

Precision Cities

Responding Precisely to Human Needs

By

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Abstract

The main research problem this thesis addresses is that public engagement processes treat actor groups as homogenous as opposed to recognizing their unique differences and their positionality in local issues. The thesis posits that it is these differences that affect their ability to engage on issues of importance to those actor groups. The Vanier neighbourhood in Ottawa serves as a case study for this thesis, as it provides a microcosm into the complexities that arise in an environment comprising different interests, capacities, and capabilities of individuals and organizations. Precision Cities was introduced to this neighbourhood to create an engagement process for the Vanier community to collaborate in finding sustainable solutions capable of tackling food insecurity. The analysis of each actor group demonstrates the importance of creating personalized engagement strategies due to the distinctions between different actor groups in terms of what motivates and demotivates them to take community action.

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Table of Contents

<i>Abstract</i>	<i>ii</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>iii</i>
<i>Table of Contents</i>	<i>iv</i>
<i>List of Tables</i>	<i>viii</i>
<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>x</i>
<i>Introduction</i>	<i>xi</i>
<i>Chapter 1: Literature Review</i>	<i>16</i>
1.1 Background.....	16
1.2 Definitions	17
1.3 Comparing Definitions.....	19
1.4 Purpose.....	20
1.5 Mechanisms Fit for Purpose	24
1.6 Technology Mechanisms.....	30
1.7 Commitment	31
1.8 Summary	35
<i>Chapter 2: Research Approach</i>	<i>36</i>
2.1 Statement of Research Problem.....	36
2.2 Thesis Approach.....	36
2.3 Diffusion Theory.....	42

2.4	Data Collection Methods	44
2.4.1	Enterprise Design Thinking (EDT) Workshops	44
2.4.2	Empathy Mapping	46
2.4.3	Interviews	46
2.4.4	Retrospective Interviews	47
2.4.5	Validation Interviews.....	47
2.5	Phase by Phase Data Collection	48
2.5.1	Ex-Ante.....	48
2.5.2	Come to the Engagement.....	49
2.5.1	Early-stage engagement.....	53
2.5.2	Building Momentum.....	57
2.5.3	Ex-Post.....	59
2.6	Summary.....	61
<i>Chapter 3: Character and Context of the Actor Communities.....</i>		63
3.1	Actor Communities	66
3.1.1	Furthest from the government – more inclined to engage	67
3.1.2	Farther from the government – more inclined to engage	68
3.1.3	Actors with greater dependency relationship on government	70
3.1.4	Actors with the closest relationship to government.....	73
3.2	Summary.....	74
<i>Chapter 4: Results and Discussion.....</i>		75
4.1	More inclined to engage.....	75
4.1.1	Come to the engagement	76
4.1.2	Early-stage engagement.....	79
4.1.3	Building Momentum.....	83

4.2	Summary	85
4.3	More inclined to engage	86
4.3.1	Come to the Engagement.....	88
4.3.2	Early-stage engagement.....	90
4.3.3	Building Momentum.....	94
4.4	Summary	97
4.5	Actors with a greater dependency relationship on government	98
4.5.1	Come to the engagement	100
4.5.2	Early-stage engagement.....	103
4.5.3	Building Momentum.....	105
4.6	Summary	108
4.7	Actors with the closest relationship to government	109
4.8	Conclusion	113
<i>Chapter 5: Suggested Way Forward</i>		116
5.1	Leadership as a function of engagement	118
5.2	Actor Coordination	119
5.3	Capacity Building	120
5.4	Funding Systems	121
5.5	Governmental opportunities to engage	121
5.6	Conclusion	122
5.7	Future research	124
<i>References</i>		126

List of Tables

Table 1.4.1 Waheduzzaman and Mphande's stages of participation.	23
Table 2.5.1 - Ex-Ante - Mapping data to indicators	48
Table 2.5.2 - Come to the engagement - Mapping data to indicators	50
Table 2.5.3 - Come to the engagement - Number of research activities.....	52
Table 2.5.4 - Early-stage engagement - Mapping data to indicators	54
Table 2.5.5 - Early-stage engagement - Number of research activities	55
Table 2.5.6 - Building Momentum - Mapping data to indicators	57
Table 2.5.7 - Building Momentum - Number of research activities	58
Table 2.5.8 - Ex-Post - Mapping data to indicators	59
Table 2.5.9 - Ex-Post - Number of research activities	60
Table 4.1.1 - Come to the Engagement - the initial point in which actors come together to address a common challenge.	77
Table 4.1.2 – Early-Stage Engagement - community leaders come together to assess and prioritize pressing neighbourhood-level needs.	80
Table 4.1.3 – Building Momentum - community leaders helping move the engagement process forward by coming back to the engagement.	84
Table 4.3.1 - Come to the Engagement - the initial point in which actors come together to address a common challenge.	88
Table 4.3.2 Early-stage engagement - community leaders come together to assess and prioritize pressing neighbourhood-level needs	91
Table 4.3.3 – Building Momentum - community leaders helping move the engagement process forward by coming back to the engagement.	94

Table 4.5.1 - Come to the engagement - the initial point in which actors come together to address a common challenge. 100

Table 4.5.2 – Early-stage engagement - community leaders at the engagement are developing strategies suited to addressing their needs. 103

Table 4.5.3 – Building Momentum - community leaders helping move the engagement process forward by coming back to the engagement. 106

List of Figures

Figure 1 - Arnstein's "Ladder of Citizen Participation."	21
Figure 2 - Cluster Diagram of Food Security Actors.....	64
Figure 3 - Summary of what I learned about engagement.....	113

Introduction

Civic engagement, the process by which citizens are included in the policy-making process, does not recognize the diversity of citizens involved. Specifically, frontline actors experience more barriers to engagement than advocacy, faith groups, and residents. Frontline actors experience more significant barriers to engagement because their role is mainly to serve rather than advocate, meaning that time and resources are limited, and other actors are better positioned to focus on engagement in issues such as food insecurity. Such barriers have a spill-over effect onto engaged groups such as advocates and faith groups, and residents, as critical players (frontline actors) cannot devote the energy needed for collaboration. The shortcomings of the literature can be seen through models that propose spectrums to identify and explain different kinds of public engagement ordered by the degree of influence afforded to citizens in the decision-making process.

For instance, Sherry Arnstein's (Arnstein 1965, 26) "Ladder for Citizen Participation," decades-old model is still widely cited as a tool for making sense of different kinds of citizen participation, ranging from minimal influence to *citizen control* over programming and decision making. The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) presents a more recent spectrum that also provides a typology of public participation, indicative of "citizens increasing impact over the decision" (IAP2 2018). From these models, scholars and practitioners privilege influence over understanding the conditions that enable or constrain citizens from coming to the engagement, let alone deciding to carry on long enough to get to the point of *empowering*, meaning citizens have primary decision-making authority (IAP2 2018).

Furthermore, citizen control or empowerment goals impose assumptions that may detract from citizen participation because there is an assumed end state, as opposed to seeing engagement as a vehicle for moving in a direction responsive to participants' vision for the objectives of their involvement in the process.

If the initiator of the engagement took the time to empathize with participants to learn about their role, their capacities, and the structures in which they operate, they would better understand the conditions that enable or constrain them from coming to the engagement. An awareness of enabling conditions for engagement are critical to creating a space that helps community organizations come together to make an impact.

This thesis is about unpacking the context and conditions of engagement. It posits that to craft appropriate engagement strategies, organizations must first understand the conditions that frame ideal engagement for community leaders operating in vulnerable contexts at three critical stages – come to the engagement, early-stage engagement, and building momentum. Come to the engagement can be defined as the initial point in which actors come together to address a common challenge. Early-stage engagement is defined as the phase in which community leaders come together to assess and prioritize pressing neighbourhood-level needs. Building momentum can be defined as community leaders helping move the engagement process forward by coming back to the engagement. Building momentum also includes actors' efforts to champion the initiative by persuading other relevant actors to be part of the process.

These categories emerged and were influenced by a combination of observable behaviours of the actors and diffusion theory, which I elaborate on in Section two.

Understanding the conditions needed to frame an ideal engagement process is critical to developing strategies that effectively move diverse actor groups to engage on complex, wicked problems.

For instance, the Vanier neighbourhood is a marginalized and underserved neighbourhood in Ottawa inclusive of newcomers, Indigenous peoples, and racialized groups, experiencing disproportionate poverty rates (Campaign 2000, 2018). The Vanier neighbourhood serves as a case study for this thesis, as it presents a compelling case for creating an engagement process shaped by the conditions that define the environment in which stakeholders operate. Consequently, Vanier was selected as the primary site of data collection. It provides a microcosm into the complexities that arise in an environment comprising different interests, capacities, and capabilities of individuals and organizations. For instance, Vanier is home to a mosaic of actors, inclusive of community organizations with distinct and overlapping roles and responsibilities, including advocacy organizations, frontline organizations, Indigenous-led community organizations, faith-based organizations, and resident-driven initiatives. Combined, these actors play an active role in the food insecurity space. Currently, community leaders are grappling with food insecurity and the need for community-based, sustainable solutions to address this issue.

To better understand the importance of constructing an engagement process informed by the context in which actors operate, Precision Cities was founded by me and introduced to the Vanier neighbourhood in collaboration with IBM Advanced Studies and the Vanier Community Association (VCA). Precision Cities is a partnership-based initiative that aims to create an engagement process for the Vanier community to

collaborate in finding sustainable solutions capable of tackling food insecurity in the neighbourhood. Precision Cities was co-constructed with IBM Advanced Studies, the Vanier Community Association (VCA), the Quartier Vanier Business Improvement Area (QVBIA), St. Margaret's Anglican Church (hereafter referred to as St. Margaret's Church), Capital City Bikers' Church, the Vanier Community Service Centre (VCSC), Wabano Centre, Minwaashin Lodge, Sara Bernard (a resident), Ottawa Community Housing (OCH), and the Parkdale Food Centre.

The thesis explores the conditions that frame an ideal engagement process for different actor groups and the effect of a responsive engagement strategy through the following sections: Section One presents a literature review to determine how much the literature can comment on engagement processes unique to people and place. Section Two outlines the approach I used to learn about enablers and obstacles to engagement for community leaders in Vanier. It also shows the framework used to sort actors into groups to understand how actors approach an engagement process differently. This section also showcases the methods used to collect data needed to answer the research questions on the conditions that frame an ideal engagement process and the effectiveness of responsive engagement strategies. Section Three shows the findings that emerged from working with Vanier actors related to the unique realities that characterize the environment in which they operate. I discuss these findings by unpacking the elements that make up the Cluster Diagram of Food Security Actors; a model used to organize these actors along with a series of dimensions that help guide our understanding of their willingness to engage.

Section Four examines the enabling environment and obstacles to engagement from the standpoint of each actor group identified in Section Three. Finally, Section Five

provides a suggested pathway forward to help bridge each cluster of actor communities to one another to enable Vanier community organizations to move from their current circumstances towards building momentum.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

1.1 Background

Peer-reviewed journal articles and grey literature, including government and not-for-profit research reports, represent the main types of literature examined in this review. These pieces of literature were reviewed because they helped situate this study within existing research and scholarship on public engagement. These pieces of literature helped frame this research by identifying opportunities for citizens to influence decisions on issues that affect their lives. The literature also provided insight into existing engagement processes suited to a particular place and context (Bradford 2005).

However, the literature falls short because it attempts to homogenize engagement. While some literature does acknowledge the importance of place-based engagement and the need to target policies to a specific geographic area, it does so in a way that maintains the primacy of government in determining how local knowledge is used to solve complex problems (Bradford 2005). By placing the government in control, the literature does not acknowledge citizens as the drivers of change. Without recognizing the role of citizens as change-makers, the literature does not view the uniqueness of people and place in terms of how these local conditions affect people's ability to make a difference.

The first section of the literature review provides an overview of the variety of terms used to discuss the inclusion of citizens in the decision-making process. Next, I compare definitions of engagement found in the literature to how I define engagement - whereby the engagement aims to enable the conditions necessary for those at the engagement to move the initiative forward to achieve change on an issue.

Additionally, I examine different continuums that help identify common objectives for public engagement. Pinpointing a potential location for my understanding of engagement along each of these continuums will naturally give way to analyzing the mechanisms used to enable public engagement goals. Finally, I examine the public engagement literature's discussion on commitment to determine the extent to which people and place are acknowledged as a way of moving actors to decide to engage in addressing critical needs in their neighbourhood.

1.2 Definitions

There are several terms used to describe the involvement of citizens in local decision-making processes, many of which are synonymous with one another. These terms include *community engagement*, *community-based planning*, *collaborative community building*, *citizen participation*, *civic engagement*, *collaborative participation*, and *public participation* (Stoney, Speevak-Sladowski and Bellefontaine 2008, 14).

The array of terms referring to citizen engagement-like processes requires an examination of their definitions to understand the extent to which mainstream literature is sufficient in commenting on the meaning of engagement adapted to the context of Vanier. Dominant terms appearing in the literature, such as *community engagement*, *civic engagement*, and *public participation*, speak to citizens playing a role in policy development and civil society (Stoney et al. 2008, 14). However, despite a widespread acknowledgement of the involvement of citizens in both civil society and policy, there is no universally agreed-upon definition of public participation (Morse 2006, 1).

In a report by Abele, Graham, and Phillips (1998, 35) for the Canadian Council on Social Development, citizen engagement is defined as the inclusion of citizens in

dynamic and deliberative dialogue that provides a space for citizens to affect the policy outcome. Their definition of civic engagement includes government as a possible initiator of the engagement process, in addition to acknowledging the potential for alternative actors to fulfill this role, such as institutions and citizens (Abele et al. 1998, 1). The concept of public participation is essentially the same as civic engagement, evidenced by IAP2's (2017) definition, "We define public participation as any process that involves the public in problem-solving or decision-making and that uses public input to make better decisions."

Rowe and Frewer (2005, 254) characterize public participation in terms of the *flow of information* resulting in the proposal of three concepts – *public communication, public consultation, and public participation*. Public communication constitutes the downloading of information on citizens by the initiator of the engagement (Rowe and Frewer 2005, 255). In comparison, public consultations represent a one-directional flow of information that moves from the public to the organizer collecting their feedback and opinions (Rowe and Frewer 2005, 255). Finally, public participation represents a two-way dialogue between the public and the convener of the engagement that involves dynamic discussion purposed in altering the perspectives and views of both parties at the engagement (Rowe and Frewer 2005, 255-256).

Rather than using public communication as a metric for public participation, Arnstein (1969, 24) defines citizen participation as *citizen power* where citizens are included and have influence over "...how information is shared, goals and policies are set, tax resources are allocated, programs are operated, and benefits like contracts and patronage are parceled out." *Citizen involvement, citizen participation, and public*

engagement represent more inclusive terms because they do not prescribe a particular technique for carrying out the engagement process, and they allow for alternative actors to initiate the engagement (Phillips and Orsini 2002, 4; Rowe and Frewer 2005, 254; Wiebe and Levac 2020, 4).

1.3 Comparing Definitions

These definitions provide a starting point for understanding how the citizen engagement literature can inform the meaning of engagement being advanced in this study. For instance, IAP2's (IAP2 2017) description of public participation speaks to the idea of involving the public in the decision-making process, which runs in parallel to the study being advanced in Vanier, as we have brought Vanier community leaders together to identify needs and to develop strategies for addressing those needs. However, IAP2's (2017) definition indicates that the purpose behind involving the public is to produce better policy outcomes.

The stated intent for collecting public input implies that there is a single decision-maker charged with leading and controlling the process of public involvement, running contrary to the goals of the engagement purported in this study in Vanier. Stoney et al. (Stoney et al. 2008, 16) affirm the assumption embedded in IAP2's Spectrum of Public Participation (IAP2 2018), which sees government as having the power to control the timing of public participation as well as the authority to determine the extent to which public feedback is incorporated into the final decision.

The conception of engagement being advanced in Precision Cities is different as community leaders control how and when information is used to make decisions. An exploration of local conditions, in this case, is not meant to provide the convener with a

pool of data to help guide the convener's decision-making. Instead, the role of the convener is to understand the realities of Vanier community leaders to navigate their context in a way that drives them to come together to act on local issues.

Arnstein's (1969, 24) definition of citizen participation further explains the situation of engagement being carried out in Vanier because of the correlation Arnstein establishes between citizen participation and the degree to which citizens are empowered to drive agenda setting and decision making.

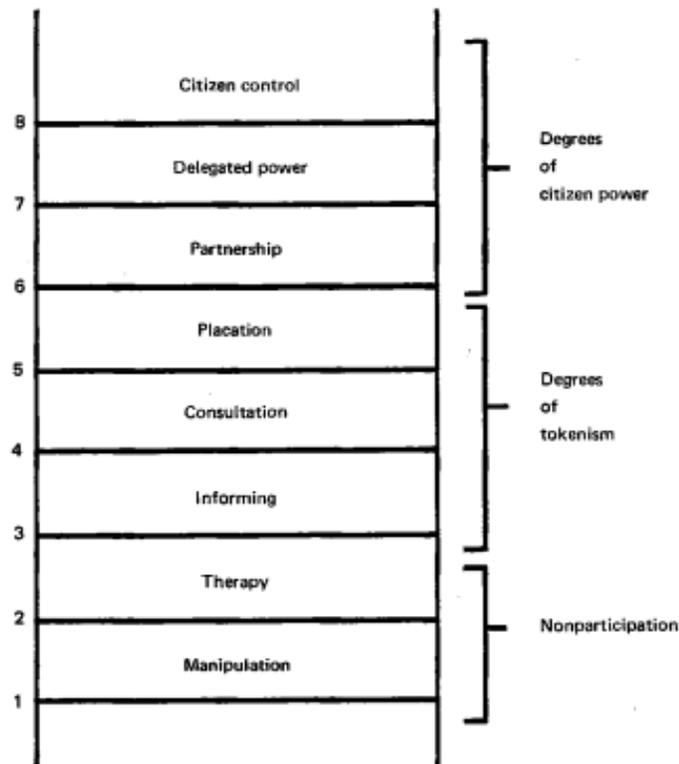
1.4 Purpose

An overview of the literature demonstrates a consistent use of spectrums and tables to organize common goals for public participation. As such, this section analyzes mainstream spectrums and tables such as the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation (IAP2 2018) (hereafter referred to as the Spectrum), Arnstein's "Ladder of Citizen Participation" (1969) and Waheduzzaman and Mphande's (2014, 42) table demonstrating correlations between levels of citizen participation and democratic institutions.

I analyze literature that discusses the different purposes of public engagement to determine the extent to which scholars leave room for the engagement process to be informed by the local context and conditions, comprising different interests, capacities, and capabilities. For example, the Spectrum (IAP2, 2018) illustrates five *public participation goals*, inclusive of the following: *inform*, *consult*, *involve*, *collaborate*, and *empower*. The goal of empower, located furthest to the right on the Spectrum, would come closest to my conception of engagement because it is citizen-led, whereby the role of the organizer is to enable the community at the engagement to advance their desired course of action.

While the Spectrum provides for higher degrees of citizen power, it does not speak to the purpose of citizens acquiring power in an engagement process. In the context of Precision Cities, the different stages of engagement are not about making citizens influence an end state in and of itself. Instead, my focus is on establishing an engagement process informed by local realities to devise effective engagement strategies that motivate actors to come together to respond to a local issue bounded by limited resources, time and systemic barriers. Other widely cited spectrums of engagement in the literature include Arnstein's (1969, 24) "Ladder of Citizen Participation," a model that classifies different participant/government interaction types.

Figure 1 - Arnstein's "Ladder of Citizen Participation."



Source: Data from Arnstein 1969, figure 2.

An analysis of the upper rungs of the ladder, particularly *partnership*, reveals the point in which Arnstein's explanation of citizen participation departs from the kind of engagement being experimented with in Vanier. For instance, Arnstein's (1969, 30) discussion of partnerships set up two camps, citizens and government, with the need for citizens to co-opt power from government decision-makers to ascertain a considerable share of influence. Thus, citizen participation is realized when power is transferred away from the government, the *powerholders*, towards citizens (Arnstein 1969, 30).

Ultimately, the difference between engagement in Vanier versus Arnstein's (1969) conception can be seen through the emphasis Arnstein places on citizen influence, whereby the goal behind citizen participation is anchored in the co-opting of power from the government by citizens. However, the engagement process being carried out in Vanier, while community-driven, has no defined objective. Thus, the goal of citizen influence does not hold up, as the process is set up to enable the community to take community action in the absence of powerholders, such as City officials. Thus, the group's destination is left intentionally ambiguous to ensure that the needs of community leaders and the community members they represent shape the group's direction to respond to their aspirations.

Beyond IAP2's Spectrum (2018) and Arnstein's model (1969), we see a variety of other spectrums distinguishing between different purposes, as these relate to the degree to which the government or initiator of the engagement wishes to involve the public. For example, Waheduzzaman and Mphande (2014, 42) have adapted the Spectrum to show how increasing citizen influence supports more robust democratic structures.

Table 1.4.1 Waheduzzaman and Mphande's stages of participation.

Table I. Relation of People's Participation With Good Governance.

Stage of participation	Model of governance
Stage 1: Informing—a one-way process, when the governing agency tells people about their decision before or during implementation of development programs.	Authoritarian model: In this model, a decision comes from the top and is implemented mostly by bureaucrats. Total process of program is not transparent, accountable, and predictable.
Stage 2: Consulting—a two-way communication, but engagement of people is limited within the decision making of the program. Governing agency is used to inform people to get feedback but makes decision and implements unilaterally.	Bureaucratic model: In this model, people's participation is not enough to ensure the transfer of power. The process of program is less transparent and less predictable, and the agency remains accountable to the top not to the people.
Stage 3: Involving—at this stage, governing agency not only listens to people to make decision, but also engages people for budget distribution and implements the program together. Usually the whole community does not get the scope to be engaged in this process.	Political model: In this model, people's participation is enough, but people are engaged in the development programs in different segments that may evolve conflicts. Governing agency is transparent and accountable to a group of people but not to the whole community.
Stage 4: Empowering—at this stage, the governing agency allows developing the capacity of people to come with their decisions and resources to implement development programs jointly. Agency works as a facilitator.	Democratic model: This model allows developing partnerships with people, delegate authority to make decisions, and implements program with the sharing of local knowledge. Total process of the program is highly transparent, accountable and predictable.

Source: Adopted from Gibson, Lacy, and Dougherty (2005) and Waheduzzaman (2008).

Source: Data from Waheduzzaman and Mphande 2014, table I.

An analysis of the Waheduzzaman and Mphande (2014, 44) table takes an expanded view of purpose in the context of engagement by illuminating the connections between public participation and improved governance structures necessary for promoting development. Waheduzzaman and Mphande's table comes closer to the nature of engagement being advanced in Vanier due to the connections they draw between citizen participation and social change in a particular problem space – the state of democratic institutions. However, Waheduzzaman and Mphande's (2014) work falls short in commenting on Precision Cities because their model does not account for local conditions and context and how this might inform the overall purpose of the engagement.

1.5 Mechanisms Fit for Purpose

This section reviews public engagement literature that focuses on mechanisms. The term mechanisms refer to the tools, processes, and techniques used to carry out public engagement (Rowe and Frewer 2005, 253). Mechanisms come in various forms, including surveys, conferences, and citizens' juries (Rowe and Frewer 2005, 253).

Therefore, this section looks at tools, processes and techniques in combination with purpose as the identification of the aim of the engagement and the context in which it is being carried out "...will have a potential impact on the appropriateness of a mechanism, i.e., its potential effectiveness in a given context" (Rowe and Frewer 2005, 253).

Literature that establishes clear links between each mechanism and its purpose provides a measure of how far the literature leads in proposing mechanisms informed by the local conditions and context in which the engagement is being delivered.

There are a variety of mechanisms discussed in the engagement literature. However, I limit my overview of mechanisms to those created for more consistent purposes with the objective of engagement carried out in Vanier. By narrowing my search to mechanisms designed to support similar goals, I can focus on how far the literature leads in recommending mechanisms suitable to supporting engagement rooted in enabling citizens to assist the facilitator in advancing a space for collaboration.

Given the parameters of identifying mechanisms more conducive to supporting a more significant role for citizens, I start by identifying the mechanisms Arnstein (1969, 26) links to the upper three rungs of her ladder of citizen participation - partnerships, *delegated power*, and citizen control. Mechanisms attached to partnerships include "joint policy boards, planning committees and mechanisms for resolving impasses." (Arnstein

1969, 31). For instance, Philadelphia, one of the participating Cities in the Model Cities program, created seats for resident organizations on their policy-making committee, designated as the Area Wide Council (AWC) (Arnstein 1969, 31). The planning committee, inclusive of citizen representatives, allowed them to create their plans and provided citizens with veto power over City plans (Arnstein 1969, 31). Arnstein (1969, 32) also highlights mechanisms tied to citizen control - a neighbourhood corporation managed and governed by citizens with a direct line to funding.

The mechanisms discussed by Arnstein go as far as presenting potential structures that align with Precision Cities' emphasis on ensuring citizens are driving the group's direction. However, these mechanisms are offered as a tool for heightening citizen power to the point of dominating government decision-makers. The presentation of these mechanisms as vehicles for co-opting power from government can be seen through Arnstein's (1969, 31, 32) explanation of structural elements included in policy boards and neighbourhood corporations such as residents holding most seats on a municipal board or residents having complete control over the governance of a policy institution. The disproportionate focus on establishing a power base for citizens leaves minimal discussion on the greater purpose behind citizens' realization of power. For instance, Arnstein (1969, 32) provides a list of experimental pilot neighbourhood corporations funded by the federal government with minimal information on how successful these neighbourhood corporations were in driving change on key economic neighbourhood issues.

Ultimately, Arnstein makes citizen power the highest goal for citizen participation. Thus, mechanisms constructed to move citizens into a position of having

complete control over an institution in all its policy and managerial aspects or dominance over decision-makers renders these methods inconsistent with the objectives of Precision Cities. Furthermore, while the engagement in Vanier relies upon citizens shaping and influencing the group's direction, citizen power is not an end state. Instead, citizen power is a means towards advancing change on pressing neighbourhood issues in a manner reflective of the community's unique needs, goals and aspirations. Thus, the engagement process in Vanier demands a mechanism supportive of what different actor groups need to achieve ground-level impact.

Rowe and Frewer (2005, 260) propose a typology of mechanisms to address a gap in the literature that makes it difficult for practitioners to understand "...what mechanisms to use in which to use in what circumstance to enable effective engagement." However, Rowe and Frewer's (2005) typology of mechanisms is limited in presenting me with a set of mechanisms that support an engagement process in Vanier.

Moreover, Rowe and Frewer's typology is limited in suggesting applicable mechanisms because their definition of purpose for engagement is fundamentally different from the aim of engagement guiding the study in Vanier. For instance, they define the objective of engagement as follows: "The aim of engagement is to acquire all relevant information from all relevant members of the population (sources) and transfer this to relevant recipients (be these the sponsors or the participants)" (Rowe and Frewer 2005, 271). In comparison, building momentum in the context of this study is about moving community leaders to the point of advancing the initiative forward to tackle a pressing neighbourhood problem. Thus, Rowe and Frewer's (2005, 271) typology falls short in directing me towards an appropriate mechanism because mechanisms are

evaluated based on their performance around enabling an adequate flow of information from a specified population to the convenor of the engagement or vice versa.

The variables Rowe and Frewer (2005, 265) use to sort different mechanisms indicate the link they establish between structure and information flow, as they focus on the *medium of information transfer, facilitation of information elicitation, response mode, information input, and facilitation of aggregation*. Rowe and Frewer's (2005, 265) variables for determining mechanisms most suited to enabling a more efficient flow of information provide some insight and relevance to this study because communication (particularly the mode of communication and messaging) with Vanier community leaders represents one of the objects of study. However, an analysis of communications in the context of Precision Cities deviates from Rowe and Frewer because Precision Cities views communication as a vehicle for enabling community leaders to take community action.

The literature's adherence to a pre-defined set of goals to inform which mechanisms to use is reinforced by Gaventa (2005). Participation goals outlined by Gaventa (2005, 18, 26) include democratic renewal and progress on poverty and social justice. Gaventa (2005, 21) argues that citizens must be equipped to express their views to the government. Capacity building must also happen within the government to ensure they have the institutions needed to support public engagement (Gaventa 2005, 21). *Participatory budgeting*, conducted in Porto Alegre in Brazil, represents a mechanism recommended by Gaventa (2005, 19). In Porto Alegre, this exercise involved the organization of *large-scale public forums* that enabled citizens to express their priorities and influence the allocation of funds to support those priorities (Gaventa 2005, 19).

Mechanisms such as participatory budgeting are ill-fitted to the study in Vanier because this type of mechanism comes with a preconceived notion as to what the goal of participation should be, namely efforts to foster capacity on the side of government and the citizenry to work together to shape policy. However, in the case of Vanier, the intent of the engagement process is ambiguous so that Vanier community leaders can define the objective of their collaboration. While the group may eventually decide to express their priorities to the government, we cannot assume this at the start to ensure the group's direction is reflective of the goals and aspirations of the group it is intended to serve – Vanier community leaders. Given the intentional ambiguity of the direction of the engagement, mechanisms such as participatory budgeting are of little use as it is unclear whether a tool meant to bridge government to citizens, at least at the onset, is in line with the motivations of those invited to the engagement.

Place-based approaches (PBA's) represent another mechanism for public engagement that comes closer to the nature of engagement being advanced in Vanier. PBA's can be defined "...as stakeholders engaging in a collaborative process to address issues as they are experienced within a geographic space, be it a neighbourhood, a region, or an ecosystem" (Bellafontaine and Wisner 2011, 6). The key ideas that make up a place-based policy-making framework are clarified in a report by Bradford (2005, v-vi), which articulates four key elements: i) *tapping local knowledge* – this element speaks to the incorporation of citizens' concerns, needs, and aspirations into the final policy outcome to ensure policies are reflective of ground-level realities ii) *finding the right policy mix* – policies designed for a specific geographic area must not have a negative effect on citizens access to more general policies that cut across urban boundaries iii)

governing through collaboration – this element emphasizes the need to ensure cross-governmental coordination to develop a cohesive response suited to the needs of the place the policy is targeted towards and; iv) *recognizing local governments* – the municipality has the primary responsibility of adopting and delivering a place-based approach, making them the stakeholder charged with bringing a network of cross-sector players together.

Precision Cities has areas of overlap with a PBA as this study is tied to a specific geographic space in an urban center, the Vanier neighbourhood in Ottawa. Furthermore, this initiative is focused on a complex issue, food insecurity. Bradford's argument for involving the community in the decision-making process to ensure local knowledge informs and shapes solutions represents another parallel between Precision Cities and Bradford's approach.

A PBA differs from Precision Cities because citizens have less influence and leadership over the direction of the engagement process. For instance, if a PBA were imposed on the Spectrum, it would hover between involve and collaborate, as the community is engaged in a more meaningful way, with the government focused on understanding their goals. However, the government controls how feedback and input influence the final policy outcome. In the context of Precision Cities, the engagement is entirely community-led, where community leaders and residents are charged with driving the direction of Precision Cities. The job of the convener is to understand the local realities of community leaders to develop an approach to engagement that enables a diversity of actors to commit to coming together to make a difference in their neighbourhood.

1.6 Technology Mechanisms

Despite the evolution of digital techniques for public engagement, the objective of participation has remained static, evidenced by McNutt's (2014) mapping of online participation tools to goals outlined in the Spectrum as well as Arnstein's (1969) "Ladder of Citizen Participation." For instance, *crowdsourcing* is compatible with the IAP2 goal: involve. At the same time, the opportunity for citizens to contribute to the crafting of policy can be correlated to higher levels of citizen power depicted in Arnstein's model (McNutt 2014). Despite reporting on citizen participation in the digital context, McNutt's article also highlights public participation as a vehicle for strengthening democracy due to its ability to bring citizens closer to government (McNutt 2014).

Government as a platform represents a technology-powered form of citizen participation that comes closest to the nature of engagement in Precision Cities, as citizens play a more active role in shaping policies (McNutt 2014). Yet, the literature falls short due to its focus on tying digital mechanisms to pre-determined goals of citizen participation, whether that's mapping it to purposes found on the Spectrum, Arnstein's Ladder, or the objective of repairing trust between government and citizens. Pre-determined goals may waste resources because tools may be constructed to achieve purpose citizens are disinterested in investing their time and energy into pursuing. Consequently, the following section speaks to the third angle of engagement that needs to be emphasized, community commitment. Without citizens rallying around the issue of concern, mechanisms and purpose don't matter much.

1.7 Commitment

This section analyzes public engagement literature focused on citizens' commitment to coming to the engagement and engaging long enough to enact change on an issue of concern. The civic engagement literature's discussion on commitment emphasizes the government's need to include the public in decision-making. For instance, a working paper published by the World Bank authored by David Ackerman (2005, 2) develops a deeper understanding of the pathways for making governments in developing countries more accountable to their citizens. As part of the discussion, Ackerman highlights civic engagement as essential to *social accountability*, meaning public officials are moved to explain the thinking behind their decisions, and their actions are subject to public scrutiny.

The *level of institutionalization* represents one of the six dimensions outlined in the framework Ackerman (2005, 16) proposes as a guide for strengthening lines of *social accountability*. Under this dimension, Ackerman advocates for government to establish institutions designed explicitly for involving citizens throughout various stages of the policy development process. Institutionalization helps preserve a seat for citizens at the engagement, as typical public involvement exercises are short (e.g., a limited series of workshops, consultations, or public hearings) (Ackerman 2005, 16). However, institutionalization falls short because it emphasizes the role of government at the expense of highlighting what needs to happen to move citizens to commit to an engagement process.

A search for additional literature discussing strategies for securing a commitment from citizens is primarily focused on capacity building, establishing trust, and forming

relationships. While each of these elements is important to the public engagement process, it does not account for differences between actors that affect their ability to engage on issues of importance to those actor groups.

For instance, Bryson and Quick's (2012) paper "Designing Public Participation Processes" speaks to the concept of citizen commitment in terms of capacity building through a discussion on the link between more robust democracies and citizen deliberation. Deliberative approaches are ongoing, thus helping to foster citizenship skills amongst participants as sustained and dynamic interactions with the government provides an opportunity to hone the public's decision-making capabilities (Bryson and Quick 2012, 25). Design considerations assigned to the purpose of "Create and sustain adaptive capacity for ongoing problem solving and resilience" include relationship building and trust (Bryson and Quick 2021, 26). Combined, strong bonds between participants produce social capital, an essential precursor for lasting participation (Bryson and Quick 2012, 26). The concept of capacity building and citizen commitment appear side by side in Bryson and Quick's list of design considerations, implying a correlation between investing in citizenship skills and citizens' decision to return to the engagement; however, this is not explicitly stated.

Gaventa's paper (2005, 18), *Strengthening Participatory Approaches to Local Governance: Learning Lessons from Abroad*, also looks at the citizen side of engagement and sees capacity-building as a critical piece in making engagement possible. In addition, Gaventa (2005, 18,21) emphasizes the need to enable *preconditions for voice*, such as educating people on their right to participate and developing their negotiation competencies.

Preconditions for voice are helpful in the context of Precision Cities to the extent that it illuminates how efforts to create a mechanism for engagement are futile should participants be unequipped to deliberate and engage on policy matters. However, the idea of capacity building ignores conditions and context and its effect on actors' willingness/ability to obtain the skills needed to better engage in pressing community problems.

While capacity-building opportunities may be offered as a means for enabling sustained engagement, there is no guarantee that citizens will want to partake in skill-building exercises. Thus, prior to considerations around building citizenship competencies, we need to understand the initial point of traction with citizens, namely the conditions that resulted in a citizen's decision to accept or decline the first invitation to engage. Furthermore, capacity-building falls short at the point of sustained engagement, as the skills to partake in an activity do not necessarily prompt an individual to commit to that activity. (For example, I may have the skills to play soccer, but I don't love the sport enough; therefore, I don't sign up for a local team). Given the potential for citizens to reject an engagement process despite having the ability to engage, we must expand our outlook to consider alternative dimensions, such as their motivations for coming to the engagement. Other avenues of consideration include efforts to understand potential barriers, as citizens may be motivated to participate. Still, their job makes it difficult to engage.

Ultimately, the concept of citizen commitment is predominantly discussed in relation to a particular tool used to enable public deliberations. Public deliberations naturally give way to a discussion on commitment from citizens as deliberative processes

are premised on a back-and-forth discussion to solve a policy problem. The ongoing nature of deliberations, as opposed to singular, external exercises meant to illicit citizens' views such as consultations and workshops, makes citizens' presence critical to carrying out the purpose of the deliberation. For instance, information on what may drive citizens to commit to the engagement in the context of deliberative approaches comes to light in Fagotto and Fung's (2009, 13) research paper, *Sustaining Public Engagement: Embedded Deliberation in Local Communities*. Fagotto and Fung (2009, 13) found that the public was attracted to public deliberations because of their association with solving local problems.

The public engagement literature offers limited insights into citizen commitment beyond capacity-building, relationship-building, and trust. Such a shortcoming is problematic because it does not provide insight into how the context or conditions in which citizens operate affects their ability to commit to opportunities designed to build capacity and social bonds. Beyond these areas, the concept of citizen commitment is implied using alternative language such as "incentives." For instance, Gaventa (2004, 23) includes a brief section, "Improving Incentives for Engagement and Quality Representation." Within this section, Gaventa (2004, 24) highlights the effect of meaningful influence over the policy outcome in moving participants to engage. Design features meant to secure citizen commitment can also be inferred from Arnstein's (1969) discussion of mechanisms tied to higher levels of citizen's power. For example, financial incentives to pay residents contributing to plans indicate incentives for participation (Arnstein 1969, 31).

1.8 Summary

Ultimately, this literature review helped frame the research by establishing citizens' role in shaping decisions and policies that affect their lives. Some of the literature, such as the PBA model, also recognizes the importance of using local knowledge to inform solutions to complex problems (Bellafontaine and Wisner 2011; Bradford 2005). However, even in a PBA approach, the government controls how local knowledge helps shape solutions to complex problems. Therefore, the model acknowledges a top-down approach but ignores the role of the convener in the engagement activities. Thus, the literature does not see the intervening actor studying local conditions to support and empower communities to facilitate socio-economic change. In sum, the literature does not lead far enough in acknowledging the uniqueness of people and place and how local conditions either facilitate/constrain the ability of citizens to rally around the issue of concern long enough to develop solutions capable of tackling the problem.

Chapter 2: Research Approach

2.1 Statement of Research Problem

This thesis addresses the research problem that public engagement processes (noted in the literature) treat actor groups as homogenous instead of recognizing their unique differences and positionality in local issues. The thesis posits that these differences affect their ability to engage on matters of importance to those actor groups. Frontline actors experience more significant barriers to engagement because their role is mainly to serve rather than advocate, meaning that time and resources are limited, and other actors are better positioned to focus on engagement in issues such as food insecurity. Such barriers have a spill-over effect onto engaged groups such as advocates and faith groups, and residents, as critical players (frontline actors) cannot devote the energy needed for collaboration.

2.2 Thesis Approach

This thesis explored the conditions that frame an ideal engagement process for actors operating in a marginalized context by asking the following research questions:

- **RQ1** – What conditions facilitate effective engagement within a marginalized and vulnerable context?
- **RQ2** – What are the effects of a responsive engagement process within a marginalized context?

I explored conditions needed to frame ideal engagement for community leaders in a marginalized context within each engagement phase —come to the engagement, early-stage engagement and building momentum. This thesis also examined the effect of adapting engagement processes to reflect the context and conditions identified by each

actor group as critical to enabling them to decide to come together to solve a pressing problem. I analyzed the essential context and conditions that frame ideal engagement because the literature tends to homogenize engagement, despite the mosaic of actors within communities. The unique realities that characterize the context in which different actors operate suggest organizations must first understand the place-based conditions that enable engagement for community leaders operating in a vulnerable context.

This thesis explored conditions that frame an ideal engagement process through a case study approach (Majchrzak and Markus 2014, 82-83). A case study approach proved helpful because it allowed me to focus on people within a defined space to understand the behaviour and actions of individual units and the interactions between different players (Majchrzak and Markus 2014, 83). The focal point of this case study was on one social problem, food insecurity, in Vanier, Ottawa. Within Vanier, there were a set of actors who could not effectively collaborate to act on the issue of food insecurity. The challenge of collaboration, with no clear delineation of roles for each player, made it so that the community could not progress towards a resolution on food insecurity. A case study helped answer RQ1 because it provided a microcosm into a mosaic of actors to gain a rich understanding of everyone's actions and their position within the food insecurity space in relation to other actors. Furthermore, a case study approach is connected to RQ2 because it provided opportunities to observe actors' responses to forms of engagement tailored to their unique context and conditions.

The sample of 13 actors is representative of community leaders, with a variety of roles within the food insecurity space in Vanier, including frontline, advocacy, faith-based organizations, and residents who have founded their food initiatives. This group of

actors was selected because they represented a network of players with distinct and overlapping roles that have attempted to come together with minimal success in sustaining their collaboration long enough to facilitate socio-economic change. Weak linkages across actors revealed the need to understand the challenge of food insecurity through the lens of different actors working in various ways to address this issue. Structures were also examined to assess the impact political and funding structures have on the ability of these actors to collaborate.

Actors with the closest relationship to the government were excluded from this study as Precision Cities was targeted towards neighbourhood-level organizations. Therefore, government leaders such as municipal officials were not invited as they were seen as a potential barrier to actors providing unfiltered input and contributions to the engagement. One of the actors included within the sample also acted as a critical advisor for me, as they helped guide my understanding around which stakeholders to invite to the engagement. For example, other actors within this group, such as large shelters, were also excluded because they did not fit the profile of smaller community-based organizations. However, I elaborate more on the complexity of the relationships between actor groups in the following sections of the thesis.

A focus on actors at the community level gives way to a discussion on *agency and structure*. Agency can be defined as the mental framework (akin to Sewell's cultural schemas) informing how individuals understand the world and their resources to act on that mental framework (Sewell 1992, 4). Structure can be defined as the mental framework and resources that support or inhibit "social action" (Sewell 1992, 27). In the context of Vanier, it was critical to understand the mental framework guiding each actor's

approach to the food insecurity space and their capacity to take social action to illuminate the heterogeneous nature of the 13 actors included in the sample. In addition, the structures that exist within each actors' operating environment, such as overarching political or funding structures, were also critical to understand to determine the extent to which these structures facilitated or constrained the capacity of actors to come together to solve a pressing neighbourhood challenge.

The sphere of influence model helped distinguish the extent to which actors were beholden to the government via funding arrangements. The sphere of influence model emphasizes the importance of *reach*, defined as the "users/clients/co-deliverers/beneficiaries" of policy action (Montague 1998, 2). Montague (2000, 1) argues that reach is significant because it emphasizes the "who and where the action" occurs. Other models have emphasized why an action occurs, but as Montague (2000, 1) argues, this has often bequeathed adverse effects on the actor groups. Therefore, I focus on the users (i.e., reach) within their context with the overarching intention to understand the conditions that lead to engagement.

The spheres of influence model help actors to distinguish between what is within their control and what is not. Montague (2000, 2) suggests three levels of control, or what they call three *spheres of influence*: *Operational Circle*, *Behavioural Change Circle*, and *State Circle*. In essence, the model shows that as you move outwards from one's direct sphere of influence to the community space in which you operate, which Montague (2000, 2) calls the State Circle, your power progressively decreases. Montague (2000, 2) also suggests a qualitative change in your influence from direct to indirect. A shift from direct to indirect influence happens when individuals interacting with your programs or services

interact with individuals in their sphere of influence (Montague 2000, 2). This model helped me parse actors within the *State Circle* as it drew attention to actors that operated close to decision-makers. The findings that emerged, guided by the spheres of influence logic model, were synthesized into the Cluster Diagram of Food Security Actors, further elaborated upon in Section three.

Diffusion theory provided a model to interpret what I learned about each actor's operating environment and how their contextual factors affected their engagement. Therefore, diffusion theory helped answer RQ1 and RQ2, as it established a link between the realities of each actor group and engagement and provided a framework for defining engagement strategies tailored to that reality. In addition, diffusion theory helped deepen my understanding of the conditions that facilitate engagement and the effect tailored strategies had on these actors' decision to engage through the *categories of adopters* – *innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards* (Rogers 2003, 283-284).

In the context of Precision Cities, adopter categories were attached to each cluster of actors outlined in the Cluster Diagram of Food Security Actors. These groups, informed by conditions parsed along a series of dimensions, were used to approximate where actors are at in terms of their willingness to adopt the engagement. For instance, frontline actors experienced more barriers to engagement because their role was to serve the client's immediate needs. Therefore, they were less likely to adopt an engagement process focused on long-term solutions. Given the mismatch in priorities, frontline organizations categorized as the early majority, a grouping of adopters that are slower to grab hold of an innovation (Rogers 2003, 283). Hesitancy among a key actor group demanded

strategies that encouraged widespread uptake of the engagement process. Diffusion theory also guided how I spoke to each of the adopter categories to increase the rate at which they moved towards the building momentum phase.

Communication techniques started with focusing on innovators and early adopters. In particular, early adopters contained a high concentration of *opinion leaders*, whose influence was leveraged to help persuade the early majority, such as frontline organizations, to decide to engage (Rogers 2003, 282). Beyond peer-to-peer persuasion techniques, diffusion theory also speaks to the importance of messaging that resonates with the circumstances unique to the actor communities within the Cluster Diagram of Food Security Actors (Rogers 2003, 366). Thus, diffusion theory carried over into RQ2 because it provided a model for approximating each actor's context and conditions to the rate they are likely to engage. Such an approximation formed the basis of a tailored strategy to guide interactions with that grouping of actors, responsive to conditions that framed an ideal engagement process. Finally, these strategies were implemented and tested, whereby actors' responses to those strategies provided insight into the effect a responsive engagement process had in facilitating engagement or not.

I addressed the following sub-questions, tied to RQ1, to enable an effective comparison of different actor groups at each stage of the engagement process:

Sub question 1.1

- What conditions are needed to frame ideal engagement for community leaders operating in marginalized communities to decide to **come to the engagement?**

Sub question 1.2

- What conditions are needed to frame ideal engagement for community leaders operating in marginalized communities at the **early-stage engagement** phase?
- **Sub question 1.3**
- What conditions are needed to frame ideal engagement at the **building momentum** phase for community leaders operating in a marginalized context?

RQ2 is understood through the following elements surrounding key decision points that actors are presented with when taking steps toward building momentum.

- **Sub question 2.1**
- What effect does the messaging and the channel of communication have in persuading community leaders to engage?
- **Sub question 2.2**
- What effect does a dynamic and responsive engagement have in moving community leaders to engage?

2.3 Diffusion Theory

Diffusion theory is defined as a social change process involving four elements which can be summarized as the innovation, communicated, via different channels over a period to a particular social system (a group that comes together to solve a problem) (Rogers 2003, 20). While Rogers identifies five *adopter classifications*, this study was primarily concerned with the two categories of adopters that are quicker to adopt a new idea and exhibit leadership and influence – *innovators* and *early adopters* (Rogers 2003, 282-283).

Innovators are *venturesome* due to their willingness to adopt a new idea without any need to consult others about their experience with the innovation (Rogers 2003, 282).

They play an essential role as they represent the gateway to the innovation coming into a new *social system* from the outside (Rogers 2003, 282-283). Early adopters possess the highest degree of *opinion leadership*, meaning their attitude on the innovation will be seen as more credible than innovators because they are more selective in the innovations they choose to adopt (Rogers 2003, 283).

The innovation-decision model within diffusion theory guided our understanding of effective communication strategies by mapping communication strategies with critical points in time in the innovation-decision process (Rogers 2003, 176-177). For instance, interpersonal networks represented the most effective mode of communication at the *persuasion stage*, as an evaluation of innovation from a close and trusted peer stimulated conditions for adoption among other individuals (Rogers 2003, 305).

Other communication elements outlined in diffusion theory include the role of the change agent. The change agent is assigned several different functions. However, those most relevant to this study included targeting, meaning the messaging was tailored to the target audience's needs, goals, and context (Rogers 2003, 366). Another critical responsibility of the change agent is to identify opinion leaders that can help conjure up interest with relevant peers (Rogers 2003, 367, 370). Finally, a change agent is also critical in helping to ensure actors that have moved in the desired direction of acceptance of the innovation maintain this position and do not suddenly reject the innovation (Rogers 2003, 370).

2.4 Data Collection Methods

This section showcases the methods used to collect the data needed to determine the context and conditions that frame ideal engagement for community leaders and the effect of developing engagement strategies responsive to the realities in which these actors operate.

2.4.1 Enterprise Design Thinking (EDT) Workshops

EDT by IBM is a qualitative method in design thinking that can be described as a mindset focused on ensuring the user's needs are being met by a product, service or program (IBM Studios 2018, 3). The EDT framework comprises two main elements — *the loop* and *the keys*. The loop can be defined as “a behavioural model for understanding users’ needs and envisioning a better future: a continuous loop of observing, reflecting, and making” (IBM Studios 2018, 4). *Observation* prompts the design team to immerse themselves in the user's environment to understand their needs (IBM Studios 2018, 4). *Reflection* emphasizes the importance of reviewing insights and data collected on the user to generate alignment and define the next steps in the design process. Finally, *make* involves co-creating prototypes responsive to the unique needs, goals and challenges that emerged during observation and reflection (IBM Studios 2018, 4).

The keys represent three communication practices aimed at condensing all major ideas exchanged in the previous activities to ensure that all involved don't lose sight of the user's needs (IBM Studios 2018, 5). These communication practices include *hills*, *playbacks* and *sponsor users*. Hills are comparable to a mission statement, whereby all information and ideas exchanged in the EDT process are structured into an overarching vision that participants can align themselves around. Playbacks involve a presentation of

insights gleaned in previous phases of the design process to different stakeholders to ensure that everyone is aligned (IBM Studios 2018, 5). Finally, sponsor users represent real users included in the process that help influence and shape a product or service (IBM Studios 2018, 5). EDT workshops were performed through Mural, a collaborative digital whiteboard, and included (but were not limited to) the following activities to uncover needs and promote progress towards problem-solving:

- **Hopes and Fears** – this activity uncovers participants' goals for the design process in addition to illuminating any concerns they may have (IBM Studios 2018, 26).
- **Stakeholder Map** – this activity involves the visualization of all key actors operating in a problem space, their role in that problem space, and the connections between different groupings of actors (IBM Studios 2018, 28).
- **Need Statements** - data collected from participants' contributions are synthesized into a one-liner that highlights key actor groups' needs and the benefits of addressing these needs (IBM Studios 2018, 38).

The limitations of EDT can be traced to its business origins, whereby design thinking within the private sector was adapted to help companies increase profitability (Lee 2021, 502). Other critiques of EDT include the argument that it treats people as objects, whereby an understanding of how they behave and interact with an IBM product is used to generate improvements designed to create value for the company (Lee 2021, 502). Furthermore, the commodification of people takes away from the emphasis EDT places on "human centeredness" (Lee 2021, 503).

Identified weaknesses in mainstream approaches to public engagement uncovered in the literature review and pre-existing relationships and collaboration with IBM Advanced Studies informed the decision to adopt an EDT approach. This IBM Canada Lab uses IBM tools and resources to address real-world challenges driven by community needs. The failure of traditional approaches to public engagement to conform to the local

conditions caused me to look for a mechanism that compensates for the disconnect between the lived experience of marginalized communities and public engagement and the breakdown between high degrees of citizen influence and problem-solving.

2.4.2 Empathy Mapping

Empathy maps involved open-ended questions to capture what the participant was thinking, feeling, saying, and doing (IBM 2018, 30). Efforts to guide participants through these categories helped surface unarticulated needs. Participants' input was captured on virtual post-it notes in Mural in a one-on-one setting to create an environment where participants felt more comfortable sharing their experiences. Empathy mapping had advantages over semi-structured interviews because they encourage storytelling. Østergaard Møller and Stone (2013, 590) highlight the efficacy of storytelling over formal interviews as participants tap into a stream of consciousness that involves the sharing of memories, in addition to attaching the feelings tied to those memories. Thus, "... informants' stories can be more honest and more revealing than their purely descriptive, explanatory or analytical answers to questions" (Østergaard Møller and Stone 2013, 590).

2.4.3 Interviews

The beginning of the empathy mapping session was coupled with structured interviews for those who took part in, declined, or did not respond to the invitation to the EDT workshop(s). Pointed questions on motivations, barriers etc., provided direct interim feedback on Precision Cities, which helped the research team adjust the engagement process to respond to what actors needed to engage. Furthermore, these interviews helped answer sub-questions 2.1 and 2.2 as actors identified limitations of the initiative's design

at the point of coming to the engagement (e.g., scheduling and timing of workshops, topics of conversation, technical barriers). However, such interview questions fell short in prompting actors to establish connections between structural issues and their effect on lasting engagement, particularly among frontline actors. As a result, other techniques such as empathy mapping helped uncover implicit conditions that the participant did not identify when asked directly about conditions that constrained or enabled progression towards the building momentum phase.

2.4.4 Retrospective Interviews

Retrospective interviews were conducted after Precision Cities to follow up on lines of inquiry generated from the decisions actors made at each phase: come to the engagement (sub-question 1.1), early-stage engagement (sub-question 1.2) and building momentum (sub-question 1.3). Again, direct interviews were needed over open-ended conversations facilitated via EDT. In addition, interviews were needed to reveal specific information on the initiative's effect in enabling and facilitating conditions of engagement (sub-question 2.1 and 2.2).

2.4.5 Validation Interviews

I conducted *validation interviews* with one community leader per actor group, identified in the Cluster Diagram of Food Security Actors (these groupings will be further elaborated upon in the following section) (Buchbinder 2010, 107). During these interviews, I showed the Cluster Diagram of Food Security Actors to the community partner/advisor (the VCA). I also reviewed the enablers and obstacles I identified in my study to confirm whether they reflected these actors' realities. The advantage of a

validation interview was that it provided the opportunity to verify my understanding of the enablers and obstacles to engagement (Buchbinder 2010, 107).

2.5 Phase by Phase Data Collection

This section provides an overview of the case study approach, utilizing the structure, agency, and diffusion theory analytical framework. It does this by presenting data organized into tables for each phase that provides an overview of i) the methods used in each phase; ii) the reason for selecting these methods; iii) the data used to identify what I was looking for from each research activity; iv) the respondents that took part in each research activity; v) the position of the actors in the Cluster Diagram of Food Security Actors relative to the government, and vii) a summary of the process used to interpret the findings through the theoretical frameworks.

2.5.1 Ex-Ante

The Ex-Ante phase introduced Precision Cities to community leaders operating in Vanier, a marginalized and vulnerable neighbourhood in Ottawa. Such an introduction facilitated a connection with an opinion leader willing to adopt the engagement and mobilize other relevant actors to be part of Precision Cities.

Table 2.5.1 - Ex-Ante - Mapping data to indicators

Phase	Method	Method Justification	Indicator	Respondents	Position in Cluster Diagram of Food Security Actors
Ex-Ante	Community presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generated interest in Precision Cities and buy-in from community leaders operating in a marginalized context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Found a community leader willing to introduce Precision Cities to their neighbourhood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VCA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Furthest from the government

I interpreted the response of the VCA through the lens of diffusion theory, which tied the behaviour of the VCA to that of an innovator/early adopter (an individual that readily adopts an innovation, in addition to influencing to persuade others to be part of the engagement) (Rogers 2003, 282-283).

2.5.2 Come to the Engagement

Come to the engagement can be defined as the initial point in which actors came together to address a common challenge. Actors' rejection or acceptance of the initial invitation to the engagement process provided an effective starting point for employing various methods to determine the contextual factors that enabled or constrained their decision. The data that emerged at this phase was also used to refine engagement strategies in subsequent stages to reflect the conditions that facilitated engagement.

Table 2.5.2 - Come to the engagement - Mapping data to indicators

Method	Method Justification	Indicator	Respondents	Position in Cluster Diagram of Food Security Actors
Empathy Mapping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created an environment for insights to emerge that participants were unlikely to mention when directly asked around the conditions that facilitated or constrained actors' ability to engage • Insights from empathy mapping sessions provided the data needed to increase the responsiveness of the engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncovered implicit and explicit conditions that constrained/enabled coming to the engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VCA, Wabano 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Furthest from the government + actors with a greater dependency relationship on government
Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtained intermittent, direct feedback on why participants decided to come to the engagement • Enabled adjustments to be made in response to the limitations of the initiative that constrained actors from moving forward in the engagement process • Emphasized features of the engagement that enabled actors to come to the engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified conditions (barriers and supports) for engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VCA, Wabano 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Furthest from the government + actors with a greater dependency relationship on government
Informal Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discerned the barriers that constrained certain actors from declining the invitation to come to the engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified the conditions that prevented engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maison Marie Louise, VCA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Furthest from the government + actors with a greater dependency relationship on government

Method	Method Justification	Indicator	Respondents	Position in Cluster Diagram of Food Security Actors
EDT Workshops (hopes and fears, stakeholder map, playback)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDT Workshops: Actors' decision to take part in the EDT workshops provided lines of inquiry to determine the reason underpinning those decisions • The use of EDT techniques and the emphasis placed on the users' perspectives provided experiences actors drew upon when asked whether a responsive engagement process affected their engagement decisions • Discussions facilitated via EDT exercises in group workshops uncovered local knowledge around unarticulated needs and challenges relevant to the issue of food insecurity • Hopes and Fears: Enabled me to refine the space for engagement to support actors in moving toward their vision for the future of their community • Stakeholder Map: Helped identify the actors that operated in the food insecurity system • Playback: Enabled actors to provide a recap of the insights generated from the stakeholder map • Provided data that informed the development of a responsive engagement process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncovered implicit and explicit conditions that constrained/enabled coming to the engagement • Identified next steps for engagement that were responsive to the needs and wants of the actor groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wabano, VCA, Resident initiating change, VCSC, OCH, QVBIA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Furthest from the government + further from the government + actors with a greater dependency relationship on government

At the come to the engagement phase, I conducted two empathy mapping sessions with actors who agreed to participate in these one-on-one sessions before starting the engagement process, facilitated by EDT workshops. These empathy mapping sessions were paired with interviews designed to obtain direct data on their reason for accepting the invitation to come to the engagement. I also conducted two informal interviews to identify the reasons underpinning actors’ decision to decline the invitation to come to the engagement. Finally, I facilitated three EDT workshops to create a tangible space for engagement that provided actors with the opportunity to commit to coming together with other Vanier community leaders to address the issue of food insecurity.

Table 2.5.3 - Come to the engagement - Number of research activities

Phase	Method	Number of activities (methods)
Come to the engagement	Empathy Mapping	2
	Interviews	2
	Informal Interviews	2
	EDT Workshops	3

I clustered the virtual post-it notes generated via empathy mapping sessions, facilitated on Mural (our online digital whiteboard) into themes. Such an approach can be likened to *exploratory coding*, as I uncovered overarching patterns before engaging in a more in-depth method of coding at early-stage engagement (Saldaña 2013, 142).

Exploratory coding of the empathy maps revealed implicit conditions that enabled engagement that did not arise in direct interviews. Interviews were paired with empathy mapping sessions and were designed to be a validating technique. Validation via interviews helped build a complete understanding of the explicit and implicit conditions that enabled/constrained engagement.

However, such an open-ended exercise required me to directly ask the actors their reason for coming to the table to corroborate my interpretation of the conditions that emerged via exploratory coding. Therefore, informal interviews were conducted to identify barriers to engagement among actors who declined the invitation to come to the table, as they were unresponsive to formal interview requests. These interviews were done by making impromptu phone calls to participants to identify barriers to engagement among unreachable actors for formal interviews. The VCA also provided insights on barriers for those actors that were unresponsive. Actors clustered virtual post-it notes generated via exercises conducted during EDT workshops to uncover themes in the data. The themes that emerged from the EDT workshop provided the basis for informing what an engagement strategy needed to look like to respond to actors' needs.

2.5.1 Early-stage engagement

Early-stage engagement was defined as the phase in which community leaders came together to assess and prioritize neighbourhood-level needs. The establishment of a collaborative space built upon the initial point of traction with actors provided the opportunity to determine the conditions that enabled actors to take steps towards longer-term engagement. Furthermore, the focus of the early stages of engagement on the assessment and prioritization of needs provided a pool of data that informed engagement strategies suited to the desired direction of the group. Data on the group's desired direction helped inform the development of strategies designed to determine the effect tailored engagement strategies had upon actors' decisions to sustain their engagement

Table 2.5.4 - Early-stage engagement - Mapping data to indicators

Method	Method Justification	Indicator	Respondents	Position in Cluster Diagram of Food Security Actors
EDT Workshop to validate Phase One (Playback, Needs statements, The voting process for highest need)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playback: Established a shared understanding of the desired direction of the group • Need statements: Validated what actors identified as critical needs in the previous phase • The voting process for highest need: Identified the need that actors were most concerned about addressing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectively engaged groups of actors in identifying their highest need to address it collectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wabano, Resident initiating change, VCSC, OCH 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Furthest from the government + actors with a greater dependency relationship on government
EDT workshop (Refinement of stakeholder map by adding in programs and services of stakeholders)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tested the effect of an engagement strategy responsive to the identified need for greater coordination across food programming initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified programs and services across actors as a step towards responsive engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wabano, VCA, St. Margaret's Church, QVBIA, Parkdale Food Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Furthest from the government + further from the government + actors with a greater dependency relationship on government
Empathy Mapping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created an environment for insights to emerge that participants were unlikely to mention when directly asked around the conditions that facilitated or constrained actors' ability to engage • Insights provided data needed to increase the responsiveness of the engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncovered implicit and explicit conditions that constrained/enabled steps towards early-stage engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resident initiating change, VCSC, OCH, QVBIA, Parkdale Food Centre, Capital City Bikers' Church, Minwaashin, St. Margaret's 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Furthest from the government + further from the government + actors with a greater dependency relationship on government
Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtained intermittent, direct feedback on why participants decided to come to the engagement • Enabled adjustments to be made in response to the limitations of the initiative that constrained actors from moving forward in the engagement process • Emphasized features of the engagement that enabled actors to come to the table 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified conditions (barriers and supports) for engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resident initiating change, VCSC, OCH, QVBIA, Parkdale Food Centre, Capital City Bikers' Church, Minwaashin, St. Margaret's 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Furthest from the government + further from the government + actors with a greater dependency relationship on government

At early-stage engagement, I conducted eight empathy mapping sessions with actors who were unable to participate in an empathy mapping session during the first phase of engagement. I also facilitated empathy mapping sessions with actors that entered the engagement in the early stages. These empathy mapping sessions were paired with interviews designed to determine why certain actors only got involved with Precision Cities at early-stage engagement, despite previous attempts to invite these actors at the initial phase. I conducted two EDT workshops inclusive of EDT exercises designed to help actors prioritize a pressing need. The prioritization of a critical need also provided an effective starting point for the refinement of the engagement strategy that was tested in future phases. Actors' interaction with a responsive engagement offered a line of inquiry for me to determine its effectiveness in incentivizing actors to progress beyond early-stage engagement.

Table 2.5.5 - Early-stage engagement - Number of research activities

Phase	Method	Number of activities (methods)
Early-stage engagement	EDT Workshop	2
	Empathy Mapping	8
	Interviews	8

I conducted exploratory coding of the transcripts from the EDT workshops to capture additional needs that may have surfaced beyond the themes clustered on the Mural by actors. These needs were synthesized into one-liner statements that highlighted key actor groups' needs and the benefit of addressing these needs (IBM Studios 2018, 38). Actors were then asked to vote on the need statement that resonated as the most important to address. Such information helped to identify what an engagement strategy needed to include to respond to the needs of actors at early-stage engagement.

Empathy maps were also conducted with actors to identify conditions that frame ideal engagement. These empathy mapping sessions were conducted with actors who did not participate in an empathy mapping session at coming to the engagement or for actors introduced to Precision Cities at early-stage engagement. Empathy maps were also paired with interviews to collect interim feedback on what compelled these actors to move into early-stage engagement. These interviews also provided retrospective data on the conditions that compelled actors to decide to progress to the point of early-stage engagement.

I analyzed the transcripts from empathy mapping sessions, interviews, and EDT workshops in NVivo software to develop an engagement strategy inclusive of the data gleaned from each line of evidence. The data migration into NVivo allowed me to conduct exploratory coding on each actor in individual and group settings to provide a complete picture of the themes relating to conditions and the effect of engagement strategies. To advance my analysis, I employed descriptive coding to regroup themes that emerged between cases to establish categories that strengthened the link between critical findings and the information I was looking for (Saldaña 2013, 11, 88). Finally, in the third coding round, I attempted to give meaning or explain the patterns that emerged by relying on my theoretical frameworks (Saldaña 2013, 13, 14).

2.5.2 Building Momentum

Building momentum can be defined in terms of the community leaders that helped move the engagement process forward by coming back to the engagement. Building momentum also included actors' efforts to champion the initiative through reaching out to other actors to invite them to be part of the process. The building momentum phase offered actors a space to address the need identified as critical in the early-stage engagement phase. The opportunity for actors to sustain their engagement provided a line of inquiry for collecting data useful for understanding the conditions that constrained or enabled more extended-term engagement. Furthermore, the building momentum phase offered a line of inquiry to increase the responsiveness of the engagement strategy.

Table 2.5.6 - Building Momentum - Mapping data to indicators

Method	Method Justification	Indicator	Respondents	Position in Cluster Diagram of Food Security Actors
EDT Workshop for validation of early stages of engagement phase (validation of the prototype map)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Validation of prototype map: Assessed the effect of a responsive engagement strategy in prompting actors to decide to progress to the stage of building momentum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified elements that contribute to a responsive engagement process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VCA, Resident initiating change, OCH, St. Margaret's Church, Minwaashin, Parkdale Food Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Furthest from the government + further from the government + actors with a greater dependency relationship on government
EDT Workshop (Hills statements to lay the groundwork for a joint mission for stakeholders)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hill Statements: Established a mission statement that stakeholders could align around and commit to act 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified the following steps to sustain engagement and momentum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VCA, Resident initiating change, OCH, St. Margaret's Church, Minwaashin, Parkdale Food Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Furthest from the government + further from the government + actors with greater dependency relationship on government
Informal Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discerned the barriers constraining certain actors from declining the invitation to come to the engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified barriers to engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Onyx Community Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actors with a greater dependency relationship on government

At the building momentum phase, I conducted one EDT workshop with actors to validate the prototype map created to respond to the actors' identified need for greater coordination. I also conducted one informal interview to assess the barriers that emerged for Onyx community services to be part of the building momentum phase.

Table 2.5.7 - Building Momentum - Number of research activities

Phase	Method	Number of activities (methods)
Building Momentum	EDT Workshop	1
	Informal Interviews	1

A combination of exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory coding techniques revealed the elements of a responsive engagement process. In addition, it showed a series of conditions that either facilitated or constrained engagement. To craft an engagement responsive to these conditions, Sam Astles, a member of the research team and myself created a prototype map and presented it to the actors at an EDT workshop with two aims. One of the aims was to validate if the map provided a helpful tool for supporting the identified need for greater coordination. The other aim was to validate additional elements incorporated into the map to respond to other actors emphasizing the importance of an engagement committed to building a more fair and equitable food security system.

In other words, this prototype map aimed to support the execution of an engagement strategy responsive to the unique realities of distinct clusters of actors. Furthermore, testing these engagement strategies provided a line of inquiry for me to follow up on in the Ex-Ante phase (which I will elaborate on in the next section). Informal interviews were also conducted with actors unresponsive to formal invitations to an empathy mapping session or interview. Finally, impromptu phone calls allowed me to

ask directed questions to identify barriers to engagement for an actor who could not attend at this phase.

2.5.3 Ex-Post

The Ex-Post phase was designed to validate the findings that emerged throughout the case study on the conditions that facilitate effective engagement. This phase also helped validate the effect of responsive engagement strategies on actors' decisions to move beyond their current circumstances to the building momentum phase. Interviews represented the method used to conduct this validation.

Table 2.5.8 - Ex-Post - Mapping data to indicators

Method	Method Justification	Indicator	Respondents	Position in Cluster Diagram of Food Security Actors
Retrospective Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Validated and revealed additional information on the effect of responsive engagement strategies on each actor's decision to accept or decline opportunities to progress through the phases of engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Validated the conditions and effective, responsive processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wabano, Resident initiating change, VCA, VCSC, Capital City Bikers' Church, St. Margaret's, QVBIA, Minwaashin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Furthest from the government + further from the government + actors with a greater dependency relationship on government
Validation Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verified the researcher's understanding of the enabling environment and obstacles at each engagement phase for each cluster of actors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verified the analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OCH, Parkdale Food Centre, VCA, Minwaashin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Furthest from the government + Further from the government + actors with a greater dependency relationship on government

At the Ex-Post phase, I conducted eight retrospective interviews (most of the sample population responded to my request for a retrospective interview except for Parkdale Food Centre, which was unreachable for an interview). Informal interviews conducted in previous phases to ascertain data on those actors that never came to the engagement represented the extent of data collection done to determine the conditions constraining their engagement. I conducted four validation interviews with a representative of each cluster of actors to verify my overall findings related to matching what I learned about each actor group to the three phases of the engagement.

Table 2.5.9 - Ex-Post - Number of research activities

Phase	Method	Number of activities (methods)
Ex-Post	Retrospective Interviews	8
	Validation Interviews	4

The same coding protocol outlined above was applied in the Ex-Post phase to validate the conditions that facilitated/constrained engagement within each of the engagement phases. This coding protocol also helped me assess the extent to which responsive engagement strategies played a part in compelling them to decide to progress through the three engagement stages.

2.6 Summary

This section provides an outline of the approach and data collection methods I used to answer the research questions motivating this study:

- **RQ1** – What conditions facilitate effective engagement within a marginalized and vulnerable context?
- **RQ2** – What are the effects of a responsive engagement process within a marginalized context?

This section highlights the starting point of my research, a case study approach, which focused on the Vanier neighbourhood in Ottawa. The sample of actors within Vanier was selected under the advisement of a critical community collaborator, the VCA. These actors were chosen due to their activity in the food insecurity space, the topic of the engagement. Food insecurity was also selected as the focus of the engagement because it is a priority neighbourhood issue.

To develop an understanding of the context and conditions that frame ideal engagement for actors in the Vanier neighbourhood, I relied on agency and structure as my theoretical framework. Agency illuminated the mental framework of each actor and their capacity to act (Sewell 1992, 4). Structure highlighted the mental frameworks that guided political and funding structure's interactions with community organizations and the resources utilized to perpetuate the government's approach to food insecurity (Sewell 1992, 27). Data gleaned around the effect of overarching structures was interpreted through the spheres of influence logic model (Montague 2000, 2) to organize actors by the extent to which they were compelled to conform to the government's high service orientation. The sorting of actors into groups mapped against the government is

visualized in the Cluster Diagram of Food Security Actors (which I elaborate on in the next section). Diffusion theory represented the model I used to organize actors into groupings that reflect how their context and conditions facilitated/constrained their ability to engage. Categories of adopters represented the critical element of diffusion theory that helped me determine which clusters of actors are more/less inclined to engage (Rogers 2003, 283-284).

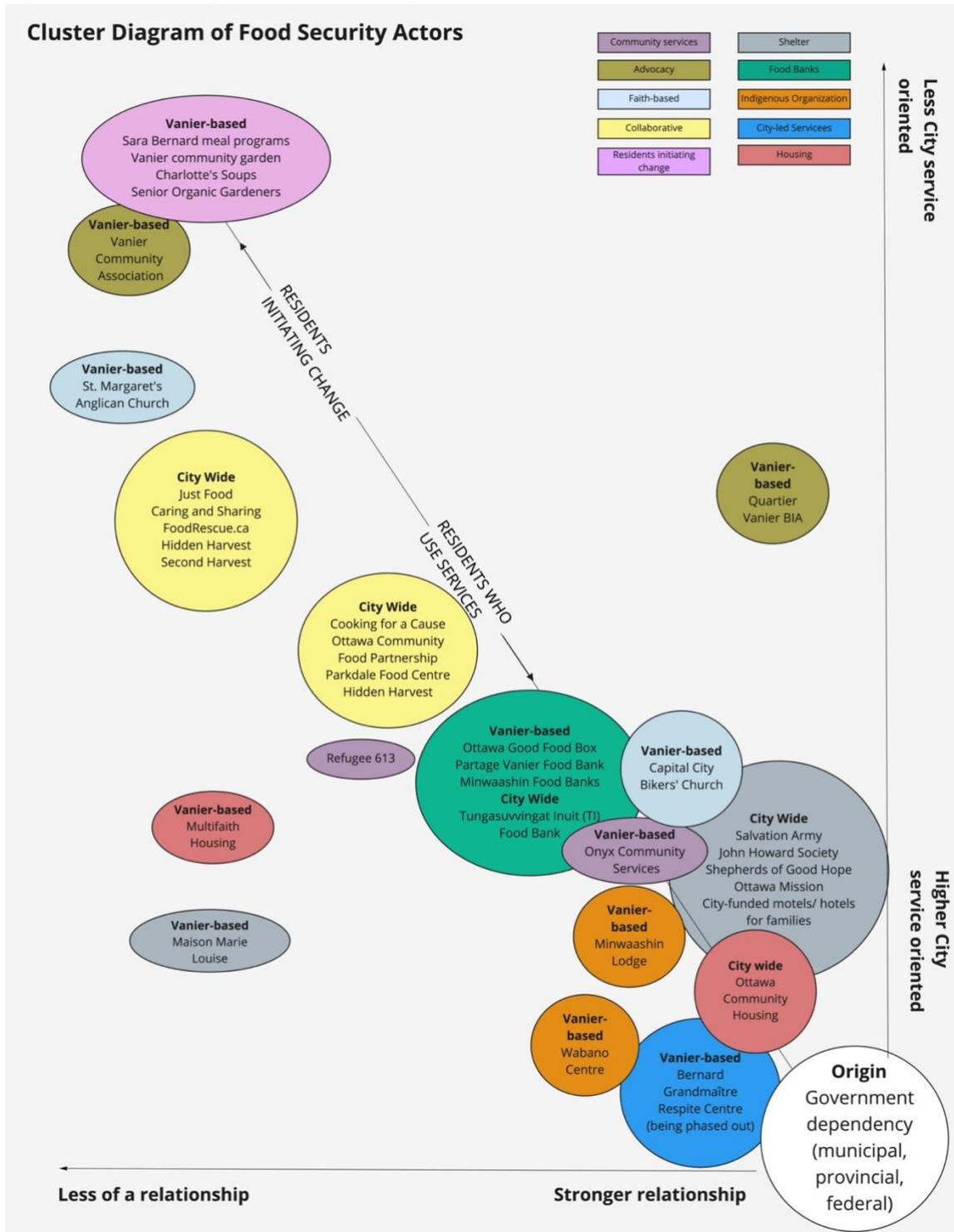
Various data collection methods were employed to generate lines of evidence suited to helping me identify conditions that facilitate effective engagement and the effect of responsive engagement strategies. For example, empathy maps, paired with structured interviews, helped identify implicit and explicit conditions that frame an ideal engagement process. Interviews conducted throughout each phase also provided a forum for gathering quick feedback on the reasons underpinning actors' decisions to accept or decline opportunities to engage within each phase in real-time.

I relied on EDT workshops to generate lines of evidence to identify the elements that make up a responsive engagement strategy. These workshops also provided the space to test responsive engagement strategies' effect in compelling actor groups to move towards the building momentum phase. Finally, the Ex-Ante phase validated the findings that emerged during the engagement process. The information I examined at each stage, including the enabling conditions and effect of responsive engagement strategies, interpreted through my theoretical frameworks, forms the basis of the following section. The next section shows my findings, sorting the actors into distinct groupings visualized in the Cluster Diagram of Food Security Actors.

Chapter 3: Character and Context of the Actor Communities

In this chapter, I show the findings that emerged from working with Vanier actors related to the unique realities that characterize the environment in which they operate. I discuss these findings by unpacking the elements that make up the Cluster Diagram of Food Security Actors. The spheres of influence model helped advance my understanding of the effects of structure on actors, by enabling me to sort actors based on their proximity to government. The origin of the Cluster Diagram of Food Security Actors represents government, to convey the power they have over decision making in respect to the issue of food insecurity. Government decision makers' power to influence the direction of actors flows from funding arrangements between them and frontline organizations as well as some advocacy groups. The origin (i.e., the government) is a significant element in the diagram, as it allows me to sort actors in a way that establishes the basis for understanding the effect of overarching structures (i.e., government) on the ability of actors to engage.

Figure 2 - Cluster Diagram of Food Security Actors



The Cluster Diagram of Food Security Actors starts with residents that have moved to democratic action to take on the role of solving challenges they face. Residents' desire for greater food security in their neighbourhood can be seen on the Cluster Diagram of Food Security Actors through individuals like Sara Bernard and Charlotte Taylor. Bernard organizes meal programs with her husband from her home kitchen, and Taylor provides soup to residents in need (Bernard; Touchant; 2020). Nathalie Carrier (Carrier 2020) from the QVBIA describes residents as hustlers that are "strong and fight daily for their community." Pastor Rob McKee (McKee 2020) from Capital City Bikers' Church affirms this comment by Carrier, as he highlights citizens' willingness to make their community better by donating their time and goods.

Citizen-led initiatives outside traditional structures struggle to survive because they are not supported. They are dependent on decision-makers, such as the City of Ottawa, to take up the mantle to address neighbourhood issues that directly affect residents. However, actors located across the Cluster Diagram of Food Security Actors, as well as decision-makers, are getting in the way of citizens wanting to collaborate to solve problems as they may feel disenfranchised from organized structures.

Evidence of this can be seen through Bernard's (Bernard 2020) comment that she feels like she is "...at war with the city." At the same time, the QVBIA and VCA (Carrier; Touchant, 2020), which are champions of collective action, illuminate another side of the community, inclusive of citizens who feel disenchanting and therefore disengaged. However, Touchant (2020) and Carrier (2020) attribute this apathy to elected officials not listening to the community, making citizens feel like the government is not engaged in solving the problems they face. Consequently, "...championing this story that

we all have to be in this together, that we all have to work together, is the single biggest challenge we face in keeping people focused on solutions..." (Carrier 2020).

Outside of residents, the model highlights different actors organized along the following dimensions: proximity to decision-makers; a spectrum of organizations sorted by those whose mandates are limited to city service provision, and those whose mandates are less oriented towards city service provision (y-axis); and a spectrum of organizations sorted by those that have a stronger relationship to the government and those that have less of a relationship with the government (x-axis).

Organizations whose mandate is restricted to a service provider role have a higher propensity to coordinate. Coordination means identifying opportunities for strategic partnerships to multiply capacities and improve service delivery efficiencies. Conversely, organizations whose role goes beyond service provision to include functions targeted towards influence tend to focus on broader social impact around solving complex neighbourhood problems such as food insecurity.

The following analysis splits these actors into four groupings that are parsed along the following dimensions i) the extent to which ties to government affects their ability to engage and ii) the extent to which the organizational culture and leadership within these organizations influence their willingness to engage.

3.1 Actor Communities

The following provides a deeper analysis of the different actor groups by analyzing their proximity to decision-makers, their mandate, and the effect external conditions have on their work and how they engage and interact with other players.

3.1.1 Furthest from the government – more inclined to engage

The grouping actors furthest from the government are composed of organizations and residents with greater freedom to define their agenda as they are not bound to the government through funding arrangements. Such freedom enables these organizations to behave in a much more fluid manner and interact with other players to achieve a common purpose that is not necessarily aligned with government priorities. This group comprises the VCA, St. Margaret's and residents initiating change, as shown in the Cluster Diagram of Food Security Actors. The VCA is an organization that represents the voices of Vanier residents. The VCA's mandate emphasizes the importance of identifying alternative collaboration streams to address local issues (Touchant 2020). The desire to go around traditional political channels exhibited by the VCA demonstrates similarities to residents initiating change independently, therefore explaining their closeness in the model.

Other distinctions that must be acknowledged within this grouping of actors include St. Margaret's. Differentiators between St. Margaret's and other actors within this grouping start with their role as a faith-based organization. As a faith group, their agenda is not directly affected by political priorities; instead, the Anglican Diocese controls resources needed by the church to support community outreach efforts (Marshman 2021). However, St. Margaret's currently has little to no mandate guiding their community outreach, as they are now in the process of "figuring out what the future of St. Margaret's should be" (Marshman and Gibson, 2020). The openness of their mandate makes them more open to exploring possibilities for collaboration, to present to Parish Council to secure the resources needed to carry out their recommended course of action.

3.1.2 Farther from the government – more inclined to engage

This actor community is located further away from the origin of the Cluster Diagram of Food Security Actors because they display qualities of organizations that are less dependent on government, evidenced by their prioritization of social change initiatives. This is not to say that this grouping of actors does not have funding ties to the government. However, they effectively utilize resources from overarching structures to support priorities counter to the government's high service orientation.

Parkdale Food Centre represents the starting point for analyzing the yellow bubble. The Parkdale Food Centre transcends traditional actor boundaries. Their role includes frontline activities, including a food bank dedicated to providing high-quality foods and advocacy efforts focused on food insecurity and poverty in Ottawa (Secord 2021). The Parkdale Food Centre's success in reducing their dependency on local political, funding and food banking structures, can be seen through their ability to establish alternative support streams. Secord's (The Executive Director of the Parkdale Food Centre) influence has been built up and dispersed across several smaller actors, including small businesses, restaurants, and funding agencies not limited to the government, such as the Ottawa Community Foundation. The latter prioritize and support projects committed to sustainable change.

For example, Cooking for a Cause represents a cross-sectoral response to COVID-19. The Ottawa Community Food Partnership supports Cooking for a Cause by funding 14 food businesses to provide 4,000 high-quality meals a week to 25 social service agencies (Secord 2020). The strategic use of resources across organizations to improve low-income populations' access to high-quality food, demonstrates a more

significant degree of collective social impact. Parkdale Food Centre's collective impact approach can also be seen through its advocacy committee, supported by the Ottawa Community Food Partnership, Just Foods, and the Ottawa Community Foundation, which rewards initiatives targeted towards systems change (Secord 2021). Thus, an exploration of the yellow bubble shows how using a network of smaller players to resist pressures from local political and economic structures enables a broader agenda that emphasizes impact.

However, Parkdale Food Centre's influence at the political level is also limited because of diverging priorities between Karen Secord, Parkdale's Executive Director, and the government. Diverging priorities can be seen through Secord's call for food to be recognized as a human right, which does not align with the emergency style responses prioritized by the government (Secord 2020). Therefore, despite reducing dependency upon the structural forces, Parkdale Food Centre is not entirely immune to feeling the symptoms of the local political, food banking and funding structures. The symptoms of this system manifest themselves through feelings of stress and anxiety due to capacity constraints.

I am angry about how I created a program helping businesses, social service agencies, and people in need. Yet I cannot get anyone from the province and federal government to recognize that this can be replicated to save businesses and help people. The City has put money behind it, but every day, I am worried I will let people down if I cannot find the money. I should not be in this position because food is a human right. (Secord 2020).

Nuances within this grouping of actors can also be seen through the QVBIA, whose role is to advocate for local Vanier businesses. The QVBIA also focuses on social development, as neighbourhood issues are necessary to attract high-quality businesses

and promote economic growth, a priority atypical to other business community organizations in Ottawa (Carrier 2020). The QVBIA has two elected officials on their board, with one official dedicated to poverty reduction, while a second councillor prioritizes other issues (Carrier 2020). With two elected officials on the board of the QVBIA, with differing priorities on the subject to whom the QVBIA is answerable, they must navigate the line between achieving social change and supporting the City.

To provide a complete understanding of this actor community and the conditions in which they operate, we must also assess the effects of COVID-19. These effects were most noticeable through the QVBIA and the Parkdale Food Centre. In the case of the QVBIA, the pandemic prompted them to elevate the needs of local businesses and channel their capacities towards assisting the businesses in navigating government direction (Carrier 2020). In the context of Parkdale Food Centre, their mandate lends itself towards a collective approach in the context of a crisis. Parkdale Food Centre's collaborative orientation is demonstrated by Secord's decision to start Cooking for a Cause, which brought together many actors to ensure residents in need across the City have access to high-quality food.

3.1.3 Actors with greater dependency relationship on government

Actors highlighted in the green and orange bubbles are positioned closer to the origin due to their reliance on the government to provide funding. This cluster of actors is distinct from the actor group with the closest relationship to government, as organizations like the VCSC, Wabano and Minwaashin have a greater dependency relationship on government. Conversely, the cluster of actors that sit next to the government possesses a higher degree of influence over decision-makers, elaborated in sections to follow.

Organizations in the green bubble that took part in this study include Minwaashin, and the VCSC, which runs Partage Vanier. The dependency relationship between smaller food banks and the government is evidenced by their inability to stretch their mandate to include activity outside of serving. Evidence of this can be seen through the VCSC. They highlight the stress that stems from having to comply with the demands of the City of Ottawa, as the resources provided by the government do not match what VCSC needs to respond to municipal demands (VCSC 2020). Other participants in the study highlight the increased strain imposed by funding structures, whereby funding is provided for a limited time frame, in addition to being accompanied by a rigorous time-intensive application process (Touchant 2020). Together, these elements impose significant stress upon frontline organizations as they stretch their resources to match a pre-determined standard or risk the organizations' termination.

The traditional food banking system also affects the conditions in which community organizations operate. Critical structural components that make up the food banking system start with the Ottawa Food Bank, which acts as a central player charged with managing and distributing food to local food banks (Secord 2020). Due to dependencies on the Ottawa Food Bank, smaller food banks are subject to providing foods with limited nutritional value, as these kinds of food are imposed on them through a top-down system (Secord 2020).

The food banking structure also prohibits smaller food banks from fundraising outside their catchment area (Carrier 2020). As a result, competition comes to bear as food banks operating in the same space are pitted against one another to fight for the money they need to support the vulnerable populations they serve (Carrier 2020).

However, we must be careful not to overstate the strain flowing from overarching structures, as services are essential to respond to the daily needs of marginalized populations.

Indigenous-based organizations situated in the orange bubble echo pressures expressed by other service providers. For instance, Wabano highlights the effect of external political forces stating, "We are a non for profit. Most of our programs are dependent on funding from governments. It's hard to work on stuff that needs to change because we are so based on whatever the government of the day lets us do" (Ireland 2020).

Nuances within this grouping of actor communities can be seen through Capital City Bikers' Church. The positioning of Capital City Bikers' Church along the x and y-axis conveys how their behaviour reflects service providers connected to the government, even though Bikers' Church's programming is not dependent upon public resources. Their serving nature is reinforced by the overlap between Capital City Bikers' Church, shelters, food banks and community service organizations as they partner with these organizations to deliver services. Other nuances can be seen through Onyx Community Services, an organization that does not receive government funding, despite its location on the map. However, they are situated closer to the government because it was noted that the City of Ottawa represents one of the most significant barriers for Onyx due to the challenges they face in getting grants (Bernard 2020). Furthermore, Onyx overlaps with other groups such as Capital City Bikers' Church due to partnerships between them.

For those organizations restricted to serving, COVID-19 appeared to move them to look internally at their operations and reinforce resources dedicated to maintaining and expanding those programs. A narrow focus on keeping the institution's mandate can be seen through Capital City Bikers' Church, which directed most of their capacities towards ensuring they could respond to the increased need in the neighbourhood (McKee 2021). The pandemic also moved Wabano to focus on internal operations and their clients to ensure adequate COVID-19 services to clients, such as COVID-19 testing and vaccines (Ireland 2021).

Ultimately, socio-political forces, human needs, and COVID-19 interact in ways that significantly strain their capacity, making these groups less inclined to engage. Rather coordination may be a more attractive option, as the reallocation of resources and the establishment of strategic partnerships help address their immediate need for greater capacity.

3.1.4 Actors with the closest relationship to government

Organizations positioned in the blue, grey and red bubbles are situated closest to the model's origin because they enjoy privileged access to government. For large shelters, privileged access to government means that these organizations have a seat on a committee alongside city councillors, providing greater opportunities to influence elected officials in a direction that aligns with their objectives. For organizations like Ottawa Community Housing, city councillors sit on their board of directors.

Influence over City Council by larger shelters can be seen through the City's approval to the Salvation Army to build a homeless shelter on Montreal Road in Vanier. This deal was done behind closed doors, whereby consultations were only conducted

with the community after the decision was made (Ireland 2020). Shelters' direct line to those with control over resources and funding make these organizations more inclined to operate in a silo, as they have a direct line to resources needed to execute municipal priorities. As beneficiaries of the system of control, it is unlikely that shelters would collaborate to advance an agenda that advocates for solving the issue of food insecurity, as their very existence is dependent upon residents using their services.

The Respite Centre (which is being phased out) overlaps with the government because they are a city-led initiative that was introduced to Vanier during COVID-19 to provide a space for residents in need to get a hot meal, a shower, as well as access to counselling, among other services (Stevens and Cooper, 2021). In addition, the Respite Centre reinforces the City's service-oriented approach to food insecurity, as many of the services offered at the centre are offloaded onto social service organizations (Stevens and Cooper; Secord; VCSC; Ireland, 2021).

3.2 Summary

In summary, Figure 2 shows a complex arrangement of local and community-based actors with different and often overlapping roles and responsibilities. The interplay between these actors is best described as fluid and dynamic, as coordination is dependent on needs and priorities at the moment, depending on local demands. Bringing these actors together for a common purpose is also complex, forming the basis of understanding engagement in this thesis. The work of engagement means understanding what drives these actors, motivates them to action, bounded by the realities of limited resources, time, expertise and willingness sometimes to exceed their mandates.

Chapter 4: Results and Discussion

In this chapter, I show what the enabling environment looks like for each grouping of actors identified in Section Three: *furthest* from the government – more inclined to engage, *farther* from the government – more inclined to engage, actors with a greater *dependency* relationship on government and actors with the *closest* relationship to government.

The analysis examines the enabling environment and obstacles to engagement from the standpoint of each actor group. Each analysis is accompanied by a table that provides a detailed discussion on the enablers and obstacles within each of the four different sets of conditions identified in Section Two: structure, agency, responsiveness, and communications. These conditional categories are also sorted into the three phases of the engagement. The actor group with the closest relationship to government represents an exception as they were excluded from this study's sample population. Therefore, the discussion on this actor group is limited to a brief overview, informed by participating actor groups understanding of the shelter's mandate and proximity to the government.

4.1 More inclined to engage

Actors within this cluster have more freedom to define their agenda as they are not attached to the government via funding arrangements. Such freedom enables these organizations to behave in a much more fluid and dynamic manner and interact with other players to achieve a common purpose that is not necessarily aligned with government priorities.

As described by Rogers (2003, 282-283), innovators are willing to adopt new ideas and to act independently on them, while early adopters contain a high concentration

of opinion leaders. Opinion leaders represent influential individuals that can persuade peers to adopt an innovation (2003, 283). Qualities unique to innovators and early adopters are exemplified by the VCA and residents willing to initiate change. For example, Lauren Touchant, the Head of the VCA, matches the criteria for an innovator through Touchant's tendency to introduce new ideas into the local system and her drive to solve pressing neighbourhood problems (Rogers 2003, 282).

Signs of opinion leadership in Touchant are evident through their success in influencing frontline organizations, residents, and faith groups to come to the engagement (Rogers 2003, 283). Residents like Bernard also fit into the early adopter category as they readily attended the engagement process. However, Bernard does not embody the entirety of Roger's definition of early adopters because she did not exhibit qualities of an opinion leader, as she did not influence other stakeholders to come to the engagement. Bernard did not invite other actors to engage because of a perceived gap between Precision Cities and their goals (Rogers 2003, 15). Bernard (2021) confirmed that they could not invite others to the engagement due to the absence of a clear plan outlining what was needed to act. Thus, the emergence of a gap between Bernard's goals and Precision Cities triggered a regression in Bernard's positioning as an early adopter.

4.1.1 Come to the engagement

As demonstrated in Table 4.1.1 below, structural conditions act as an enabler for this group at the point of coming to the engagement (Sewell 1992; Rogers 2003). Sewell (1992, 27) describes structure as a combination of mental frameworks and resources that facilitate or get in the way of social action.

Table 4.1.1 - Come to the Engagement - the initial point in which actors come together to address a common challenge.

Enablers	Obstacles
<p>Structural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political and funding structures have driven organizations and residents to collaborate on food insecurity due to the failure of the government to address the issue adequately • St. Margaret's <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Parish Council was conducting a needs assessment to identify what their role in the community could be <p>Agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fit with community needs around food insecurity • Fit with desire for collaboration that emphasizes problem-solving • VCA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Leadership emphasized the importance of collaboration and solving key neighbourhood issues • St. Margaret's Church <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The openness of mandate created space for grabbing hold of new initiatives <p>Responsiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The further out you are more responsive you are to community action • Resident <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ First-hand experience at workshop demonstrative of potential for the engagement process to: ○ Establish connections with other stakeholders ○ Increase situational awareness of existing programs and food initiatives happening across ○ Increase communication between organizations <p>Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach by a change agent • Limited lines of communication in the community between those operating in the food insecurity space 	<p>Structural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overarching structures acted as more of an enabler than an obstacle at the point of coming to the engagement <p>Agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VCA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Volunteer driven organization, creating limitations on capacity <p>Responsiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Technology constraints <p>Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 led to breakdowns in communication

For instance, the priorities that drew the VCA to seek out Precision Cities were a response to perceived failures at the political level, which led the VCA to seek out new streams of collaboration that operate outside of the political system (Touchant 2020). Residents such as Bernard (2020) also felt disenchanted by the government. As a result, they were looking for opportunities to collaborate with other stakeholders to brainstorm solutions to neighbourhood issues such as food insecurity. Structure was also an enabler for St. Margaret's Church; however, rather than external political and funding structures

motivating their agenda, the Church is subject to an internal hierarchy that limited its ability to coordinate without parish consent.

Agency, meaning people's capacity to perpetuate, shape and transform structures also helped trigger movement at the phase of coming to the engagement process (Sewell 1992, 4). Evidence of the enabling effect of agency can be seen through the fit between Precision Cities and the direction Touchant was leading the community towards - a collaborative model that addressed critical issues in the neighbourhood. A lack of definition within St. Margaret's mandate created a high degree of freedom for representatives of Parish Council to come to the engagement, although consent was still required. The openness of St. Margaret's mandate can be seen through representatives of the Church's role in "figuring out what the future of St. Margaret's should be" (Marshman and Gibson, 2020). Committee members from the Church attended as they saw Precision Cities as a space supportive of their work in conducting a needs assessment, a task commissioned by the Church to define a community outreach strategy (Marshman and Gibson 2020).

The fit between Precision Cities and the problems Bernard was trying to solve resonates with specific perceived attributes of an innovation highlighted in diffusion theory, namely, observability, "the degree to which the results of an innovation are visible to others" (Rogers 2003, 258). A perceived match between Precision Cities and Bernard's needs was clarified through her first workshop, as she was exposed to the specifics of how Precision Cities could be of assistance in food programming efforts. Bernard (2021) expressed the same challenges as frontline organizations, namely, poor communication in the community, which resulted in a lack of situational awareness of the

range of services being provided in Vanier. Thus, the opportunity to connect with other stakeholders to learn about other organizations' activities demonstrated the potential to identify opportunities to integrate into the existing local food insecurity system. Such integration was key to providing Bernard (2020) with the support needed to advance their goal of working with the community to achieve a common purpose of identifying solutions to food insecurity.

Overall, obstacles at such an early stage in the engagement process were minimal, including low barriers to entry due to the opportunity stakeholders had to trial the initiative and attend based on their schedules (Rogers 2003, 16). The obstacles that did arise at this phase included communication and technological constraints.

Communication challenges were primarily concentrated among residents initiating change and St. Margaret's. COVID-19 posed a challenge to communicating with St. Margaret's as it closed during the summer of 2020 (Marshman and Gibson 2020; Touchant 2020). Technical constraints were felt by representatives of St. Margaret's, Bernard, and Charlotte Taylor. Technical limitations existed through the challenges St. Margaret's and residents faced using the video conferencing and digital brainstorming tools that supported the engagement process. Outreach by the change agent (myself as the researcher) was critical to activating opinion leaders such as the VCA. This is because I needed to be in constant communication with them to come to a shared understanding as to which actors they needed to invite to the engagement (Rogers 2003, 370).

4.1.2 Early-stage engagement

The VCA's and St. Margaret's organizational structure acts as an enabler and a constraint within this engagement phase. From an enabler perspective, the *human* and *non-human*

resources, combined with the mental frameworks employed by people within the VCA and St. Margaret's, spilled over into early-stage engagement (Sewell 1992, 9,10).

Table 4.1.2 – Early-Stage Engagement - community leaders come together to assess and prioritize pressing neighbourhood-level needs.

Enablers	Obstacles
<p>Structural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political, funding and food banking structures have driven organizations and residents to collaborate on food insecurity due to the failure of the government to address the issue adequately. • Residents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Nothing impeding them, beholden to nobody • VCA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>human and non-human resources</i>, combined with the mental frameworks employed by people within the VCA • St. Margaret's <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Anglican Diocese moving in a direction supportive of parishes crafting outreach strategies responsive to community needs <p>Agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leadership emphasizes the importance of collaboration and solving key neighbourhood issues ▪ A loose affiliation of actors attracts more stakeholder individuals and communities <p>Responsiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More agile than other groups closer to the origin <p>Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VCA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Informal outreach via text is the most effective means for garnering a response • Resident <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Informal messages via email 	<p>Structural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service-oriented actors impede residents from taking community action. Service-oriented actors' inability to plan can be traced to the political, funding and food banking structures. • St. Margaret's <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Internal hierarchy of the Church who hold control over resources needed to support community action • VCA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An organization run by volunteers limits the extent of their ability to contribute <p>Agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Beholden to nobody, which provides the freedom to exit the initiative when it isn't as responsive to their goals and ideas as to where the engagement process should lead ○ Ability to contribute <p>Responsiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service-oriented actors getting in the way of residents from being able to take community action • Resident • Failure of Precision Cities to trigger coordinated action

For example, the mental framework Lauren Touchant, the Head of the VCA, used to guide the agenda and priorities for the VCA is shaped by their view of the community, which emphasizes the importance of collaboration and poverty reduction. Jane Gibson and Joan Marshman (2020), committee members from St. Margaret's and St. Margaret's

priest, elevate the importance of strategic community outreach to ensure outreach is aligned with neighbourhood-level needs. Furthermore, the Anglican Diocese appears to be moving in a direction supportive of parishes crafting outreach strategies responsive to community needs (Marshman & Gibson, 2021). Structure as an enabling factor also extends to residents initiating change, as they are not beholden to anyone.

The mental frameworks and resources that contribute to the enabling environment of these organizations can also be viewed through the lens of agency (Sewell 1992). An analysis of this actor constellation through the lens of agency shows how structure, in combination with agency, contributes to the enabling environment within the early stages of engagement. Evidence of the duality at play can be seen through the VCA, whereby Touchant represents a human resource to their organization, whose mental framework translates into organizational priorities. Simultaneously, Touchant acts as an agent, as her mental framework guides the VCA's approach and emphasis on poverty reduction and social change. Marshman and Gibson can also be categorized as agents within their organizational structure. Their leadership on community outreach is evident by their role in spearheading their local parishes community needs assessment. Marshman and Gibson are also advocates for broader organizational buy-in for Precision Cities. Residents can also be viewed as agents, evidenced by Bernard and Taylor. They are driven to create their programming without adequate government responses to their community's poverty.

However, the organizational structure of the VCA and St. Margaret's also poses an obstacle at early-stage engagement. For instance, Touchant (2020) highlighted that poverty reduction efforts championed by the VCA are driven mainly by herself and a limited number of volunteers. Furthermore, the VCA is an entirely volunteer-run and led

organization; thus, Touchant (2020) and other volunteers' professional commitments override opportunities to contribute to and develop collective strategies on food insecurity. In the case of St. Margaret's, Marshman and Gibson (2021) also face limited capacity issues as they struggle to secure buy-in from the wider Parish Council and congregation related to garnering support for their engagement in Precision Cities. Ultimately, Gibson and Marshman face structural challenges as they struggle to have their voices heard by Parish Council and the hierarchy of decision-makers within the Church (including some external authorities such as the Bishop). The latter control the resources needed to support community action (Marshman & Gibson, 2021). Structures are also viewed as obstacles by residents like Bernard (2020). Evidence of this struggle comes to light through the comment that they feel they are in "a war with the City" due to existing funding arrangements that make it difficult to access the resources needed to carry out their food initiatives.

Within this engagement phase, those more beholden to the government present a barrier to actors who have more freedom to develop solutions to pressing neighbourhood issues. For instance, the government's agenda can be characterized by a high service orientation that affects the behaviour of frontline organizations, who are beholden via funding arrangements that perpetuate the government's approach to food insecurity. Sewell's (1992, 27) discussion on structure helps to explain how the behaviour of frontline organizations "constrains social action" as they "reproduce" government structures through their mandate, which utilizes resources (government funding) to carry out a service-oriented mental framework.

Conversely, actors located furthest from the government are not dependent on government; therefore, these organizations have a greater degree of freedom to define their agenda. Such freedom enables these organizations to behave in a much more dynamic and fluid manner, with the ability to collaborate with other players to achieve a common purpose that is not necessarily aligned with government priorities. In the context of the actor group located furthest from government, the mental framework and resources specific to these actors' support "social action" (Sewell 1992, 27). However, the structural pressures felt by frontline organizations constrain community action by the VCA, residents and St. Margaret's, as efforts to develop solutions capable of addressing food insecurity cannot be supported by these organizations and individuals on their own.

Agency also represents a barrier for this cluster of actors at early-stage engagement. That is, the structure is not the sole determinant of human behaviour, as all agents, regardless of the degree to which pressures are felt from overarching systems, have some degree of capacity to act (Sewell 1992, 10). Thus, leadership across frontline organizations that is unwilling to allocate a portion of their agenda to poverty reduction also impedes early-stage engagement for the VCA, St. Margaret's and residents initiating change. Finally, communications proved to be an enabler at this stage as the strengthening of relationships and trust resulted in participants providing their personal contact information.

4.1.3 Building Momentum

A high degree of overlap exists between enablers identified at early-stage engagement and building momentum. For instance, structure plays a role in the building momentum phase once organizations have crafted a strategy to address neighbourhood-level needs.

In the case of the VCA, Touchant is representative of a critical resource within the organization, as their knowledge and commitment to poverty reduction have enabled them to enter the phase of building momentum. In the context of St. Margaret’s, Marshman and Gibson are part of a committee dedicated to conducting a community needs assessment to guide the future of St. Margaret’s role in the community.

Table 4.1.3 – Building Momentum - community leaders helping move the engagement process forward by coming back to the engagement.

Enablers	Obstacles
<p>Structural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organizational structure of VCA and St. Margaret's Church is inclusive of effective human resources and mental frameworks that emphasize problem-solving and coordination • Independence from political and funding structures enables this grouping of actors to advance a problem-solving agenda <p>Agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant to mandate focused on collaboration and the facilitation of socio-economic change • Leadership • Civic-minded residents who want to make a difference in their community <p>Responsiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible engagement process that enables actors' communities to enter and exit engagement by their schedule <p>Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change agent works to stabilize the positive movement of organizations that have decided to contribute to the development of strategies tied to solving food insecurity 	<p>Structural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The limited capacity of frontline actors, which can in part be traced to the political, funding and food banking structures, made worse by COVID-19 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ St. Margaret's <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Internal church hierarchy controls resources needed to carry out community action ○ VCA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An organization run by volunteers limits the extent of their ability to contribute <p>Agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resident <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A disconnect exists between high-level discussions focused on developing a strategy for action directed towards sustainable change versus Bernard's focus on programming <p>Responsiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resident <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Failure of Precision Cities to trigger coordinated action

Structure provides insights into the indirect relationship that contributes to the enabling environment at the phase of building momentum. Degrees of freedom and

mobility allow groups such as the VCA, St. Margaret's and residents to interact and engage with others to pursue their interests and agendas. While this freedom represents a contributing factor to this phase, it also represents an indirect relationship to social and political structures (Sewell 1992, 27). Agency is also required for actors to benefit from this freedom (Sewell, 4). Touchant, Marshman and Gibson, Bernard and Taylor recognize the need to act to benefit from the space between them and the government.

Frontline actors' dependency on government provides a complete explanation of why these actors and their agenda get in the way of building momentum for the VCA, St. Margaret's, and residents. The dependency relationship between frontline actors and government perpetuates a response to food insecurity that is predicated upon day-to-day service delivery, thus reinforcing patterns set by overarching political and funding structures (Sewell 1992, 9, 10). As a result, it becomes difficult for the VCA, St. Margaret's and residents to come together to solve the problem of food insecurity when a crucial part of the food insecurity network (i.e., frontline organizations) are moving in a direction that maintains the status quo.

The work of the change agent to maintain constant contact with each of the organizations and the resident initiating change was critical at this phase. For instance, participants were often unresponsive to initial invitations to workshops or requests for feedback on the prototype map, making it essential to continually follow up to encourage forward movement (Rogers 2003, 370).

4.2 Summary

In sum, the actors furthest away from the government are representatives of innovators and early adopters. Furthermore, the structure of organizations within these actor groups

serves as an enabler for engagement. Agency also acts as an enabler, with individuals within these organizations, such as Touchant, Marshman and Gibson, and residents acting as champions for crafting strategies responsive to neighbourhood level needs. For instance, most community associations focus on street-level beautification and neighbourhood-wide celebrations, while Touchant has placed the VCA's focus on addressing neighbourhood problems.

However, this grouping of actors also faces critical challenges at early-stage engagement and building momentum. These obstacles include limitations within their organizational structures. Structure also acts as a blocker, as dependency relationships upon government encourage frontline actors to perpetuate a mental framework characterized by a high service orientation. At the same time, the inability of frontline leadership to emphasize the importance of problem solving also poses a barrier. Until these obstacles are dissolved, the VCA, St. Margaret's and residents will struggle to build momentum.

4.3 More inclined to engage

This actor community is located further away from the government in the Cluster Diagram of Food Security Actors because they display qualities of organizations less dependent on government, evidenced by their prioritization of social change initiatives. A lower level of dependency does not mean that this grouping of actors does not have funding ties to the government. However, they effectively utilize resources from governmental bodies to support priorities that run counter to the government's high service orientation.

This grouping of actors comprises early adopters and innovators (Rogers 2003, 282, 283). Innovators include people who are the first to adopt new ideas without consulting others on the concept, service, or product (Rogers 2003, 282). Innovator qualities are exemplified by Karen Secord, Executive Director at Parkdale Food Centre and Nathalie Carrier, Executive Director of the QVBIA, which is expanded upon below. Early adopters follow close behind innovators in terms of their rate of adoption (Rogers 2003, 283). Early adopters are different from innovators because they contain a higher concentration of opinion leaders (e.g., Secord and Carrier). Opinion leaders are defined as influential individuals that can effectively persuade peers to adopt an innovation (Rogers 2003, 283). These characteristics can be seen through the Parkdale Food Centre and the QVBIA. For example, Secord exemplifies the qualities of an innovator and opinion leader evidenced by her success in breaking out of the traditional food banking structure and the subsequent establishment of the Ottawa Community Food Partnership. However, Secord did not use her influence to invite other actors to move the engagement process forward. Parkdale Food Centre (Secord 2020) did not make it to the building momentum phase due to little money. Thus, resource limitations present an obstacle to engagement, despite the alignment between Precision Cities and their mission.

Innovator qualities are also evident in Carrier. For example, Carrier was willing to adopt Precision Cities without consulting others about their experience at the engagement (Rogers 2003, 282). In addition, Carrier's leadership style of the QVBIA affirms their innovativeness, as Carrier has shaped a plan for the QVBIA that emphasizes the importance of contributing to social progress to achieve maximal economic development. Such an approach is not widely ascribed to by other business associations in the City of

Ottawa. Carrier also fits into the category of an early adopter as they match the criteria of an opinion leader (Rogers 2003, 283). For example, Carrier influenced other parties to engage, including Spagnoli from Minwaashin and Secord from Parkdale Food Centre.

4.3.1 Come to the Engagement

These actors came to the engagement because they demonstrate a more significant concern for facilitating socio-economic change. For example, Sewell (1992, 27) highlights agents capable of using resources made available by the overarching structures to enact change. Carrier and Secord are examples of individuals that are not waiting for the structures to shift, to achieve poverty reduction. Instead, they know how to work within existing systems to secure resources from the government to redistribute to like-minded partners committed to solving food insecurity. Given these organizations' mandates, they were willing to explore Precision Cities to build community capacity, recognizing the limited access community organizations have to resources required to exceed their mandate.

Table 4.3.1 - Come to the Engagement - the initial point in which actors come together to address a common challenge.

Enablers	Obstacles
<p>Structural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political, funding and food banking structures have driven organizations to collaborate on food insecurity due to the failure of the government to address the issue adequately <p>Agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Committed to making lasting community change • Relevant to organizational mandate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Parkdale Food Centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Emphasis is on creating a fair, more equitable system and dismantling the food banking system ▪ COVID-19 acted as an enabler due to the strain on capacity generated by increased pressures from government and client needs, that drove organizations to enter a space that offers the opportunity to identify possible 	<p>Structural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Overarching structures act as more of an enabler than an obstacle at the point of coming to the engagement <p>Agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinctive mandate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ QVBIA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ COVID-19 prompted QVBIA to shift capacities to respond to the needs of businesses ○ Parkdale Food Centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ COVID-19 prompted the Parkdale Food Centre to ensure that their efforts support their main priorities, including their primary catchment area, the Ottawa Community

Enablers	Obstacles
<p style="text-align: center;">partnerships and opportunities to orchestrate a collective response to pressures felt by all service providers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ QVBIA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mandate sees social development as key to supporting local businesses <p>Responsiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The further away from the origin actors are, the more responsive they are • Looking for opportunities for collaboration with like-minded organizations • Flexible engagement process that enables actors' communities to enter and exit engagement to accommodate their schedules • QVBIA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To define their role within the food insecurity space, as well as to reduce duplication and to address gaps • Parkdale Food Centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Debunking myths around poverty and the idea that people are poor because they did something wrong ○ A problem-solving discussion <p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach by an opinion leader 	<p style="text-align: center;">Food Partnership, and their peer advocacy office.</p> <p>Responsiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rigid scheduling that requires actors to be present for the entire duration of a series of workshops

Agency can also be seen as an obstacle at the stage of coming to the engagement. For instance, the QVBIA's mandate primarily serves local businesses (Carrier 2021). In a time of crisis, such as COVID-19, a shift in resources and capacities occurs to reinforce, expand, and reimagine operations to keep pace with the increase in business needs during the pandemic. Thus, a focus on the organization's inner workings to address the needs of primary users of the QVBIA means less time is invested in a collaborative space. The behaviour exhibited by the QVBIA is explained by Sewell's (1992, 19) conception of agency, as the QVBIA channels resources, from overarching structures to advance their mental framework, which is primarily concerned with the welfare of local businesses. The mandate of Parkdale Food Centre also acts as an obstacle to coming to the

engagement as they are responsible for a catchment area outside of Vanier. In a pandemic context, constraints on resources increased. Thus, Parkdale Food Centre must turn inward to ensure that their efforts support their main priorities, including their primary catchment area, the Ottawa Community Food Partnership, and their peer advocacy office.

From a communications perspective, community leaders with influence were important at this stage, as evidenced by the Executive Director of the QVBIA, Nathalie Carrier. Carrier leveraged their relevant networks to invite Secord, the Executive Director of the Parkdale Food Centre, to come to the engagement.

4.3.2 Early-stage engagement

Agency also represents a key enabler at early-stage engagement, as these organizations' commitment to facilitating change trumped their structural constraints. For instance, the QVBIA is funded by the government and has two city councillors on its Board of Directors. These organizations further exemplify Sewell's (1992) discussion on the concept of agency at early-stage engagement because they are actively using their networks, including government, to provide the connections and resources like-minded partners need to execute on their goals of socio-economic change.

Table 4.3.2 Early-stage engagement - community leaders come together to assess and prioritize pressing neighbourhood-level needs

Enablers	Obstacles
<p>Structural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It has become more politically interesting to be a supporter of anti-poverty <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ e.g., the City is funding partnerships oriented towards making a difference on food insecurity (e.g., the City has funded the Ottawa Community Food Partnership) • COVID-19 resulted in government funding to support partnership-based initiatives that are also committed to achieving systemic change <p>Agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership - committed to making lasting community change • Relevant to organizational mandate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Parkdale Food Centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Emphasis is on creating a fair, more equitable system and dismantling the food banking system ▪ COVID-19 acted as an enabler due to the strain on capacity generated by increased pressures from government and client needs, which drove organizations to work together to evaluate their model of service delivery ○ QVBIA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mandate sees social development as key to supporting local businesses <p>Responsiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizations around the table who are willing and invested in creating a more fair and equitable system • Mandate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ QVBIA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Partners invested in addressing social issues will feed into economic development, therefore helping to support local businesses ○ Parkdale Food Centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The identification of like-minded organizations creates opportunities for strategic partnerships that can help support Parkdale's Peer Advocacy Office and help <p>Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change agent works to stabilize the positive movement of organizations that have decided to contribute to the development of strategies tied to solving food insecurity 	<p>Structural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 funding supportive of poverty reduction efforts may not be phased outpost COVID-19 • Parkdale Food Centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Political and funding structures require organizations to meet a set output and generate statistics on the number of clients served. Time spent at an engagement process does not create results recognized by the government and funders ○ Funders pit organizations against one another <p>Agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinct mandate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ QVBIA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If businesses are not seen as necessary in the overall picture, they are unable to maintain their collaboration ○ COVID-19 prompted QVBIA to shift capacities to respond to the needs of businesses ○ Parkdale Food Centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Money <p>Responsiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An unwillingness among service-oriented organizations to understand the real needs of end-users and rethink their model and approach to food insecurity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ QVBIA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A stronger relationship with the government can present obstacles to supporting poverty reduction

Evidence of this can be seen through Carrier's (2021) comment that they have the budget and ability to act quickly to fund groups like the VCA. Thus, the QVBIA utilizes their links to the government to enact its mental framework on economic development.

This mental framework manifests itself through the agenda of the QVBIA, which includes social development out of a recognition that to achieve economic growth in Vanier, poverty needs to be addressed (Carrier 2020).

Parkdale Food Centre has also discovered ways to create a more fair and equitable system by leveraging resources from the government. For instance, during COVID-19, the Parkdale Food Centre used social service emergency relief funding to support partnership-based initiatives (i.e., the Ottawa Community Food Partnership) committed to creating a more fair and equitable system (Secord 2021).

Political and funding systems can also be seen as an enabler. Sewell (1992, 27) defines structure as a combination of resources and mental frameworks that support or inhibit social action. Overarching structures have provided resources (e.g., Social Service Relief Fund) that inject capacity into organizations, like Parkdale Food Centre, to launch a partnership focused on generating sustainable change.

Finite resources represent another barrier at early-stage engagement. The concept of agency provides a better understanding of the obstacles that emerge when agents have limited resources. For instance, Sewell highlights agents' capacity to secure *human and non-human resources* to advance their understanding of the world (Sewell 1992, 20). In the case of Parkdale Food Centre, limitations on resources, particularly money, serve as a blocker at early-stage engagement. Evidence of resource-based obstacles can be seen through their inability to secure adequate resources from the government to better support an alternative approach to food insecurity, supported via a cross-sector approach committed to advancing sustainable change.

I am angry about how I created a program helping businesses, social service agencies, and people in need. Yet I cannot get anyone from the province and federal

government to recognize that this can be replicated to save businesses and help people. The City has put money behind it, but every day, I am worried I will let people down if I cannot find the money. I should not be in this position because food is a human right. (Secord 2020).

For the QVBIA, COVID-19 blocked progress at early-stage engagement.

COVID-19 stopped progress at this phase because the QVBIA had to triage the needs of local businesses in Vanier, including food and non-food-related businesses. Sewell's (1992, 19) conception of agency highlights the capacity of organizations to obtain resources from various structures to advance their mental framework. For example, we see local businesses securing resources from government emergency relief funds in a pandemic context. In the case of a crisis, such as COVID-19, the QVBIA is forced to divert resources away from an engagement process predicated on social change to assist the businesses in taking advantage of funding needed to survive amidst frequent mandated closures.

Funding structures pose an obstacle to the Parkdale Food Centre at early-stage engagement. Political and funding structures require organizations to meet a set output and generate statistics on the number of clients served (Secord 2021). With minimal recognition for planning around poverty reduction among funding agencies, it becomes challenging to divert capacity towards efforts dedicated to long-term planning on food insecurity reduction. In addition, funding provided by the government that Parkdale is using in support of the Ottawa Community Food Partnership is also likely going to be phased out post COVID-19 (Secord 2021). Other obstacles that flow from funding structures can also be seen through the extent to which it encourages community organizations to operate in siloes, as they are pitted against one another to compete for

the same pool of funding (Secord 2021). From a communications perspective, the change agent needs to actively follow up with actors to maintain and encourage them to continue in the process.

4.3.3 Building Momentum

Sewell's definition helps explain how agency contributes to the QVBIA's enabling environment by drawing attention to their constituents, local businesses. Sewell (1992, 20) defines agency as people's mental frameworks and their ability to introduce them into an alternative environment. Additionally, this means an individual can secure resources from different structures with different conceptions and reconfigure them to advance their mental framework (Sewell 1992, 20).

Table 4.3.3 – Building Momentum - community leaders helping move the engagement process forward by coming back to the engagement.

Enablers	Obstacles
<p>Structural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It has become more politically interesting to be a supporter of anti-poverty. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ e.g., the City is funding partnerships oriented towards making a difference on food insecurity (e.g., the City has funded the Ottawa Community Food Partnership) • COVID-19 resulted in government funding to support partnership-based initiatives, that are also committed to achieving systemic change <p>Agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant to aspects of the organizational mandate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mandate strikes a greater balance between serving and the facilitation of socio-economic change • Network and resources to build capacity among other stakeholders at the table • Leadership <p>Responsiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parkdale Food Centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ People with lived experience at the table ○ Organizations interested in an open dialogue around different ways to think about food insecurity ○ Contributes to the development of their peer advocacy office • QVBIA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Presence of other perspectives at the table ○ Visualizations and synthesis of the information to show where organizations 	<p>Structural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The government does not prioritize social services, evidenced by the municipal budget • Funders pits organizations against each other as organizations apply for the same pot of money <p>Agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinct mandate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ QVBIA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If businesses are not seen as necessary in the overall picture, they are unable to maintain their collaboration ▪ COVID-19 prompted QVBIA to shift capacities to respond to the needs of businesses • Organizations feel they are in competition with one another for funding <p>Responsiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time commitment • Service-oriented organizations that are not willing to rethink their model limits the capacity of organizations to advance systems change

Enablers	Obstacles
<p style="text-align: center;">fall within the bigger picture of food insecurity</p> <p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A proven case for an alternative, collaborative approach to addressing food insecurity causes others to want to support or join forces 	<p>Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Messaging that requires organizations to rethink their model for addressing food insecurity

For instance, Carrier (2021) highlights the importance of local merchants understanding the relationship between business success and addressing social issues at the neighbourhood level. Carrier's work to introduce her view on the need to facilitate social change to achieve economic growth exemplifies the capacity they have to mobilize actors from an economic standpoint to understand the value of being part of an engagement process supportive of social change.

Secord shares the same capability around extending her mental framework by establishing connections between social and economic development. Evidence of this can be seen through her success securing buy-in from local restaurants to cook high-quality meals for residents in need across the City (or as they call "neighbours"). Ultimately, Secord shares Carrier's view on the importance of taking a cross-sector approach and has tapped into different contexts, such as the local restaurant scene, to advance their vision for a more fair and equitable system. Secord's mental framework also extends into residents using their services. For instance, Secord actively hires clients to work at Parkdale Food Centre. In addition, individuals with lived experience with poverty are also part of their advocacy efforts (Secord 2021). Ultimately, Carrier and Secord's entrance into different spheres to extend their mental framework for change mobilizes human and non-human resources. Combined, these resources represent enabling factors at the building momentum phase.

Agents operating in different contexts and sectors can also act as an obstacle, as some are resistant to the idea of rethinking their business or service delivery model. For instance, Carrier (2020) encounters resistance with businesses and investors who have become cynical to the idea that their neighbourhood will develop, and those efforts to address social issues will contribute to overall growth. Secord (2021) also highlights the resistance encountered among frontline agencies that are unwilling to challenge the traditional food banking structure.

Our businesses, new businesses and investors have been saying for 30 years they have been telling us Vanier will turn around, we help the food bank, and here we are 30 years nothing has changed, in fact, it's gotten worse, there is more crime, more drugs, more prostitution (Carrier 2020).

However, structural challenges contribute to the resistance or unwillingness among frontline agencies and businesses to come together to arrive at solutions to food insecurity. For instance, the tendency for funding structures to generate competition between community organizations detracts from their willingness to come together to work towards a common purpose. Furthermore, the government prioritizes urban revitalization projects rather than acknowledging the City's role in contributing to local businesses and residents' struggles (Carrier 2020).

Championing this story, we still must be in this together. We all must work together. That is the single biggest challenge that we face is keeping people positive and moving and focused on solutions, not complaints (Carrier 2020).

Communications at this stage contain a mix of enablers and obstacles. From an enabler's perspective, Secord (2021) highlighted how the success of the Ottawa Community Food Partnership provides an effective case for encouraging other actors to move towards collaboration focused on solving food insecurity. Conversely, messaging that compels

actors to challenge the status quo can act as a barrier in this phase as some actors cannot exceed their mandate.

4.4 Summary

These actors were more inclined to come to the engagement due to their leadership's commitment to systemic change. Agency represents a critical enabler for this actor group across each phase of engagement, as leaders like Carrier and Secord are committed to social change, despite structural barriers. Other dimensions of agency that stand out include Carrier and Secord's ability to tap into resources from different structures and contexts to support broader food security activities.

Obstacles can be seen through the individual interests of these organizations, as representatives around the engagement do not fall within their primary constituents or client base. In addition, challenges to engagement are felt through resistance from frontline actors, local businesses, and investors to contribute to this vision for a more fair and equitable system.

The analysis of enablers and obstacles shows that an engagement process must provide opportunities to form partnerships with like-minded actors focused on solving the problem of food insecurity. Furthermore, there is a need to carve out a space for businesses to be part of the process and ensure that strategies targeted towards food insecurity also contribute to economic development. Finally, resources that reward efforts to advance systemic change are critical to enabling engagement.

4.5 Actors with a greater dependency relationship on government

Actors highlighted in the green and orange clusters in Figure 2 are positioned closer to the government due to their reliance on the government to provide funding.

Organizations in the green bubble that participated in this study include Minwaashin and the VCSC, which runs Partage Vanier. Nuances within this grouping of actor communities can be seen through Capital City Bikers' Church and Onyx Community Services. These organizations do not receive government funding. However, they overlap with actors in this grouping because they have a high service orientation and partner with organizations within the green and orange clusters. Multifaith Housing and Maison Marie Louise represent exceptions within this category as they have a high service orientation but are less dependent upon the government.

From a diffusion perspective, this grouping of actors is composed of early majority and late majority actors. The early majority consists of actors that follow behind early adopters and take more convincing and persuasion to engage (Rogers 2003, 172). The late majority represents those that are even later to adopt a new idea, service, or product (Rogers 2003, 173). Characteristics of these categories are exemplified by the VCSC, Wabano, and Minwaashin. This is not to say that this actor group did not demonstrate a willingness or need at the engagement phase. However, diffusion helps explain their initial responsiveness to the engagement process through opinion leaders, including Touchant and Carrier. Together, they helped jumpstart the engagement by inviting frontline actors to the table.

Roger's (2003) discussion on perceived attributes helps to expand our understanding of these actors' initial willingness to come to the engagement. The three perceived

attributes that explain this actor groups decision to come to the engagement includes compatibility, the extent to which the innovation matches a problem the organization is trying to solve; trialability, “the degree to which an innovation may be experimented with on a limited basis,” and observability “the degree to which the results of an innovation are visible to others” (Rogers 2003, 16, 258). For three of five organizations that did not come to the engagement, a mismatch between the critical issue being addressed by Precision Cities and the focus of these groups’ organization played a part in their decision to decline. For instance, Maison Marie Louise indicated that their key area of focus is on supporting families through the provision of shelter and clothing, among other non-food-related items (Ginette Gratton, phone call with author, October 5, 2020).

The focus of Precision Cities on a key neighbourhood issue, representative of a problem included in the VCSC’s, Minwaashin’s and Wabano’s agenda, provides a deeper understanding as to why they progressed to the point of coming to the engagement, versus those organizations that declined the invitation. These organizations perceived a match between Precision Cities, and the agenda of each organization can be seen through the focus of the initiative on food insecurity- a problem they have identified as a priority for their community.

Frontline organizations developed a greater level of perceived compatibility between Precision Cities when the engagement was restructured so that organizations entered and exited the engagement in accordance with their schedules and perceived needs and challenges at the time. The opportunity to trial the initiative gave way to observations that stimulated a specific perception of how Precision Cities may support greater coordination to help multiply capacity. However, perceptions of compatibility

regressed quickly due to the failure of the initiative to trigger coordinated action across frontline actors. As a result, this actor group has less incentive to progress to early-stage engagement and building momentum because they meet their day-to-day requirements, requiring the organizer to work harder to get them to engage.

4.5.1 Come to the engagement

Limitations on the capacity of frontline actors represent an enabler for coming to the engagement process because actors search for alternative streams of support that can help fill gaps in funding, material goods and physical space. While strains on capacity may seem contrary to enablers, resource deficiencies create a sense of necessity. The research shows that resource-based enablers (e.g., use of space, money, material goods) can be seen through Wabano, the VCSC and Minwaashin. However, they do not have enough resources to keep pace with clients’ needs and government demands. As a result, an engagement process is attractive due to the potential to facilitate resource sharing between organizations currently operating in siloes.

Table 4.5.1 - Come to the engagement - the initial point in which actors come together to address a common challenge.

Enablers	Obstacles
<p>Structural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dependency on funding and political and food banking structures strains frontline actors. Potential external resources to support and alleviate capacity constraints are attractive <p>Agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant to organizational mandate that includes food insecurity • Distinct mandate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A higher City service orientation towards food insecurity • COVID-19 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prompts organizations to work together, as the increase in people’s needs demands a collective response ○ Forces organizations to think outside the box and reevaluate their approach to service delivery 	<p>Structural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overarching structures act as more of an enabler than an obstacle at the point of coming to the engagement <p>Agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinct mandate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A higher service orientation directed towards non-food related community issues or ○ A higher City service orientation towards food insecurity ○ COVID-19 is a shock that created barriers to collaboration among organizations with a distinct mandate <p>Structural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overarching structures act as more of an enabler than an obstacle at the point of coming to the engagement

<p>Responsiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to support coordinated action that will help to alleviate individual, organizational capacity constraints <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increases situational awareness of existing programs and food initiatives happening ○ Increases communication between organizations • Flexible engagement process that enables actors' communities to enter and exit engagement per their schedules <p>Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of opinion leaders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tap into their network to recruit frontline actors and warm the ground for a change agent to reach out to invite actors to take part in the engagement process 	<p>Agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinct mandate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A higher service orientation directed towards non-food related community issues or ○ A higher City service orientation towards food insecurity ○ COVID-19 is a shock that created barriers to collaboration among organizations with a distinct mandate <p>Responsiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial rigidity around the need for actors to be present for the entire duration of workshops <p>Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mode of Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Emails that are not directly addressed to the actor ○ Interpersonal networks - over-reliance on opinion leaders to recruit • COVID-19 created breakdowns in communication, as organizations were less responsive over email at times due to shifting work environments and heightened needs on the ground
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Structure also acts as an enabler when coming to the engagement for frontline organizations. The government represents an overarching structure that privileges day-to-day service delivery, whereby funding and frontline agencies act as resources to support their agenda (Sewell 1992, 27). For instance, the government represents a significant funding source for agencies like Wabano, OCH, the VCSC, and Minwaashin. Thus, funding streams are designed to advance government priorities, prompting organizations to structure their initiatives and programs to align with the government's high service orientation.

Design elements of the funding structure are instituted to advance these priorities, as seen through high demands to match the immediate needs of the most vulnerable in Ottawa, accompanied by short timelines and rigorous applications processes (Touchant

2020). Together, these elements impose significant stress upon frontline organizations as they stretch their resources to match a pre-determined standard or risk their termination. In addition, the strain on the capacity that flows from inequities between government and frontline organizations creates an incentive for seeking out alternative spaces, like Precision Cities, to assess the possibilities for securing external resources useful for meeting output requirements set by the government.

The frontline organization's role also posed an obstacle to coming to the engagement, as COVID-19 resulted in increased pressures to respond to people's needs. Therefore, these organizations had to triage the needs of individuals and communities while implementing a new organizational model to comply with health and safety. Sewell's (1992, 19) conception of agency highlights the capacity of organizations to obtain resources from various structures to advance their mental framework. In a pandemic context, we see frontline organizations securing resources from government social service emergency relief funds to pivot their operations to respond to an increase in needs in a manner consistent with COVID-19 protocols. As a result of the need to shift resources to maneuver between emergencies on the ground, these organizations struggled to come to the engagement. COVID-19 also created barriers to communication as emergencies created challenges around responding to emails. Furthermore, some individuals in organizations shifted to working at home. Therefore, they were no longer reachable at their office phone number.

4.5.2 Early-stage engagement

A key enabler for helping frontline actors at early-stage engagement is to ensure the initiative is responsive to frontline actors’ need for greater coordination to achieve greater capacity. A mechanism capable of increasing individual frontline agencies’ capacities can be understood through Roger’s (2003, 16) perceived attribute of compatibility (the extent to which the innovation matches a problem the organization is trying to solve). An engagement process responsive to the day-to-day requirements of frontline actors stimulates perceptions of compatibility, creating enabling conditions for securing early-stage engagement.

Table 4.5.2 – Early-stage engagement - community leaders at the engagement are developing strategies suited to addressing their needs.

Enablers	Obstacles
<p>Structural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It has become more politically interesting to be a supporter of anti-poverty <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ e.g. City is funding partnerships oriented towards making a difference on food insecurity (e.g. City has funded the Ottawa Community Food Partnership) • COVID-19 resulted in government funding to support partnership-based initiatives that are also committed to achieving systemic change <p>Agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organization provides the permission staff need to invest the time at the engagement, as well as the support to work differently • COVID-19 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prompts organizations to work together, as the increase in people’s needs demands a collective response ○ Forces organizations to think outside the box and reevaluate their approach to service delivery <p>Responsiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for partnerships that enable organizations to identify better ways to serve clients needs Resources that help build capacity within frontline agencies in the form of monetary and/or non-monetary compensation - e.g., provide volunteers and payment to an organization for participating. <p>Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal communications 	<p>Structural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political and funding structures require organizations to meet a set output and generate statistics on the number of clients served. As a result, time spent at an engagement process does not generate results recognized by the government and funders. • Funding structures create a competitive environment that disincentives engagement <p>Agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinct mandate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Higher service orientation - those focussed on service delivery are constantly maneuvering in the middle of emergencies, preventing them from getting involved in rethinking their model • High demand for services • COVID-19 is a shock that created barriers to collaboration among organizations with a distinct mandate <p>Responsiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure of Precision Cities to provide an outcome that is responsive to the day-to-day operational needs of service-oriented actor • A stronger relationship with the government limits the ability of service-oriented organizations to rethink their model

Enablers	Obstacles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The higher email response rate to messages with only the date and time of the workshop ○ Phone calls and text messages are often more effective than email 	

Political and funding structures and their effect on frontline actors' behaviour demonstrate the need for a responsive engagement process. For instance, the City utilizes frontline actors as a resource for carrying out the City's mental framework on food insecurity, which prioritizes a high service orientation (Sewell 1992, 27). However, funding arrangements between organizations closer to the government restrict their movements, as funding structures impose standards that discourage organizations from exceeding their mandate. Furthermore, government standards on the expected number of clients frontline actors must serve, combined with a high demand for services amplified by COVID-19, outweighs the capacity of these organizations to respond (VCSC 2021). However, frontline actors' collaboration is integral to an effective engagement process, as their emphasis on service delivery perpetuates a *status quo* that contributes to food insecurity. Thus, an engagement process must be supportive and respond to frontline organization operational needs to create room for frontline community leaders to decide to be involved in the early stages of the process.

Given the discussion on enablers, it becomes clear that political and funding structures pose an obstacle at early-stage engagement. The dimensions of structure articulated by Sewell (1992, 9, 10) help to explain how political and funding structures get in the way of community action. For instance, the government's funds are insufficient compared to the statistics or outputs the government requires community organizations to meet to ensure funding is renewed. Thus, time away from serving clients to invest in

problem solving and collaboration comes at the expense of fulfilling day-to-day requirements. Consequently, frontline organizations are restricted from contributing to the design of strategies targeted towards social change as top-down demands do not reward this kind of activity.

At the same time, frontline actors can be seen as obstacles due to organizational culture and leadership's failure to value early-stage engagement. Sewell (1992, 4) provides insight into agents' influence on shaping and reproducing structures. For instance, the high service orientation of frontline actors' decision to dedicate most of their agenda to fulfilling day-to-day requirements helps perpetuate the government's short-sighted approach to food insecurity. Consequently, agency can also be seen as an obstacle as their emphasis on the status quo means there is minimal room for rethinking their approach to service delivery.

Efforts to maintain communication with actors was enabled by limiting messaging to the details regarding the timing of the workshop. Some actors stated that the initial workshops gave them enough information on the nature of Precision Cities, therefore future invitations did not need to provide in-depth descriptions about the event.

4.5.3 Building Momentum

Building momentum requires the leadership to adjust their culture to prioritize not just the day-to-day but also long-term strategic planning in collaboration with other actors. Frontline agencies show glimpses of potential in this area, evidenced by Minwaashin and the VCSC's active role in distributing healthy meals to residents via their decision to be part of the Ottawa Community Food Partnership (Secord 2021). However, greater buy-in

at the decision-making level of frontline agencies is critical to securing the organization’s support in advancing the engagement process.

Table 4.5.3 – Building Momentum - community leaders helping move the engagement process forward by coming back to the engagement.

Enablers	Obstacles
<p>Structural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It has become more politically interesting to be a supporter of anti-poverty <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ (e.g. City is funding partnerships oriented towards making a difference on food insecurity (e.g. City has funded the Ottawa Community Food Partnership) • COVID-19 resulted in government funding to support partnership-based initiatives that are also committed to achieving systemic change <p>Agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The organization permits and encourages staff to invest time into rethinking their model • COVID-19 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prompts organizations to work together, as they increase in people’s needs demands a collective response ○ Forces organizations to think outside the box and reevaluate their approach to service delivery <p>Responsiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources that help to build capacity within frontline agencies in the form of monetary and/or non-monetary compensation - e.g., provide volunteers, payment to an organization for collaborating <p>Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Messaging that focusses on coordinated action, inclusive of supports that take on the burden of triggering resource sharing, the definition of roles that complement one another in a way that enables a successful, collective grant application 	<p>Structural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political and funding structures require organizations to meet a set output and generate statistics on the number of clients served. Time spent at an engagement process does not generate results recognized by the government and funders • Funding structures create a competitive environment that creates a barrier to effective engagement between the organization <p>Agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinct mandate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Higher service orientation - those focussed on service delivery are constantly maneuvering in the middle of emergencies, preventing them from getting involved in rethinking their model • High human needs, amplified by COVID-19 • COVID-19 is a shock that created barriers to collaboration among organizations with a distinct mandate <p>Responsiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure of Precision Cities to provide an outcome that provides a gain to each organization, such as supporting their day-to-day operational needs

Additional enablers at the building momentum phase include leadership within existing political and funding structures that advance a different narrative: prioritizing anti-poverty initiatives and challenging the City’s high service orientation. There are pockets of support for anti-poverty initiatives at the government level, such as the Social

Services Relief fund supporting the Ottawa Community Food Partnership. This partnership is designed to facilitate social change (Secord 2021). However, these patches of support within the government are short-term, with the Social Services Relief Fund being phased out post-COVID-19 (Secord 2021). Given the capacity needs of frontline organizations to engage, messaging must highlight how the engagement process includes supports for coordinating resource sharing or some form of monetary or non-monetary compensation that assists these groups in meeting their daily requirements.

Political and funding structures represent an obstacle to building momentum for frontline actors because they do not reward frontline agencies for investing time in a process that does not contribute to more efficient service delivery. Sewell (1992, 27) described that the structure is composed of mental frameworks and resources that either facilitate or get in the way of social action. Funding structures are guided by a mental framework that elevates the importance of day-to-day service delivery. Funding agencies' narrow focus on service delivery means organizations tend to replicate one another to align themselves with the criteria the government is looking for in their funding applications. Such replication results in competition as organizations compete for the same pool of funding. As a result, funding structures constrain community action as overarching structures foster a competitive, high service-oriented environment, which is at odds with an engagement process that emphasizes working together to solve problems.

However, a competitive environment is also a problem that emanates from the grassroots level. Sewell's (1992, 19) argument that agents have access to resources that can be used to enact an alternative mental framework highlights community leaders' ability to go beyond their service-dominated mandate. The unwillingness of leadership to

foster a culture of collaboration results in limited awareness of services being offered, resulting in the overlap. Without allocating time towards defining roles to complement one another or tackle niche parts of the food insecurity system, these organizations reduce their chances of receiving funding. Given the competitive nature of these actors, communication that promotes efforts targeted towards reducing competition via coordination represents a compelling message when speaking about an engagement process to frontline actors.

4.6 Summary

At the phase of early-stage engagement and building momentum, as shown in the tables, funding structures pose an obstacle to frontline actors to progress past the point of coming to the table. Therefore, funding structures must provide new incentives that privilege outcomes over outputs and more significant funding to match the desired outcomes for these actors to move forward.

Frontline organizations must also commit to rethinking their approach to food insecurity, despite existing structural barriers. However, at the point of coming to the engagement, community leaders identified the need for increased coordination and a reduction of competition. Since frontline actors are typically saturated with day-to-day service delivery, they are often unable to provide the necessary support for coordinating funding sources.

Thus, a key enabler for helping frontline actors move past the point of coming to the table is an engagement process that is responsive to frontline actors' need for greater coordination. A responsive engagement process would build on existing strengths to achieve greater capacity, such as: expanding existing partnerships with stakeholders in

food security and further defining their service offerings, which complement one another instead of competing with one another.

4.7 Actors with the closest relationship to government

This actor group is distinguishable from the cluster of actors discussed in the previous section due to their size and influence at the government level, far exceeding smaller frontline actors. For example, homeless shelters such as the Salvation Army, Shepherds of Good Hope and the Ottawa Mission have greater access to resources such as funding, infrastructure, and the ear of the City due to the position and influence they hold at Council. Evidence of this can be seen through the Salvation Army's success in gaining the City's approval and funding to build a new shelter on Montreal Road in Vanier, despite resistance from community organizations. In addition, these actors' influence and size help secure the support needed to operationalize the City's agenda and its objectives, both of which emphasize a high service orientation.

Other actors with a close relationship with the government also include Ottawa Community Housing (OCH) which is an "arm's length organization owned by the City of Ottawa" whose board of directors includes multiple city councillors (Infrastructure Ontario 2020; Ottawa Community Housing Corporation 2020, 4). Finally, the Respite Centre is a city-led initiative in response to COVID-19 (which is now being phased out) coordinates community organizations to provide a one-stop-shop for temporary relief for the homeless population (Steven and Cooper 2020).

This study targeted neighbourhood-level organizations; therefore, this cluster of actors was not invited to participate in Precision Cities as they mutually reinforce and benefit from the existing social and political structures. The City of Ottawa was also

excluded because government represents power that can influence and cause community organizations to filter their input and contributions. OCH was invited to the engagement under the advisement of a key collaborator. However, OCH's involvement highlighted the importance of engaging resources within an organizational structure that has the power to make decisions and affect change.

It is not to say that the power held by the City of Ottawa is a negative contributing factor to food insecurity. However, when the City of Ottawa is part of the engagement, community actors feel less freedom to share an unedited version of their views. Limits on the freedom to share can be traced to the dependency relationship between frontline actors and the City, whereby a challenge to their approach may threaten their survival. However, power at the grassroots level becomes critical for engagement. Therefore, it is vital to locate representatives with influence within their organizational structure to secure the resources needed to move the engagement process forward.

Due to the exclusion of this cluster of actors from Precision Cities, I rely on a combination of diffusion theory, agency and structure and comments shared by actors at the engagement to explore the nature of this group's engagement strategies. However, this section does not provide a phase-by-phase analysis because this grouping of actors was excluded from the sample. Nevertheless, they are important to discuss because of the influence and role in facilitating or constraining the ability of smaller Vanier community-based organizations to reimagine their approach to food insecurity.

From a diffusion perspective, this actor group can be categorized as the late majority - those that are even later to adopt a new idea, service, or product (Rogers 2003, 173). Rogers expands on his definition of the late majority by stating that "adoption may

be of both the economic necessity for the late majority and the result of increasing peer pressures” (Rogers 2003, 173). In the context of this actor cluster, efforts to contribute to poverty reduction run counter to their current model, which fits into and reinforces the government’s approach to the problem of poverty. In addition, these organizations’ proximity to the government makes them privy to the resources needed to carry out their operations. Thus, there is no economic necessity for them to cooperate with other organizations to share resources to solve the problem of food insecurity. Efforts to reduce clients’ need for their services threaten their funding, which is predicated on outputs, meaning the number of clients served.

Rogers (2003, 173) also argues that “system norms must definitely favour an innovation before the late majority are convinced to adopt.” Given that the system's norms the system to heavily favour an alternative approach to food insecurity, it can be understood that the need for both grassroots organizations to come together to affect change and for political leadership to adjust their mental framework. If the system shifts in this way, this actor group is pressured to reframe their operations and enter more collaborative relationships that emphasize social change.

A key obstacle for this organization at early-stage engagement and building momentum can be seen through the link between them and the government and their role in supporting and advocating for a traditional model to food insecurity. Sewell’s (1992, 4) discussion on agents’ role in perpetuating and helping to advance structures helps explain this actors’ group’s behaviour in the food insecurity network and how this translates into a blocker at early-stage engagement and building momentum. For example, a homeless shelter’s mandate is predicated on short-term, service-oriented

responses. A service-oriented offering also falls in line with the governments' day-to-day focus.

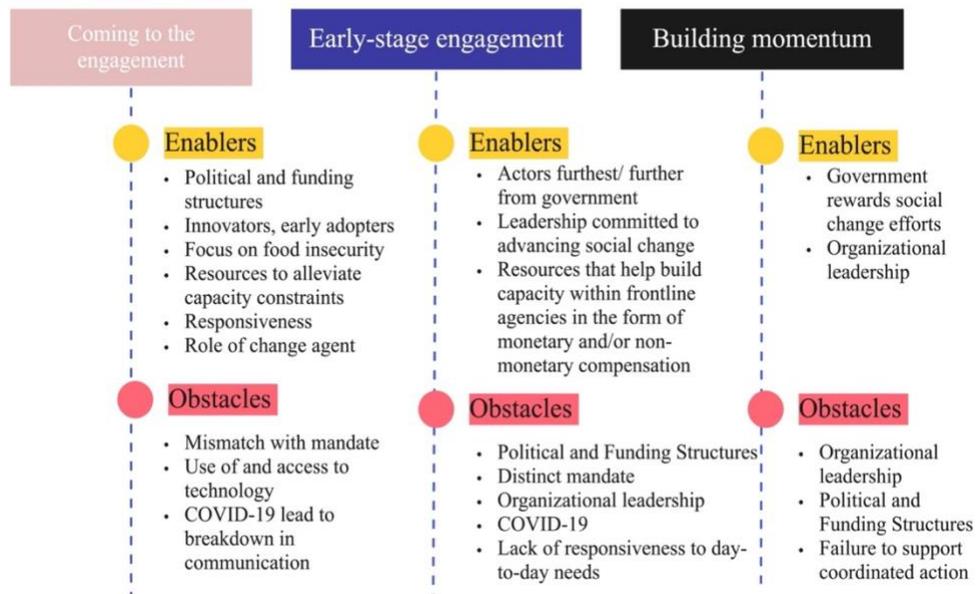
Thus, agents (e.g., homeless shelters) and structure (e.g., elected officials) mutually reinforce one another's high service orientation (Sewell 1992, 14). The alignment between shelters and governments' approaches to pressing social problems stimulates a symbiotic relationship whereby outside actors operationalize elected officials' agenda, and elected officials provide the funding and resources these organizations need to execute their objectives. Given the nature of the relationship between large social service organizations, and the government, we can better understand why they would be unmotivated to explore other models. The lack of motivation may be because collaboration dedicated to achieving poverty reduction would render their current mode of operation less relevant and contradicts government funding arrangements predicated on serving clients' immediate needs.

In summary, this actor group is unlikely to participate in an engagement process that focuses on finding solutions to eliminate food insecurity. This is because they have a close relationship with the government through funding arrangements; they have direct access to resources, thereby limiting their need or desire to collaborate with other actors. For them to engage, systemic norms need to shift, to increase pressures for them to acknowledge the need for government and their organization to adopt a new approach, which focuses on reducing residents' reliance on their services.

4.8 Conclusion

In sum, section four shows what I learned about each cluster of actors and showcases why context matters at the early stages of engagement. The importance of identifying the place-based conditions that frame ideal engagement for community leaders operating in a marginalized context become evident through the City. Because City initiated engagement processes tend to homogenize engagement, they are unable to form the level of relationships and trust needed to support long-term engagement. Figure three (below) provides a high-level overview of what I learned about engagement across each grouping of actors.

Figure 3 - Summary of what I learned about engagement



Political and funding structures act as an enabler at the phase of coming to the engagement. Political and funding structures act as an enabler because actors seek alternative streams of collaboration to alleviate capacity constraints that can be traced to government demands on frontline actors that outweigh the resources needed to respond to a standard set by the City. Outreach by opinion leaders, primarily concentrated within the

category of early adopters, was also vital to mobilizing a critical mass of relevant actors at the initiation of the engagement. Obstacles at the early phases of engagement can be attributed to a mismatch between the focus on food insecurity and actors whose mandate emphasizes non-food-related services. COVID-19 also created barriers to collaboration, as actors turned inwards to maintain operations central to their mandate.

Key elements contributing to the enabling environment at early-stage engagement include actors with the freedom to define an organizational agenda that prioritizes social change and collaboration. Leadership is also crucial in the early stages of engagement, as actors with limited ties to the government must act on this freedom to advance an agenda of social change. Finally, despite structural constraints, a leadership committed to social change is also key in the early stages to provide staff with the permission needed to rethink their approach to food insecurity.

At the early stages of engagement, actors are called to lay the groundwork for triggering collective social action. As a result, political and funding structures become obstacles, as frontline actors are compelled to generate outputs. Therefore, additional time spent at a collaboration detracts from their ability to meet requirements tied to their survival. The engagement process also acts as an obstacle at the early stages if it is unresponsive to the supporting organization's day-to-day needs.

At the building momentum phase, it becomes important for the government to acknowledge the effects of their approach to food insecurity on actors to work together to reduce clients' reliance on services. With the onset of COVID-19, the government has made positive strides towards rewarding organizational efforts focused on poverty reduction; however, such relief funds are being phased out. At the same time,

organizational leadership is also critical as actors must advance a more fair and equitable system to enable broader engagement to solve food insecurity.

Given the differences between each cluster of actors, we can understand the need to adapt the engagement process to resonate with the conditions that enable each cluster of actors to take community action. Ultimately, an understanding of the obstacles and enablers for engagement for each actor group forms the basis of defining a strategy capable of bridging each of these groups to engage effectively in solving the problem of food insecurity.

Chapter 5: Suggested Way Forward

Section three, which identifies actor groups against the “origin,” or government and
Section four, which identifies why context matters at the three identified phases of
engagement, provides insight into my two research questions:

- **RQ1** – What conditions facilitate effective engagement within a marginalized and vulnerable context?
- **RQ2** – What are the effects of a responsive engagement process within a marginalized context?

The previous section provides insight into what I learned about each actor group and, therefore, translates into findings capable of understanding each of my research questions. For RQ1, I found that political and funding structures represent an essential condition that facilitates/constrains engagement. At the phase of coming to the engagement, political and funding structures act as enablers across each actor group due to pressures government imposes on frontline actors that draw them to seek out alternative sources of resources. Conversely, for actors located furthest and further from government, political and funding structures, failure to provide adequate rewards and support for poverty reduction initiatives encourages these actors to find like-minded partners at the grassroots level to advance community-led change. Structure also acts as an enabling condition for actors outside government funding arrangements. These organizations have the freedom to define an agenda that prioritizes social change instead of being tethered to day-to-day service delivery requirements stipulated by the government. As a result, organizations can behave more fluidly and can work with other actors to advance an agenda that does not conform to the high service orientation of government.

I also learned that agency is a key condition that facilitates effective engagement, as organizations or residents must leverage their resources and take action that supports creating a more fair and equitable system. Therefore, leadership at the grassroots level that emphasizes the importance of incorporating social change and collaboration into their agenda becomes a critical enabler. For instance, actors are compelled to move towards commitment at early-stage engagement and building momentum. At these phases, political and funding structures overwhelm actors with a dependency relationship on government, as resources dedicated to a collaboration that elevates long-term planning take away from meeting government standards. Thus, leadership that does not wait for structural constraints to shift, to prioritize social change initiatives becomes critical at these phases. Evidence of this can be seen through the actor group further from government, whereby organizational leaders are “moving the needle” on solving food insecurity by mobilizing government funding and redistributing it towards social change efforts. Leadership also acts as an enabler at the stage of coming to the engagement, in the form of innovators and early adopters willing to mobilize their resources to introduce an engagement into their local neighbourhood and mobilize a base of other actors to be part of the initiative.

At the same time, recognizing the capacity constraints felt by actors beholden to the government requires support from the engagement process itself. For instance, actors identified the need for assistance achieving greater levels of coordination to identify strategic partnerships capable of increasing organizational capacity. Thus, a third enabler can be traced to an engagement process that is responsive to the needs of organizations part of the initiative, providing insight into RQ2. Discussion on the failure of the

engagement to provide adequate support naturally gives way to a discussion on what I learned about the effect of responsive engagement strategies. Evidence of this can be seen through organizations' initial reason for coming to the table, which was partially compelled by the perception that Precision Cities could help integrate existing services to reduce overlaps and increase overall cohesion across the community. However, the failure of the initiative to trigger such coordination at early-stage engagement saw these actors withdraw as contributions to Precision Cities could not be sustained given the pressures to focus on their distinct, service-oriented mandate. For those actors that are beholden to the government, the engagement encouraged their participation due to its focus on mobilizing partners to advance collaboration, tied to solving the issue of food insecurity.

Ultimately, the findings that emerged through my work with Vanier community leaders provided the importance of adopting engagement strategies that account for the unique realities of different actor groups. Furthermore, these findings highlight the importance of studying conditions, over time, to recognize the shifts that occur and the need to refine the engagement in ways that respond to actors changing needs. Therefore, the following uses my findings on structure, agency and a responsive engagement strategy as the basis for crafting engagement strategies that incorporate place-based conditions identified throughout the research.

5.1 Leadership as a function of engagement

Leadership among actors with a greater dependency on government should recognize the agency they have to rethink their model and approach to food insecurity. Efforts to re-

evaluate their approach to food insecurity, despite structural constraints, will open opportunities to integrate better and support residents initiating change, users of services, and problem-solving-oriented groups like the VCA.

To enable engagement, it begins with a shift in organizational culture, mandates, and leadership at the grassroots level among frontline actors. This kind of shift begins with decision-makers within the organization placing greater value on early-stage engagement whereby patterns are set that must be responsive to organizational needs and priorities. As seen through Sewell's (1992, 19) definition of agency, agents have a degree of capacity to act. Parkdale Food Centre provides the case to show how frontline organizations, bound by funding arrangements, do have the power to exceed their mandate to collaborate with other actors to address poverty. The following provides a set of enabling conditions that can be addressed to improve early engagement strategies.

5.2 Actor Coordination

Given the current state of fragmentation among frontline actors in Vanier, there is a clear need to start with coordination to lay the foundation for broader food security activities. The current operating environment among frontline actors is competitive due to government funding approaches; therefore, it discourages effective collaboration. Competitiveness can be reduced if social agencies define their roles to complement one another and tackle niche parts of the food insecurity system rather than respond exclusively to city-defined needs.

However, the challenge to effective coordination is that these actors have limited time to gather to increase service delivery efficiencies across the community. In recognition of the effect maneuvering between emergencies has in inhibiting

coordination, there is a clear need to introduce a hub and spoke type of organization that facilitates resource-sharing initiatives. The need for a coordinator is critical to encourage organizations to move in the desired direction of collaboration and help maintain any positive movements in behaviour. Parkdale Food Centre provides a concrete example of this as the administrative lead for the Ottawa Community Food Partnership.

Organizations involved in this initiative come together to apply for grant monies, to carve out unique roles for each of them within that grant to eliminate competition and direct their efforts at community-defined needs more efficiently.

5.3 Capacity Building

Frontline organizations have the potential to increase their capacity to act and transform existing structures by tapping into the actor group located farther from the government (i.e., the Parkdale Food Centre and the QVBIA). These actors' strengths lie in their knowledge of working within existing local structures and contexts to secure resources from the government to redistribute to like-minded partners committed to solving food insecurity. For example, the QVBIA represents an underutilized actor in this space, as they have the network and money to support socially minded groups like the VCA. Faith-based organizations also can offer an alternative supply stream to help frontline actors reduce dependencies on government. For example, Capital City Bikers' Church has partnerships with Foster's Farms and Cobs Bread Bakery. As such, Capital City Bikers' Church could facilitate the distribution of these foods to frontline organizations charged with delivering food to vulnerable residents in need.

5.4 Funding Systems

An obstacle to engagement can be traced to political and funding structures that do not reward frontline agencies for investing time in a process that does not contribute to more efficient service delivery. Funding agencies' narrow focus on service delivery means organizations tend to replicate one another to align themselves with the government's criteria in their funding applications. Such replication also contributes to competition at the grassroots level as organizations compete for the same pool of funding. In addition, it has the effect of homogenizing social service agencies in their organizational structures and the services they provide instead of providing funding arrangements that are more responsive to community organizations and the clients they serve. These needs include funding covering an extended timeframe to alleviate pressures to reapply and enable these groups to engage in long-term planning. Furthermore, the funding system must be restructured to prioritize outcomes over outputs to provide an incentive structure that rewards frontline organizations committed to reducing clients' reliance on their services.

5.5 Governmental opportunities to engage

The government, across all levels, needs to acknowledge the effects of the system on the level of poverty that exists at the neighbourhood level. Beyond acknowledgement, leadership within government must identify ways to strike a better balance between problem-solving and emergency responses. As discussed in Section four, there are pockets of support for anti-poverty initiatives at the government level, such as the Social Services Relief fund supporting the Ottawa Community Food Partnership. This partnership is designed to facilitate social change (Secord 2021). However, these patches

of support within the government are short-term, with the Social Services Relief Fund being phased out post-COVID-19 (Secord 2021).

Furthermore, efforts to tackle issues like poverty do not generate the immediate results politicians need to prove their worthiness of re-election within four-year cycles. Therefore, it becomes difficult to move the government to invest in sustainable solutions to issues like food insecurity. As a result, it requires efforts from the community to organize themselves to raise awareness with the government of the importance of local knowledge to achieve lasting impact for social issues such as food insecurity and poverty reduction.

5.6 Conclusion

The suggested way forward highlights the need for leadership at the community organizational level to expand their mandate to include activities targeted towards systemic change. Engagement processes must also provide a mechanism capable of supporting coordination across frontline organizations. At the same time, political and funding structures must also shift to empower actor groups to prioritize broader social impact.

Ultimately, this thesis is about unpacking the context and conditions of engagement. It posits that to craft appropriate engagement strategies, organizations must first understand the conditions that frame ideal engagement for community leaders operating in marginalized and vulnerable contexts at three critical stages in the engagement process – coming to the engagement, early-stage engagement, and building momentum. Understanding the conditions needed to frame an ideal engagement process is critical to developing strategies that effectively move a diversity of actor groups to decide to engage

on complex, wicked problems. From the Cluster Diagram of Food Security Actors, four key groupings of actors were identified, with those closer to the origin being less inclined to engage and those situated further away from the origin exhibiting a greater desire to engage. There must be recognition of different groupings of actors and the context and conditions in which they operate to improve the efficacy of local programs delivered by these clusters.

For example, individual citizen-led initiatives operating outside of traditional structures struggle to survive because they are not supported financially. These initiatives depend on the government to address the needs of the residents. However, actors closer to the government and the government itself can represent barriers to citizens wanting to collaborate to solve problems as citizens feel disenfranchised from organized and financially supported structures. Evidence of the limitations actors face that operate closer to government imposes upon the actor groups located furthest away from government influence can be traced to a combination of structural barriers and issues of leadership. For instance, those actors closest to the government benefit from a system that emphasizes a high service orientation.

On the other hand, the actor community that is highly dependent upon government and less able to stretch their mandate presents a barrier to more motivated groups, such as residents, the VCA, Parkdale Food Centre and the QVBIA. Barriers created by these clusters can be attributed to a combination of the structural constraints and organizational leadership that is not willing to exceed their mandate to consider taking risks towards creating a more fair and equitable system. Therefore, a combination of structural changes and leaders ready to adopt a systems-oriented mindset into their agenda is critical to

bridging the gap between these actor communities. Ultimately, understanding the conditions needed to frame an ideal engagement process for different actor communities showcases the importance of developing tailored strategies to encourage a diversity of actor groups to collaborate on complex, wicked problems.

5.7 Future research

Future research can explore ways to translate what actor groups need to build momentum to governmental bodies. For example, for the enabling conditions related to structure, future research could study the potential of collective impact to sustain engagement between local actors and government (Weaver 2016). Other areas could look at non-traditional models like diffusion theory, and the co-creation of processes that focus on the impact community organizations want to have rather than a defined pathway of service delivery. Other enabling conditions include recognition from the government that the characteristics of those furthest away from government, such as the VCA, St. Margaret's Church and residents, allow them to be agile and flexible. Therefore, the government needs to tailor their opportunities and supports so that it doesn't require this cluster of actors to shapeshift that detracts from the freedom they have to advance a problem-solving approach to food insecurity.

Enabling conditions for the cluster of actors dependent on government include more significant incentives for frontline actors to pursue a balanced agenda providing services delivery and impact. In response, the government must personalize their interactions with frontline actors in a manner that rewards activity tied to rethinking their model of service delivery. Given the unique positionality of different actor groups on local issues, future research can explore how government can increase their awareness of

the ecosystem of actors. Future research can also look at ways government can translate their awareness and understanding of enabling conditions into strategies that facilitate community action among a diverse set of actors.

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