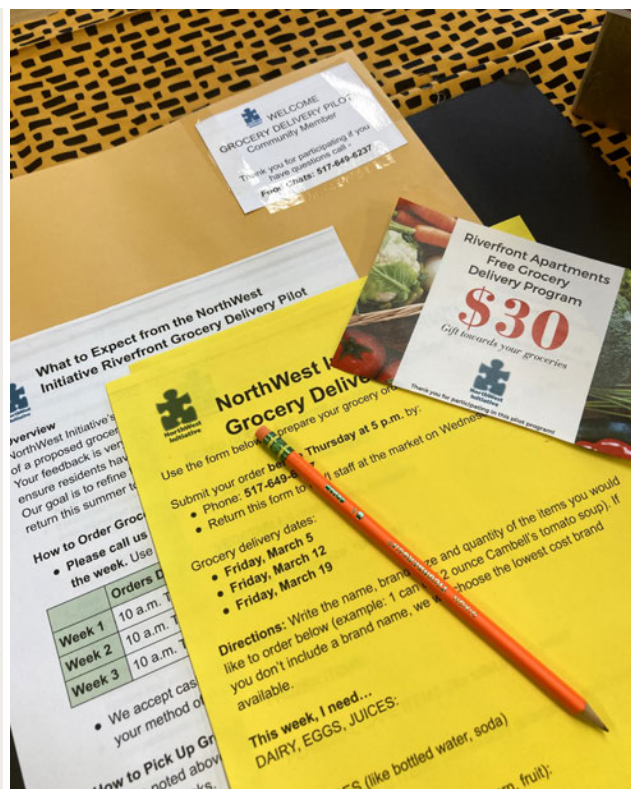

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

**Last Name \***

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

**Apartment Number (Building Address: 601 N Cedar St, Lansing, MI 48912) \***

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

### What to Expect from the NorthWest Initiative Riverfront Grocery Delivery Pilot

#### Overview

NorthWest Initiative's Grocery Delivery Pilot is a three-week test of a proposed grocery delivery program at Riverfront Apartments. Your feedback is very helpful in determining what works best to ensure residents have consistent access to affordable groceries. Our goal is to refine this pilot based on participant feedback and return this summer to continue the project.

#### How to Order Groceries

- Please call us at **517-649-6237** to place your order for the week. Use the order form provided to organize your list.

	Orders Due	Delivered On
<b>Week 1</b>	10 a.m. Thursday, March 4	Friday, March 5
<b>Week 2</b>	10 a.m. Thursday, March 11	Friday, March 12
<b>Week 3</b>	10 a.m. Thursday, March 18	Friday, March 19

- We accept cash, EBT cards, and bank cards. Please bring your method of payment when picking up your order.

#### How to Pick Up Groceries

- As noted above, pick up day and time will be the same for all three weeks.
- If you are feeling sick or are unable to pick up your groceries on delivery day, please call 517-649-6237.
- Masks are required when picking up orders. If you need a mask, we have extras.

### Agreement

Please review the information on this page, sign on the line below and return to NorthWest Initiative when picking up your first order.

By providing your signature below, you are agreeing that you understand:

- This program was created by and will be operated by NorthWest Initiative. This program is not funded or operated by Riverfront Apartments or its staff.
- This is a short-term, three-week program running from the end of February through late March only. Future grocery delivery service is not guaranteed.
- When you place an order, NorthWest Initiative will use all reasonable efforts to deliver to you within the weekly delivery window communicated.
- If NorthWest Initiative is unable to reach you at your specified time to place your order, please call us back before 5 p.m. on Thursday. If we are unable to contact you, we will be unable to place the order.
- If you are unable to transport your groceries in the cart to your apartment, NWI staff and volunteers can assist with bringing them to your door. However, we are not allowed to enter your apartment. Tips will not be accepted.
- From time to time, products you order may be unavailable. If NorthWest Initiative is unable to fulfill your entire order, we will make every reasonable effort to substitute the closest product.
- You are responsible for paying for your grocery items in full when you come to pick them up.
- NorthWest Initiative will track overall purchases to understand the types of items residents purchase most. Depending on how this program goes, NorthWest Initiative may use this information for future grocery delivery and shopping programs.
- Your feedback is highly important to NorthWest Initiative. Everything we learn from participants of the program will help us improve any future initiatives.
- NorthWest Initiative will do everything in our power to maintain confidentiality for program participants.

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

## NorthWest Initiative (NWI) Grocery Delivery Order Form

Use the form below to prepare your grocery order.

Submit your order by phone at 517-649-6237 before Thursday at 10 a.m.

Grocery delivery dates:

- Friday, March 5
- Friday, March 12
- Friday, March 19

**Directions:** Write the name, brand, size and quantity of the items you would like to order below (example: 1 can of 12 ounce Campbell's tomato soup). If you don't include a brand name, we will choose the lowest cost brand available.

**This week, I need...**

DAIRY, EGGS, JUICES:

BEVERAGES (like bottled water, soda)

CANNED GOODS (like soups, corn, fruit):

BOXED GOODS (like cereal, crackers, pasta):

PACKAGED GOODS (like bread):

VEGETABLES (include size, ripeness):

FRUITS (include size, ripeness):

MEATS:

FROZEN ITEMS:

PERSONAL CARE ITEMS (like toilet paper, soap):

HOUSEHOLD ITEMS (like laundry detergent, paper towel):

NOTES & QUESTIONS:

NorthWest Initiative's Phone: 517-649-6237  
Turn over the page for more options!



NorthWest Initiative's Phone: 517-649-6237  
Turn over the page for more options!



### NorthWest Initiative Grocery Delivery Pilot Feb - Mar 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	Feb 22	Feb 23	Feb 24	Feb 25	Feb 26	Feb 27
Feb 28	Mar 1	Mar 2	Mar 3	<b>Mar 4</b> Place your grocery order by phone by 10 a.m.	<b>Mar 5</b> 1st ORDER PICK UP at your assigned time of _____	Mar 6
Mar 7	Mar 8	Mar 9	Mar 10	<b>Mar 11</b> Place your grocery order by phone by 10 a.m.	<b>Mar 12</b> 2nd ORDER PICK UP at your assigned time of _____	Mar 13
Mar 14	Mar 15	Mar 16	Mar 17	<b>Mar 18</b> Place your grocery order by phone by 10 a.m.	<b>Mar 19</b> LAST ORDER PICK UP at your assigned time of _____	Mar 20





Online Focus group with D-Town and Oakland Avenue farm : yet to be conducted, this will allow remote moderated research (remotely observing users completing tasks on their own devices in context).

## Letting Go (Design Implementation)

### High level steps

1. Create a sustainability plan for the work created and walk thru with your team.
2. Maintain Flow of the vision.
3. Be prepared to receive lessons learned through your experience while documenting your work.

### Questions:

Technology to do what? What is the impact of the tools I create? Does the researcher have a commitment to the community's self-empowerment? Is my research agenda based on a social model? What are knowledge and design connections to place? How can design function as a tool of Nation building and self-determination? How does repatriation serve as a mechanism of reasserting traditional Indigenous Knowledge?

### Methods used within process

- Facilitating sustainable agreements
- Feedback Looping
- Platforming
- Sustainment

Below are images sharing the next steps of each case study. We will start with Northwest Initiative then move to the redesign of D-Town and Oakland Avenue Urban farm which is now



Shop Detroit Farms.

## EQUITY AND ACCESS SOLUTIONS FOR LOW-INCOME SENIORS

**Phase 1**  
Online Grocery Order + Delivery Pilot in 1 Building

**Phase 2**  
Online Grocery Order + Delivery Pilot in 4 Buildings + Community Store in 1 Building

**Short-term:** expand the pilot into a sustainable program that serves all 278 seniors at Riverfront

**Intermediate:** on-site mini market  
Reopen the small store at Riverfront and sell staple and popular items  
Items would be restocked weekly as needed  
Special order requests may be accepted

**Long-term:** expand services to those living at the other three senior apartment complexes served by NWI's Mobile Farmer's Market:  
Capitol Commons (200 units)  
Walnut Park Apartments (72 units)  
The Abigail I & II (60 units)

## PLATFORM TOOLS USED

Northwest Initiative

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Both teams used Platforming as a method instead of a strategy due to the hybrid nature of the projects. Tony Fry uses platforming as a triple strategy. Hybrid is defined as work split digitally and in analog.

# LESSONS LEARNED

## ONLINE GROCERY SYSTEMS

**Technology**

- Limited technology (landline only, no computer, no smartphone)
- Limited technology skills or no interest in learning
- Limited or no access to or ability to afford wi-fi

**Affordability**

- Low-income seniors often cannot afford delivery or processing fees
- Those with EBT cards can place online orders for pick up, but not necessarily for delivery
- Corporations have temporarily streamlined services in many cases, but the pricing structures may change over time and are not in favor of low-income citizens.

**Accessibility**

- Some may have limited or no transportation
- Access is determined by geographical location
- The pandemic has exacerbated this issue by creating personal health risks for every excursion to a public setting

An equity and access report will be created for Northwest Initiative that will go out to their community partners and the Capital Area Food Policy Council to make everyone aware of the dire need to design better systems for our senior citizens who have no communal access or support.

AUGUST 2021

## THE EQUITY AND ACCESS REPORT

PREPARED BY  
KEESA V. JOHNSON, MDES  
THE EQUITY AND ACCESS GROUP

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH  
NORTHWEST INITIATIVE OF  
GREATER LANSING

**THE STATE OF ONLINE GROCERY DELIVERY SERVICE FOR SENIORS IN LANSING MICHIGAN**



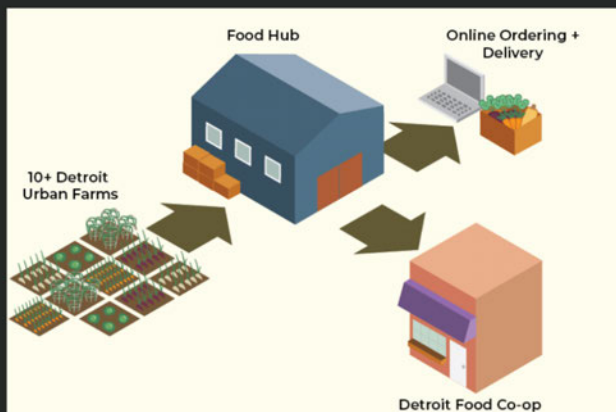
There are 278 senior apartments at Riverfront  
We served 8 individuals in a 3-week grocery delivery pilot

8 in 1st week, 6 in 2nd week, 7 in 3rd week  
Used Kroger pick up for 2 weeks and Meijer pick up for 1 week

Disseminated orders to residents in Riverfront's former mini-market room

D-Town and Oakland Avenue are now called, “Shop Detroit Farms”.

## EQUITY AND ACCESS SOLUTIONS FOR GROWERS/PRODUCERS



**Short-term:** Launching new brand Shop Detroit Farms May 26

**Intermediate:** taking on 10 farmers, food entrepreneurs, or artisans

**Long-term:** Expand the brand into a food hub that will continue to service local residents, chefs, restaurants, and black led grocery stores.



<https://www.shopdetroitfarms.com/>

## LESSONS LEARNED

### ONLINE PRODUCE SYSTEMS

#### Interface and Interaction

- Every farm has its own ethos and personality
- Each system is set up for general usage not how each individual farm runs
- Farmers must make a connection to online farm sales and inventory management
- Understand how you do inventory currently and implement a system online that works for you

#### Affordability

- Platforms are pricey.
- Online platforms require upfront time for long-term ease
- Platforms can grow with you - take time to consider options before diving in

#### Accessibility

- Are there spaces for storytelling and connections
- Building community interaction, and having an interface that is conducive for the farm online is extremely important.
- Barriers to EBT users



[www.shopdetroitfarms](http://www.shopdetroitfarms) is the new rebranding of the D-Town and Oakland Avenue Urban Farms.

