

Community and University Podcast Series

Interviewee: Tony Willis, Chief Equity Officer at LEAP

Interviewer: Emma Gilbert, REI Research Assistant

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Emma Gilbert: Hello, and welcome to Community and University, the MSU Center for Community and Economic Development podcast aimed at providing outreach to both community members and students throughout the state of Michigan. The Michigan State University U.S. Economic Development Administration University Center for Regional Economic Innovation's (REI) mission is to stimulate innovative economic development in the most distressed communities within Michigan.

The **REI University Center** embraces a culture of regional collaboration and knowledge sharing between economic development professionals and committed scholars. The Center's model provides responsive community engagement, strategic partnerships, and collaborative learning to support the creation and identification of innovative tools, models, and practices to increase the number of small businesses; create access to job skill development; improve public infrastructure; advance high-growth entrepreneurship, and; encourage global competitiveness to strengthen underserved communities and historically excluded citizens.

The **REI University Center**'s most recent award focuses on four key pillars of community and economic development that together will build up the resilience, sustainability, and equity within the communities in which it partners. The four pillars include, resiliency planning, financial resilience, circular economies, and 21st Century communications. The **University Center** will work with community partners to address these themes in Michigan Economic Development Corporation's identified Redevelopment Ready Communities containing opportunity zone census tracts and/ **OR** large concentrations of ALICE populations—or those who are asset-limited, income-constrained employed.

I am Emma Gilbert and I'm one of the hosts for Community and University. Today, we will be spotlighting one of REI centers Innovation Fellows, Tony Willis, who is working on a project entitled "Exploring Communal and Cooperative Investment Models for Lansing, "building financial resilience in the Lansing community. Innovation Fellows provide on the ground support and coordination to move concepts to actions implementing new economic development tools models and policies. Welcome to the CCD podcast, Tony.

Tony Willis: Hey, thank you so much for having me. Pleasure to be here.

Emma Gilbert: So, before we begin talking about your project, would you mind providing our listeners with a brief overview of your educational and professional background?

Tony Willis: Yeah, absolutely. So, I started off at community college for a number of years there then transferred to Michigan State University. So, I had the full Lansing collegiate

experience, I would say, and then from that point, I was able to get to start my career and Business Banking at MSU Federal Credit Union, which I worked at for a number of years, five to six years or so. And during that time, with a credit union, we're just getting started through business lending in the spring and division. And part of my task was to reach out to different partners and organizations. They help support small businesses. One of those organizations was LEAP, where I met my predecessor Jeff Smith, that pitch competition called the "Hatching" and you know, shortly after that, they had a position open I applied and, you know, two weeks after applying got the role and I started and I've been at LEAP for over eight years now in economic development, from the greater region, and multiple roles within that position. Everything from VP of entrepreneurship to corporate innovation, and now as the Chief Equity Development Officer, and so that's my pathway further into economic development. I've done a number of projects outside of LEAP as well. Helps keep me going and curious as well, beyond the great work of duality.

Emma Gilbert: Well, it sounds awesome. I think that provides a good overview of how you got into economic development work. So, what key changes have you discovered or observed since you first started working in Lansing beyond your educational experience?

Tony Willis: So a number of key things I think since my time over the last eight and a half to nine years at least here you can see a strong energy reinvestment in the community taking place. You can also sense visibly accent over the last eight and a half years in a row I've noticed a number of investments, both public and private, in key areas of the community. LEAP offices located in Reo Town, I was just south of downtown, and that area dramatically changed after infrastructure of streetscape and WHO making it its headquarters located there, and so more businesses grew to support that and just like the hipster type, was in full swing at that space, but also currently, like the last year and a half. But the Lansing region has been red hot when it comes to outside investment, and knowing that we're located, we are centrally located throughout the state. So, it's a good space. When it comes to logistics, Michigan as a whole is great, you know, environmental climate protection. That's an asset being right here in the Midwest and in the north part of the state or in the Midwest as well is that we really don't have that geographic or environmental disruptions that take place such as tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, have so we had good safety built. But beyond that, our industry in leading factoring has posed as a great resource when it comes to talent. And so, corporations, especially looking at the manufacturing space, see that as a great way to pull all-star talent, knowing that we have a great educated population and then finally the cost of living. Lansing still remains to be affordable for a lot of folks to have a great cost, a great lifestyle and not a super high and expensive costs. So those are the key factors that I've seen leading to some of the changes in the increase investment or region over the last, you know, eight years or so.

Emma Gilbert: So, it sounds like building up the resilience of the city overall has been part of its chief goals in the past few years. Would you say that that is a correct characterization of what Lansing has been up to?

Tony Willis: Yeah, resilience for sure is definitely correct. We're trying to make sure that we can best stabilize ourselves for any other upcoming crisis and that we can be as dependent upon our local infrastructure when it comes to agriculture and food production, to other types of emergency crisis ease as well as centralized here, and when it comes to developing a talent pool that can meet the needs of our current workforce in the future. So, resiliency is a great way to describe what's going on, to say,

Emma Gilbert: Well, it sounds like your project definitely has some great inroads with the work that's already going on in the city. So, let's get more into that. For your Innovation Fellowship project, can you provide the audience with an overview of what your project is about the research that you are conducting and some of the goals that you have in how the project will eventually be implemented?

Tony Willis: Yeah, absolutely. When it comes to the project of the fellowship here, as you mentioned earlier in the intro, it is all about the communal focus of tools to help build wealth, and to help create a more equitable approach for development as a whole. The two aspects that I'm looking into, first being a community investment trusts, and the second being a worker owner cooperative space. Both of these tools and business models, I believe, can generate access to wealth and access and the stability and local control authority that is rarely seen or not seen as it should be in the greater economy. And so those are the two areas I'm focusing on to develop those, one of those is with the CIT model, only here as individual working with the local government Board of Commissioners as well as the City of Lansing itself, to look at the strategy and the feasibility of that and develop that plan. And then the other one, working in partnership with LEAP is to further the ability for the worker owner cooperative and related to succession planning. You know, I think one of the next there's my personal thing here for sure is exponential. What the next financial crisis we may see is that we're number of baby boomers are baby boomers that own businesses. And once you retire, they don't have a succession plan in place. So, they will just start to close down their doors, which is like a triple net loss across the board that the community loses because they could thrive. Businesses just close because the person doesn't want to work anymore. Employees lose because they don't have a job. And then the business owner has a loss, AKA facility where they could sell that business and retain or get additional income and count the legacy retained as well. So, in those manners, I think the worker owner session plan will help alleviate that by allowing workers to take ownership of the business and proceed and increase their incomes, individuals' owners, and a community wins sometimes the owner so the former owner at that point. Yeah, so I'm excited about this, the project, and this fellowship allows us to really take in myself to take a look at commitment to have these things grow and see where they end up over these next six months here.

Emma Gilbert: So, one of the goals of your project was a Community Investment Trust, if I heard you correctly. Now, can you provide a little bit of a description of what a Community Investment Trust actually is?

Tony Willis: Yeah, absolutely. So, Community Investment Trust is an actual trust, where a organization creates a trust to hold and purchase a property. This property is owned by the

trustees which are individuals who are from certain zip codes, can contribute into the trust through monthly installments, whether that's \$10 up to \$100 a month. And this allows a community collected to own a property, a commercial property in fact, it can be a mixed use, but mostly commercial property. And this ownership benefits individuals in many ways. So, as I mentioned, this is a trust that we have a group of trustees that will select a management board and the management board will have authority to make decisions through vote to make sure the properties and maintenance and who they want to have in the property or lease rates and beyond. So, that's what a community investment trusts, and I want to go into the benefits. So, see the benefits we see here, and this is a newer concept to know. I think there's only been one real, or two, both in the state of Washington, in Seattle, the greater Seattle metropolitan area where these are installed at, but a number of folks have been inquiring about this model and other communities because the local level of ownership, of authority. A number of these commercial properties, especially in Lansing, are owned by the folks that don't live here. And so, it's kind of out of sight, out of mind type of thing where the property can be dilapidated at times or the kind of tenants there are probably not the type of tenant that communities would like to have in the neighborhood. Perhaps you know, but for the people that are there, you know, they just look at it as pre revenue versus the other thoughts that could be associated with having a certain type of establishment in a certain location. And so, the local ownership and direction is a key part of it. The other part is that this is a way that allows people in different zip codes to have ownership. Ownership presents a wealth building opportunity, because as the property value increases, you're paying off the debt service of that property and that leads to dividends for the individuals who invest in primary and then also for the community investment Trusts model is that your money is guaranteed because you use the city's credit for this investment. So, any person who puts their money in their initial investment is guaranteed, so they can pull it out anytime they want. Once a year they can put their money back out and you could also join back in the next open period as well. So, it's a no risk investment for the individual to get this into high potential high yield and return and high yield when it comes to governance of the project.

Emma Gilbert: So, since you said the Community Investment Trust model is something that's newer in terms of, you know, just it as a concept itself, but also in its implementation within communities, how, or if you've done this work already, how have you understood the community's perspective about this opportunity? Or is this something they're looking forward to? Is this something that, you know, specific demographics within Lansing are targeted to benefit from? How have you been able to really leverage the strategy?

Tony Willis: Yeah, great question. When it comes to our engagement and seeing the buy in from this, we were able to talk to a number of community organizations. I myself, I say "me" as we really like that, on this project, total number of community organizations representing mostly on like the south side of Lansing in the southwest side of Lansing. It is a number about three or four different commercial strip mall type properties, I think this type of investment model will be prime to utilize for. So, for the feedback we've seen the main hardship, that hardship concerning the committees as brought up in these meetings with both one level global and seed, the communities education economic development group which is like the local organization as well

based on Southwest Lansing. They say that, you know, nobody invests in these properties are as hard to talk to the owner or owners not there or in that realm. And so, there's a collective desire to have some type of authority and these properties and to see that investment happen and also help be more attractive to newer businesses and businesses that the community wants. So, through conversation of local groups and bodies is how was to get the interest and their main point of desire for such a program.

Emma Gilbert: That's awesome. So, it really sounds like this community investment model is really building off of the needs that you've identified within the community already. And in terms of the second goal of your project, which has to do with Cooperative investment models, The Allen Neighborhood Project, which is located in the East side of Lansing, that also uses a cooperative kind of investment model. But how have you understood this concept to wanting to expand this concept rather in other areas within Lansing? Is this something that's also really community driven or how do you see this kind of expanding beyond a neighborhood center but to other maybe more mainstream or widely used resources within the city?

Tony Willis: Yeah, so Allen Neighborhood Center is a phenomenal space. And I want to know, originally, going into this plan of action for the worker-owner business model, it's that I really see that looming possible crisis of the retirement and then knowing that many regular people outside of business owners don't have wills or succession planning in place. And how the crucial step it is, when it comes to like, next steps afterwards for whatever you have left, after you have transitioned from this, you know, from this plane of existence, and so, those type of things are I see as like, big opportunities that we could improve upon as a community collectively, if we understood and implemented models to help shore up to shore up the loose ends here. And so, the worker and I, we had a number of local institutions here, Lansing institutions, that are restaurants and other businesses that had been around for years. They closed up during the pandemic and they, you know, and two of them I can say right now as I've mentioned, one is DeLucas. They weather the pandemic, it was just the fact that they're looking to retire is the owner, family all had different, you know, interest in other job opportunities, and they didn't really want to pursue the family business, which has been around for about 50 years. And it's like an amazing staple, but he had a potential buyer towards the very end, but that wasn't so after he did an article or interview that said he wants to sell the business or wants to close the business. And he mentioned "Hey, I'm looking to close business out by five months", then a potential buyer approached him, but that timeframe didn't allow enough due diligence to make that deal go through. And so, I looked at that as imagine if you know the workforce, bad work there at DeLucas, who probably been their folks and employees have been there for you know, years and years, that know how to do their job and know how the flow of the business looks like. Imagine that they're able to collectively purchase the business. Keep the owner on as the consultant or help them train some of the other aspects of the business. They're not privy to whether it's the supply chain or the payroll management software and beyond. And they figure out a way to buy the business and their individual company increase that being only a profitable business and they get a revenue sharing as a collective from that, I say that would have been a major win in that space. So, seeing the cooperative model, in other areas. I know that Ohio was a few spots that

have was like a dry-cleaning business that's been our best brand by new Americans or new newcomers. Also, as refugees to America in the space here that's been very both profitable, but as well as successful. I see that model as something that be replicated in our community, and Lansing very much so. Those are the kinds of breakdowns I'm looking at, and just knowing that these models are not new, that they're not rare, you know, I think the last year MSU REI Summit of innovations. We had a speaker talking about cooperatives in that space now. There's like over 144,000 throughout the United States, and so they're out there for sure, but I think it's less known and, unfortunately less utilized, I think, but the output could be such a big benefit for the community.

Emma Gilbert: Are there limits to the number of people that can be a part of this kind of cooperative type of investment model? You know, dues? I know you mentioned DeLuca's which is a restaurant in Lansing, but say other types of service providers or businesses in general wanted to adopt a similar framework, would that be, you know, transmissible to those other types of situations?

Tony Willis: Yeah, for sure. You know, I think of, you know, manufacturing whether it's you know, print or other different types of goods being produced, where even those type of realms there already understand, like a Collective, a group mindset. Especially when you look at a union approach, right, that there's a collective understanding as a bargaining group wants this. And so, I see this not just applicable to the restaurant or catering business, but beyond that, and when it comes to the limit of individuals, you know, it goes from the smaller amount employees mean there can be more of a partnership type aspect, and a larger amount definitely goes into the different rights of voting, then into a board and into a managing partner in that space. So, you have a little more complexity, but nothing that can't be done with, you know, a little well, effort.

Emma Gilbert: You also mentioned previously that in working on these, setting up these, kinds of models, you've been working with LEAP and you've also been working with some individuals on the board of commissioners, but what support have you gotten from other local governance structures in order to really make this not only an idea, but a model that can truly be implemented and utilized within the community?

Tony Willis: Yeah, so for the worker on secession planning, Ingham County saw the vision and, you know, they back this is going through their service committee, and it's been approved to move forward. That's a yay, hooray for that. So that's a big win for the work on a session planning. I think we're getting close, whether through the City of Lansing or even some local financial institutions I've talked to, as well, that have dollars that could go to support this through. Whether go through, their civic engagement or corporate philanthropy efforts to help support this type of programming. So yeah, I've been doing a lot of support, but the commissioners have been great from Ingham County for sure. So that's been a big win. For me, and both LEAP, we've been going personally with the CIT space.

Emma Gilbert: Well, that's great that you've had some simultaneous support and that this hasn't been something that, you know, you've identified in the community but isn't supportive

politically. So, that's also something that's, you know, a barrier to overcome. And that's great that you've already, you know, surmounted that. Moving forward, you know, how do you see or who do you see this project having the most impact on within Lansing? You know, your project is targeted towards, you know, the landscape community in general, but are there specific demographics in which you truly see these programs supporting?

Tony Willis: Yeah, you know, top of mine are underrepresented communities that have been unable to fully participate in all the wealth building activities that can take place in the United States, and that being ownership of a business or ownership of a property have been tied to some of the most effective ways to grow one's overall wealth in net house income, collectively. So those underrepresented groups simply BIPOC, Black people. Other people of color, those with disabilities in that realm and beyond. Those that are under-served, that is a core area that I want to see partake in these programs, they could benefit from these programs even more so. When it comes to, you know, other ways of, you know, outreach, I think, is there were a number of community leaders in those areas that want to be part of this, are being a part of this. So that's where I see the benefit happening in that space. Did that answer the question all the way? I'm sorry, I kind of took a different angle, but I definitely share that for sure.

Emma Gilbert: No, I definitely think that you answered the question, especially in your discussion of, you know, who specifically will benefit as well as the outreach strategy that you're trying to build. And elaborating on the outreach strategy, is working with community partners that might have more specific ties to these underserved communities' part of your plan for this project, or is that an effort that you plan to take on and moving forward beyond the work the work you're doing within the REI Center?

Tony Willis: Yeah, so I look at this program being ongoing. I think we can get some legs on this program. You know the worker-owner session planning is implemented this year. It won't be a quick turnaround per se, because after talking to the firm C2BE. You know, you have to reach out hit the political comfortable going, via the business owners feel comfortable going over their books perceived value, what that is they're putting a number on it. Find the right business or have enough employees that want to partake in buying the business. And so, this is over a year to process what you're getting it started implementing this year. They know what's going to happen very clearly. We know that the CIT program and then leaps are what's going to work on your cooperative leap, as well as Ingham County will be there to spearhead and move that forward. And I'm involved in both of those areas that way. For the CIT, the first step is a feasibility study, and that takes about between six to ten weeks I believe when it comes to looking at the financials from the organization to help form the trust. We can get properties, demand of the marketplace for certain properties, figuring out roles, legal documents, so it does take the time and feasibility so I feel like both these projects have enough support in the community thus far, and which will help drive these things forward beyond the timeframe of the fellowship right now. Which is which is great because we want to see these things, you know, live longer. than just the initial engagement and implementation through the support of MSU REI.

Emma Gilbert: Yeah, I mean, that is definitely a goal of the REI University Center and truly seeing not just the you know, the theory or the research behind it, but also seeing the outcomes that are produced and in the communities in which we're partnering. And so, just to kind of push this conversation along. I think we've definitely covered a lot about your project itself and the goals of your project, but what truly makes your project innovative?

Tony Willis: Oh, wow that's a great question, I think one of the biggest aspects when it comes to innovation is you know, finding the need and filling a need, and we found the need through it's been long standing that wealth building has not been the tools of wealth building have not always been easily accessible to certain demographics in the community and certain areas in a community that are hurting more than others. And so, we know there's a need right there. And then you know, it makes it innovative these are both two models that are less explored and less known. One is completely pretty much almost brand new, really the last five years. And so that's the CIT model. So, I think those both breed innovation in itself and that it is upon us and is obtainable for us to have an equitable economy, great programs and pathways to help lower poverty, to help increase household income, increase local ownership authority, and drive a communal collective goal for good and I think that's what kind of makes up the innovation part of this program.

Emma Gilbert: I think you've definitely hit the nail with that one. And so, you know, not just looking at the innovative nature of your project, but also looking at you know, some of the goals in terms of the pillars of financial resilience at the center is taken on, you know, how does your project further the REI mission not only in terms of equitable development, but also in building that local financial resilience to stop some of those linkages that you've identified?

Tony Willis: Yeah, so, majorly you know, MSU REI is definitely a Cornerstone institution when it comes to this kind of thought process. And so, when we think of resilience, long term, this program really aligns itself to the ability that if a community individuals have more income, you are less susceptible to, an unknown, or impulsive, or catastrophic change, that could happen whether its the economy, your jobs, you personally, your household income and the ability to have savings and having assets makes you more resilient. You know, when they talk about long term wealth outlook for the for the majority of Americans and how 50% of people don't have over \$5,000 saved about 50% people don't have the ability, or don't have the ability don't have you know, retirement savings in a space that puts the community at large in a very treacherous type of state. Where you're susceptible to a lot of, you know, unknown dangers financially and that takes a toll on you as a person, that takes a toll on your loved ones. It takes a toll on a lot of community activities as well. So, by creating this program right here, by really helping create access to assets, access to wealth building, and those are being both commercial real estates, and or a business, through the worker owner succession planning. Those things allow individuals to seek and grow and become less susceptible to change, or by changed by negative change in that space. So that's where to align ourselves very closely with the resilience pillars that MSU REI has in store.

Emma Gilbert: Yeah, that's great, I definitely see a lot of comparisons as to how your project truly fits into like the culture and the work that the city is already doing. So, it seems like there's a lot of streamlined efforts towards really building that, not just resilience in one aspect of the city, like you previously mentioned to natural events shocks or natural disaster shocks. But to, you know, changes into our social and economic environments as well, which a lot of people you know, don't pay attention to maybe as explicitly but live through every day implicitly whether they recognize that experience or not, in those terms. So yeah, I welcome your response to that.

Tony Willis: Yeah, I totally agree with what you say there. I look at the worker owner succession plan as a tool that allows, especially, for industries that are outside a restaurant outside of the retail leg of the supply chain. The majority of businesses are in their retail legs supply chain, which is, which is directly dependent on the consumer and so we thought with COVID, the shake up, and how that hurt the economy, especially those small businesses, because people lost their jobs. And those retail businesses suffered tremendously. They're dependent upon just the consumer. And the majority, the vast majority of any underrepresented group, whether it's person of color, women, veteran, majority of those demographics, are situated within the underrepresented, are situated in the retail of the pipeline. And so, if we can have individuals who are in the manufacturing game or the wholesale in the pipeline, think about succession planning and having their workforce are typically more diverse and just ownership in those areas and that new ownership is more representative, more representative of the community at large. We can really see a shift and large-scale wealth production as well as, core beliefs of some organizations as well, so that really excites me. So that's why we're kind of stepping on that

Emma Gilbert: I know you mentioned previously, the fact that there are some other communities in Washington state that have already implemented that communal investment trust model. But what is the potential in your opinion for other communities? Not only in Michigan, potentially, across the nation to implement a similar model maybe to that community investment trusts, but also in cooperative investment models to which are already a little bit more widely used, but could use more you know, wide disbursement across communities that don't have access to those opportunities currently?

Tony Willis: Yeah, I think the opportunity is very large. I think we can see this being very replicable across a number of communities. For both of those aspects. I went and talked to CIT invest, which is like the leading firm for the Community Investment Trusts, the ones that started the program, and have their outreach, engagement, and replication officer and I met with the CEO of the firm as well. He mentioned you know, this year, since the beginning of this year, they had 12 engagements from different communities, looking at their model, and he mentioned I forgot the number from last year, but he saw like for the first quarter 12 was like whoa that was a giant spike up. So, I think the interest is there. And I think you know, you know, myself and this committee of Lansing and MSU REI are part of this. We're definitely one of the early adopters that see this as a way that we can really benefit the community at large, and I think furthering the branding and the storming success of both CIT as well as the worker- owner succession model. Because like I said, the workout session has been around but probably less known. We can

highlight that successfully trumpet it to our peer cities and other communities. And so, it worked here and that's how we did it, and it can work here too. And trust me we're not the only ones that are the first ones to do it. It's been done before but we're doing it this way because equitable approach where these demographics specifically, you know, go for it, we can help you along the way, so I think there's a large opportunity for us to show the way and lead the way to a number of other communities to do these programs.

Emma Gilbert: That's awesome, and in terms of, you know, the tools and partnerships that you have leveraged and trying to mobilize these strategies, what advice would you give to other communities looking to implement similar models? What tools or partnerships or you know, just overall advice would you provide them?

Tony Willis: Yeah, you know, I have the benefit of both being an economical developer and professional in this space, but I say working with both your local EDO, you economic development organization, is a great way to start as well as community led organizations. Understanding their needs, and understanding when they say like, hey, especially when it comes to wealth generation. That will be a big one there, and we'll get into it and then on my behalf here, and then your local elected official. I think, you know, on the local, whether it's county or city probably the best bet to go, having that relationship. I have a strong partnership with the Commissioner here. That has been a great ally and supporter of both these programs, and they see the vision, they see the need to have a finger on the pulse of the community as well. So, I think that's imperative, because, you know, especially looking at dollars. Then I would also tell folks, you know, local banks and credit unions to see what they have a mandate to, do funding or to do philanthropic giving, in different communities. That might be a Go ahead as well. You know, luckily here, one of our larger bank institutions has contributed a lot. I think they might want to contribute helping that feasibility study for the CIT model. And so, what are some ways I think you know, other community individuals, or other individuals in their communities could take and utilize, to help create a program like this in their community, or other programs. So, the EDO's, the local political elected officials being definitely in the county, at the city level, and then a community-based organization for the outreach of the community that you're trying to serve.

Emma Gilbert: I think that's a great overview. Definitely building relationships is a core part of community and economic investment work anyways, so it definitely makes sense with the trends of the work in this environment. But is there really anything else that you would like to discuss about your research or other opportunities for local financial resilience building?

Tony Willis: Yeah, I think we did a great job covering it. I just really want to say that we as a community, every community, really, this has to be at the forefront of our minds, that the time is upon us, to really think about what the future holds. We have to be serious that there are some demographics and areas that probably need a lot of emergency attention. Once these areas grow and thrive, we got to be bold and direct about the support we give and you know, also thoughtful for sure. But we have to be willing to take those educated risks to move a program forward and do good for the whole and trying beats not trying any day. Trying allows you to say there's room

for improvement, not trying just lets the problem grow. What we're trying to do right now for this project is definitely trying to build and grow wealth and support for certain communities and hope it will continue to grow and improve as this grows through, but I think as a whole just try, go for it, be bold, and be direct about the plans, and initiatives, that help certain areas of the communities out who we know those exists throughout every municipal area, community city, throughout the nation, so that says my particular worries about putting resiliency in that space, Emma.

Emma Gilbert: I think that that's a wonderful way to recap and also leave our listeners with something to think about in their own work. So, with that, I would really truly like to thank you for joining us today, Tony. We look forward to the completion of your research.

Tony Willis: I appreciate you, Emma, for this conversation. And yeah, I look forward to talking to you soon and can't wait to you know have another follow up as this for the other summer year.

Emma Gilbert: Well, this has been community and university with Tony Willis discussing his project exploring communal and cooperative investment models for Lansing in order to build resilience in the Lansing community. Tune in next time for another interview with an REI project leader. Thank you.