

DETROIT'S STRATEGIC NEIGHBORHOOD FUND:

DECEMBER 2020

A BASELINE REPORT OF RESIDENT PERCEPTIONS

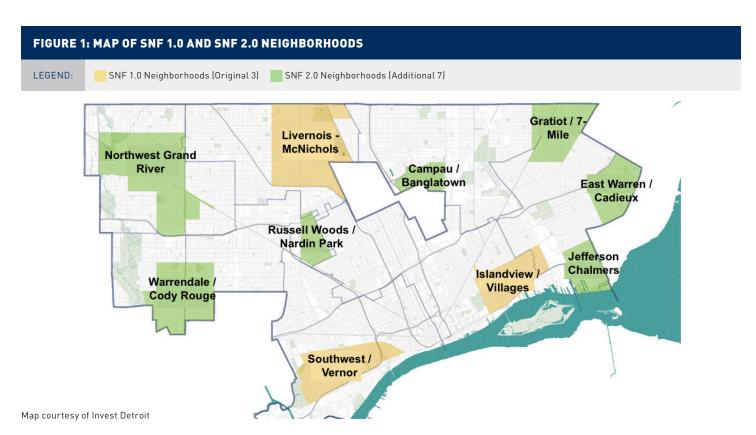
By Lydia Wileden and Afton Branche-Wilson

BACKGROUND

The Detroit Metro Area Communities Study (DMACS) is a University of Michigan initiative designed to regularly survey Detroit residents about their perceptions of neighborhood conditions, economic opportunity, local priorities, and overall quality of life. Since 2016, DMACS has conducted citywide surveys on topics including crime and policing, community health, housing and blight, entrepreneurship, and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In fall 2019, DMACS deployed a survey focused, in part, on capturing baseline data to measure the impact of Detroit's Strategic Neighborhood Fund (SNF) initiative. The SNF initiative is an effort by the City and its non-profit and private sector partners to stabilize neighborhoods and attract new residents through projects aimed at boosting economic opportunity and

improving quality of life. The City and its partners selected ten Detroit neighborhoods—all outside of greater downtown (see Figure 1)—for the SNF program based on their likelihood to quickly benefit from localized investment as measured by their population densities, the presence of a central commercial corridor, strong local leadership, and proximity to public assets.¹ Announced in 2014 and formally launched in 2016, the first round of SNF investments targeted improvements in the Southwest/Vernor, Livernois-McNichols, and Islandview/Villages neighborhoods (referred to here as SNF 1.0 neighborhoods). In 2018, the second round of SNF investments was announced for seven additional neighborhoods: Northwest/Grand River, Warrendale/Cody Rouge, Russell Woods/Nardin Park, Campau/Banglatown, Jefferson Chalmers, East War-







ren/Cadieux, and Gratiot/7 Mile (referred to here as SNF 2.0 neighborhoods). This report draws on fall 2019 DMACS data to offer a snapshot of neighborhood conditions and resident perceptions at the early stages of the SNF program. Deployed as initial investments were coming to fruition in SNF 1.0 neighborhoods and prior to much of the planned development in SNF 2.0 neighborhoods, the survey captures the perspectives of 1,855 Detroit residents, including an oversample of those living in SNF communities.² The data have been weighted to reflect city demographics. The resulting data enable comparisons between SNF and non-SNF resident perspectives as well as between SNF 1.0, SNF 2.0, and other Detroit residents.

By highlighting these differences in resident sentiments early in the SNF initiative, this report provides a baseline against which to measure the impact of forthcoming investments in parks, streetscapes, commercial corridors, and housing as well as neighborhood-level feedback on how the City can most effectively and equitably plan for continued economic development in these neighborhoods and across Detroit. Additionally, we highlight suggestive findings on how initial investments in SNF 1.0 neighborhoods may be impacting residents' perceptions of their neighborhood and offer neighborhood level feedback on how the City can most effectively and equitably plan for continued economic development in these neighborhoods and across Detroit.

KEY TAKEAWAYS³

- Residents of the first three SNF neighborhoods (SNF 1.0)—where strategic investment started in 2016—are significantly more likely to report greater overall neighborhood satisfaction and improvements to neighborhood quality of life than other Detroiters. SNF 1.0 residents are also more likely to be satisfied with housing conditions and the availability of neighborhood parks and stores.
- These same SNF 1.0 neighborhoods have seen more positive signs of neighborhood change more people moving in, more businesses opening, increasing property values, and increasing neighborhood attractiveness—than other neighborhoods in the city.
- Despite these reported improvements, residents of SNF 1.0 neighborhoods are no more likely than residents in the rest of the city to express fears over being displaced due to rising housing costs.
- Perceptions of safety are stronger in SNF
 1.0 neighborhoods than other Detroit

- neighborhoods. SNF 1.0 residents are also more likely to sense their neighborhoods are growing safer, though they remain dissatisfied with the amount of local crime.
- In the second set of SNF neighborhoods (SNF 2.0)—where strategic investments are only in the planning stage— perceived changes in quality of life closely match the rest of the city. Comparing SNF 2.0 and non-SNF areas going forward can help demonstrate how SNF investments may impact resident perceptions over time.
- On many measures of neighborhood quality, residents of the 10 SNF neighborhoods do not express greater satisfaction with neighborhood amenities than other Detroit residents, despite their neighborhoods being chosen for SNF in part based on preexisting local assets. These baseline similarities suggest that future comparisons in resident perceptions between SNF and non-SNF neighborhoods may offer evidence of the effectiveness of the SNF strategy.





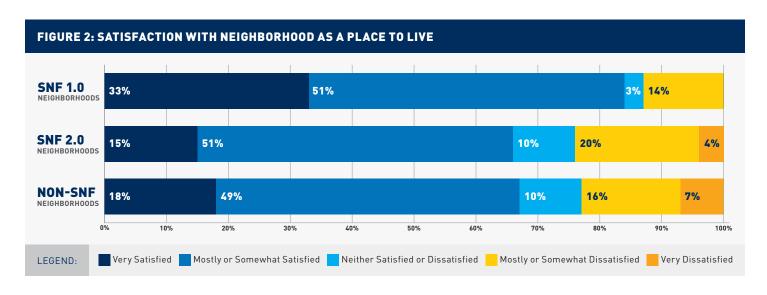
RESULTS

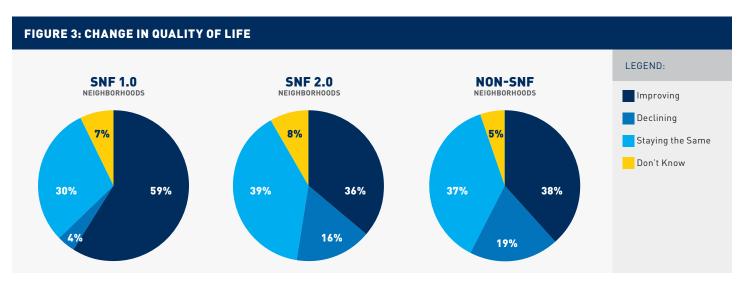
RESIDENTS OF SNF 1.0 NEIGHBORHOODS REPORT GREATER NEIGHBORHOOD SATISFACTION AND ARE MORE LIKELY TO SAY THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD QUALITY OF LIFE IS IMPROVING.

As a whole, the majority (69%) of Detroit residents say they are somewhat, mostly, or very satisfied with their neighborhoods as a place to live. Just 5% of Detroiters say they are very dissatisfied with their neighborhood. While residents of SNF neighborhoods are, collectively, not more likely to be satisfied with their neighborhoods than non-SNF residents, residents of the first three SNF neighborhoods report greater neighborhood satisfaction than other city residents: a third of SNF 1.0 residents say they are very satisfied with their neighbor-

hood, whereas residents of SNF 2.0 neighborhoods and other neighborhoods in the city were roughly half as likely to be very satisfied. Just 14% of SNF 1.0 residents report being dissatisfied, while nearly a quarter of residents in other neighborhoods say they are dissatisfied with their neighborhoods (**Figure 2**).

Beyond being more satisfied, SNF 1.0 residents—where strategic investment efforts began in 2016—are also more likely to view the quality of life in their neighborhood as improving. While Detroiters overall have mixed views on how quality of life is changing in their neighborhoods, a majority (59%) of SNF 1.0 residents view their neighborhood quality of life as improving. Only 4% think quality of life is declining, and 30% think it is staying the same (**Figure 3**).









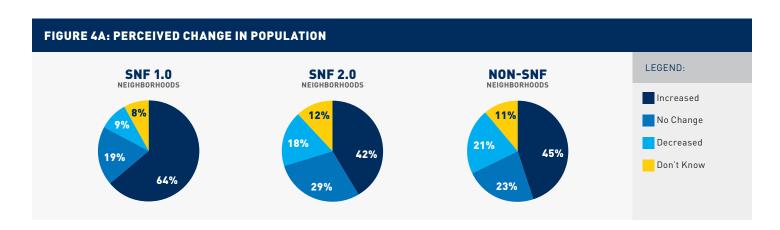
By contrast, residents of the remaining seven SNF neighborhoods view quality of life in their communities much like residents in non-SNF neighborhoods: they are more than four times as likely as SNF 1.0 residents to say quality of life in their neighborhood is declining. Nearly one-in-five residents living outside of SNF 1.0 neighborhoods say quality of life is declining, while almost 40% say it is staying the same and 40% say quality of life is improving. Within SNF neighborhoods, residents of Islandview/Villages (an SNF 1.0 neighborhood) are the most likely to view quality of life as improving—over three-quarters (77%) of those residents feel neighborhood life there is getting better—while residents of Russell Woods/Nardin Park (an SNF 2.0 neighborhood) are the least likely to view quality of life as improving—just under a quarter (23%) of those residents think the quality of neighborhood life is getting better.

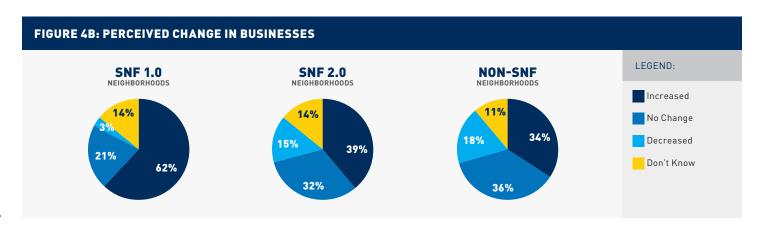
THE MAJORITY OF SNF 1.0 RESIDENTS HAVE NOTICED NEIGHBORHOOD GROWTH—IN TERMS OF NEW RESIDENTS AND NEW BUSINESSES—IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS.

Nearly half (46%) of Detroit residents report that they have noticed more people moving into their neighborhoods in the

last five years. Just one-in-five (19%) Detroiters report more people moving out of their neighborhoods and a quarter (24%) have noticed no change over the same period. Similarly, though 15% of Detroiters say more businesses in their neighborhoods have been closing over the past five years, 39% report seeing more businesses opening and 33% report no change in business presence. It should be noted that these population and business trends may be impacted by the social and economic displacement resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Resident perceptions of population and business growth are not uniform across neighborhoods. Those living in SNF 1.0 neighborhoods are more likely to say more people have moved in and more businesses have opened than other residents (Figure 4). 64% of SNF 1.0 residents have noticed more people moving into the neighborhood in the past five years and 62% have noticed more businesses opening, compared to 44% and 36% of residents in other neighborhoods, respectively. Moreover, residents outside of SNF 1.0 neighborhoods are twice as likely to say they have observed more people moving out of their neighborhoods and roughly five times as likely to say they have observed more businesses closing in their neighborhoods as residents of the first three SNF neighborhoods. Due to a lack of data on resident perceptions prior to the SNF program,









we cannot say definitively whether positive perceptions of neighborhood change in SNF 1.0 neighborhoods are a result of early-phase SNF investments or if they represent underlying differences between neighborhoods.

SNF NEIGHBORHOODS ENJOY RISING PROPERTY VALUES, BUT MOST RESIDENTS DO NOT FEAR DISPLACEMENT.

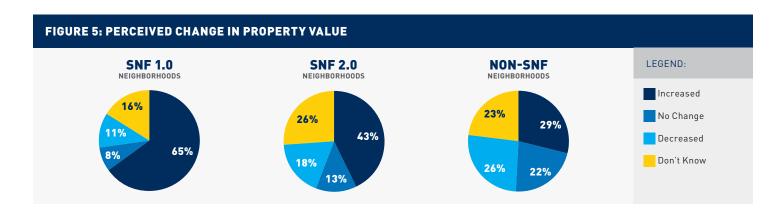
Across the city, 39% of homeowners report that their property value has risen in the last five years, compared to 21% who reported a decline in property value, and 17% who report no change in value. Like population and business growth, perceptions of change in property values vary across neighborhoods. Residents in all SNF neighborhoods are more likely to report increases in property values than residents in non-SNF neighborhoods. Nearly two-thirds (65%) of SNF 1.0 residents report their property values have increased in recent years, compared to 43% of residents in SNF 2.0 neighborhoods and 29% of residents in non-SNF areas. A quarter of non-SNF residents say that their property values have decreased in the last five years (**Figure 5**).

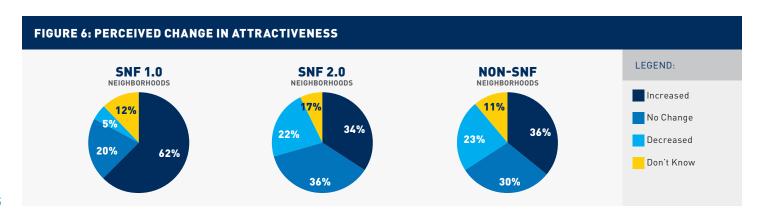
Despite rising property values, which could indicate a hot housing market and higher risk of displacement by incoming

residents, SNF residents are not more likely to be concerned that their neighborhood is getting too expensive to live in. 32% of SNF 1.0 residents, 26% of SNF 2.0 residents, and 33% of other Detroiters agree with the statement, "I am worried that it is becoming too expensive for me to live in my neighborhood."

SNF 1.0 RESIDENTS ARE TWICE AS LIKELY TO REPORT INCREASES IN NEIGHBORHOOD ATTRACTIVENESS AS OTHER RESIDENTS.

Residents of SNF 1.0 neighborhoods—where some investments have already been made to revitalize streets, parks, and street-scapes—are nearly twice as likely as other Detroit residents to report that their neighborhoods have become more attractive in the past five years. Just 5% of SNF 1.0 residents think their neighborhood has become less attractive in that time. Mean-while, the perceived change in neighborhood attractiveness among residents of SNF 2.0 neighborhoods—where similar investments are forthcoming—looks much like the rest of the city. Nearly a quarter of these residents think their neighborhoods have become less attractive in recent years while 36% of SNF 2.0 residents and 30% of non-SNF residents perceive no change in neighborhood attractiveness (Figure 6).





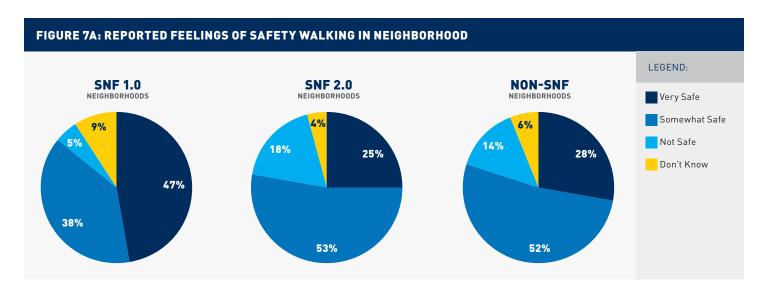


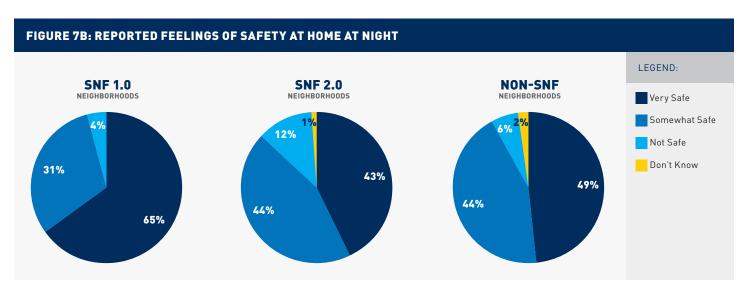


Interestingly, despite this investment in public infrastructure and residents' sense that neighborhood attractiveness has improved, SNF 1.0 residents only report marginally higher levels of satisfaction with neighborhood street and sidewalk conditions than other Detroiters. However, residents of the original SNF neighborhoods do report much higher satisfaction with the way vacant lots are used and maintained, and with the condition of most houses. Roughly half (48%) of the residents in SNF 1.0 neighborhoods report being satisfied with vacant lot maintenance and 58% report being satisfied with housing quality in their neighborhoods, compared to just 34% and 43% of other city residents, respectively (see Figure 10 below).

THE MAJORITY OF DETROIT RESIDENTS FEEL SAFE AT HOME, WHILE SNF 1.0 RESIDENTS ARE MORE LIKELY TO REPORT IMPROVEMENTS IN NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY THAN OTHERS.

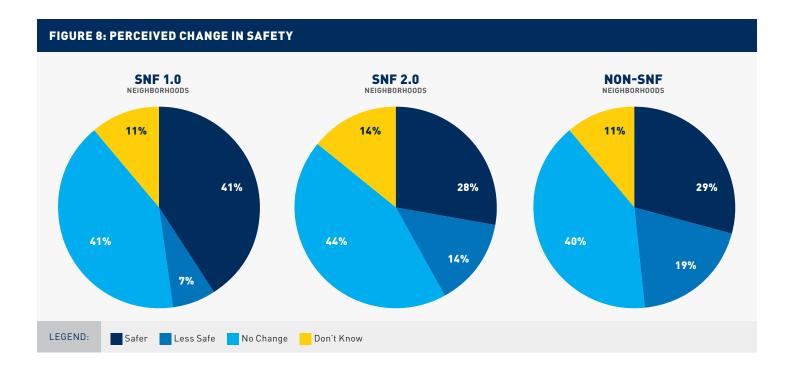
Overall, 91% of Detroit residents feel very or somewhat safe at home at night and 80% of residents feel safe while walking in their neighborhood. But, residents of SNF 1.0 neighborhoods are significantly more likely to report feeling very safe in their neighborhood—both walking around during the day and in their homes at night—than residents in other neighborhoods. Just 5% of residents in these original SNF neighborhoods say they feel unsafe walking around their neighborhood during the day compared to 18% of SNF 2.0 residents and 14% of non-SNF residents (**Figure 7**).











In addition to feeling safer, SNF 1.0 residents are also more likely to feel that safety in their neighborhoods has improved over time (**Figure 8**). 41% of residents in SNF 1.0 neighborhoods feel that their neighborhood is safer compared to five years ago, while an equal proportion feels that safety hasn't changed. Just 7% of these residents believe their neighborhoods have gotten less safe. By contrast, roughly 30% of residents in SNF 2.0 neighborhoods and in non-SNF neighborhoods believe that their neighborhoods have gotten safer. 14% of SNF 2.0 residents and 19% of non-SNF residents view their neighborhoods as growing less safe in the last five years.

SNF 1.0 RESIDENTS ARE MORE LIKELY TO FEEL THAT THE CITY IS WORKING TO IMPROVE THEIR NEIGHBORHOODS.

Leaders of the SNF initiative have placed community engagement—including resident-driven planning studies, participatory budgeting, and support for local developers—as a cornerstone of local planning and development efforts. These efforts towards engagement and dissemination of information may be reflected in SNF 1.0 residents' greater sense that they are informed about local goings-on and that the City is working to improve their neighborhoods. While 51% of Detroit's residents agree that they feel informed about what is happening in their neighborhood, 64% of residents in the original three SNF neighborhoods say they feel informed. Additionally, 69% of SNF 1.0 residents agree that the City is working to improve conditions in their neighborhood, compared to 55% of SNF 2.0 residents and 52% of non-SNF residents (Figure 9).









Despite this emphasis on participatory planning and heightened sense of being informed, SNF residents are not significantly more likely than other Detroiters to feel that they have the power to bring about change in their neighborhood. Just 24% of SNF 1.0 residents, 17% of SNF 2.0 residents, and 21% of non-SNF residents strongly agree that they have a say in affecting change in their neighborhoods. 20% of residents in SNF 1.0, SNF 2.0, and non-SNF neighborhoods, respectively, strongly disagree that they can affect neighborhood change.

When asked to rank their top three priorities for neighborhood change, Detroiters most often choose reducing crime and fixing up or tearing down blighted houses, though improving streets and improving schools also rank highly. Examining each residents' reported ranked priorities reveals considerable variation between neighborhoods (see Appendix for further detail).

RESIDENTS OF SNF 1.0 NEIGHBORHOODS REPORT GREATER SATISFACTION WITH CERTAIN NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES ALIGNED WITH SNF INVESTMENTS. FOR OTHER AMENITIES, SNF RESIDENTS ARE GENERALLY NO MORE LIKELY TO BE SATISFIED THAN OTHER DETROITERS.

SNF funds are intended to focus on community-driven projects in four specific areas—park improvements, streetscape improvements, commercial corridor development, and affordable single-family home stabilization. Interestingly enough, it is in these areas where we see some differences in resident perceptions between SNF 1.0 neighborhoods and the rest of the city. SNF 1.0 residents are significantly more likely to express satisfaction with the availability of stores, the availability of parks and playgrounds, the quality of housing, and the upkeep of vacant lots in their neighborhoods than residents in other neighborhoods. They are also marginally more likely to be satisfied with the conditions of neighborhood streets and sidewalks. These differences should be interpreted with caution in relation to the SNF initiative, as they may reflect, at least in part, under-

lying differences in neighborhood conditions predating SNF for which we lack data. Still, it is noteworthy that resident satisfaction in SNF 1.0 neighborhoods is higher for amenities aligned with SNF investments. Going forward it will be interesting to see whether or not perceptions in these same amenities shift in SNF 2.0 neighborhoods as they also begin to see investment.

While we see significant differences in resident satisfaction between SNF 1.0 neighborhoods and the rest of the city in certain amenities, we see no differences in resident satisfaction with the majority of neighborhood amenities. When asked to rate their satisfaction with the availability of public transportation, public facilities, places to buy healthy food, or affordable housing in their neighborhoods, SNF residents are no more likely to be satisfied than other residents. Similarly, SNF resident satisfaction with the quality of public schools and the amount of local crime is generally consistent with the perspective of other Detroiters (Figure 10).

This is interesting for two reasons. First, though SNF investments are at an early phase—the majority of SNF neighborhoods have seen no investments to date, though planning has begun in all ten communities—one still might expect to see some differences in resident perceptions of amenities between SNF and non-SNF neighborhoods given that SNF neighborhoods were selected in part based on their potentially catalytic demographic and infrastructure advantages. The fact that we don't see these differences in many areas means that we can better judge the effectiveness of neighborhood investments in shifting resident perceptions going forward.

In addition, it's again interesting to note that the areas in which we don't see differences in resident satisfaction are areas of neighborhood life that SNF investments don't explicitly seek to impact. As part of the SNF initiative, the City is not making specific investments in public transit, food access, or public schools, for example. However, it will be interesting to see if these initial investments soon lead to follow-on investments in these other areas, either through the City or philanthropic partners.



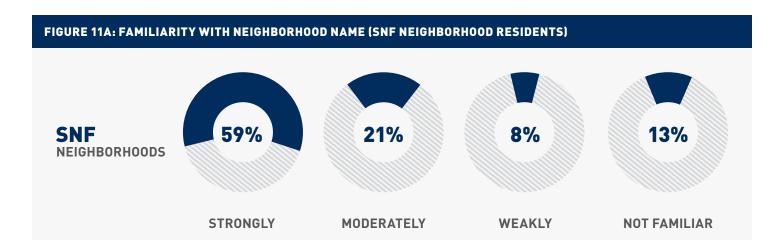


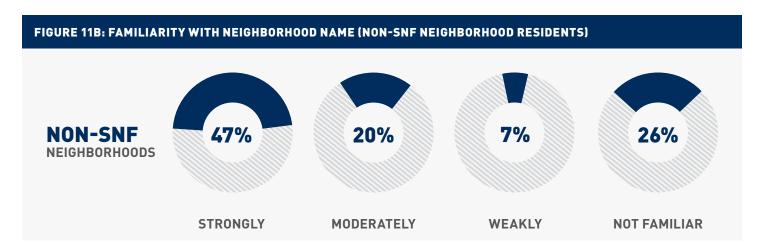
FIGURE 10: SATISFACTION WITH NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES

FIGURE 10: SATISFACTION WITH NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES			
LEGEND: SNF 1.0 Neighborhoods SNF 2.0 Neighborhoods Non-SNF Neighborhoods			
	PUBLIC TRANSIT		PUBLIC FACILITIES
60%		47 %	
53%		50%	
58%		45 %	
	HEALTHY FOOD		AFFORDABLE HOUSING
46%		39%	\$ \$ \$ \$
51%		35 %	\$ \$ \$ \$
42%		35%	
	PUBLIC SCHOOLS		CRIME
35 %		31%	
36%		27 %	
29%		26%	Committee the committee of the committee
	STORES		PARKS & PLAYGROUNDS
68%		66%	
62%		51%	
54 %		57 %	
	HOUSE QUALITY		VACANT LOTS
58%		48%	
45%		37 %	
42%		32%	
	STREETS & SIDEWALKS		
56%	<u>* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * </u>		
45%	<u> </u>		
46%	<u> </u>		









AMONG THEIR RESIDENTS, SNF NEIGHBORHOODS ENJOY STRONGER NAME RECOGNITION, BUT NOT NECESSARILY STRONGER REPUTATION, THAN OTHER DETROIT NEIGHBORHOODS.

Though past research suggests that Detroit residents are more likely to identify with a side of the city than a particular neighborhood, survey results find that half of Detroiters strongly identify with their neighborhood name as defined by the City's Department of Neighborhoods. The salience of neighborhood identity is greater among SNF residents, 59% of whom say they strongly identify with their neighborhood name compared to 47% of those living outside of SNF neighborhoods. Non-SNF neighborhood residents are twice as likely (26%) as SNF neighborhood residents (13%) to be unfamiliar with the neighborhood name that the City uses (**Figure 11**).

The connection to neighborhood identity varies across SNF neighborhoods. Jefferson Chalmers residents most strongly identify with their neighborhood name (83%), followed by residents of Southwest/Vernor (75%). Just 45% of Russell Woods/Nardin Park residents identify strongly with that neighborhood name.

Stronger neighborhood identity, as suggested by the salience of neighborhood names, doesn't necessarily mean a better reputation among residents. Despite the heightened salience of neighborhood names across all SNF neighborhoods, only residents in the first three SNF communities rate their neighborhoods' reputations more highly than do residents of other neighborhoods in the city. Compared to both SNF 2.0 and non-SNF residents, residents of SNF 1.0 neighborhoods are more likely to hold positive assessments of their neighborhood's rep-





utation (Figure 12). Three-quarters (74%) of SNF 1.0 residents rate their neighborhood's reputation as good or very good and only 8% say their neighborhood has a bad or very bad reputation. Residents in other neighborhoods are roughly twice as likely to say their neighborhood has a neutral or bad reputation. Nearly 20% of SNF 2.0 residents and 13% of non-SNF residents think their neighborhood has a bad reputation, while nearly 40% of residents in these neighborhoods think they possess a neutral reputation.

Perceptions of reputation vary greatly by neighborhood. Nearly three-quarters of residents in Islandview/Villages, Southwest/ Vernon, Jefferson Chalmers, and Livernois-McNichols rated their neighborhoods as having good or very good reputations (Figure 13). Only a quarter of residents in Gratiot/7-Mile or Russell Woods/Nardin Park similarly assessed their neighborhoods as having a good reputation.

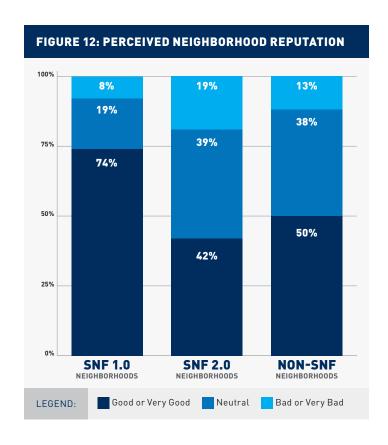


FIGURE 13: PERCENT OF RESIDENTS WHO VIEW THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD REPUTATION AS GOOD OR VERY GOOD







SOUTHWEST/VERNOR



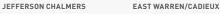
SNF 2.0 NEIGHBORHOODS





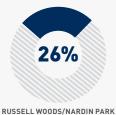






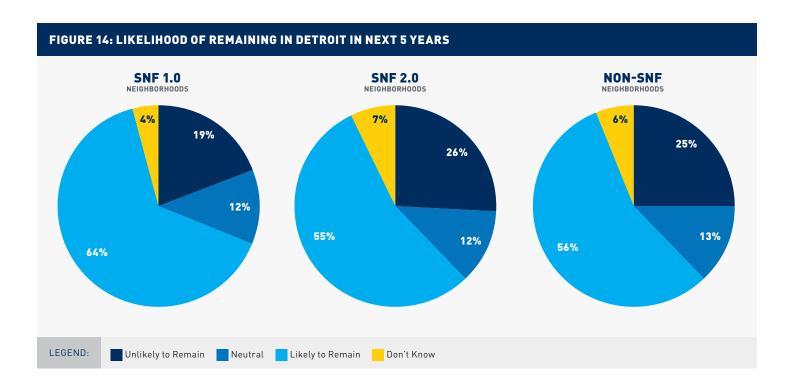












THE MAJORITY OF DETROITERS—SNF AND NON-SNF RESIDENTS—EXPECT TO REMAIN IN THE CITY IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS.

Across the city, Detroiters are split in terms of how long they have lived in their neighborhoods. Half of Detroiters are relative newcomers and have lived in their neighborhoods for fewer than 5 years. One-in-five Detroiters have lived in their neighborhood for 6-10 years, while 31% of residents have lived in their neighborhood for more than a decade. SNF residents are similarly split between being newcomers to and long-time residents of their neighborhoods. 42% of SNF 1.0 residents have lived in their neighborhood for 11 or more years while 28% of SNF 2.0 residents and 30% of non-SNF residents have lived in their neighborhoods for similarly long periods.

Regarding resident intentions to remain in Detroit in the future, the majority (57%) of Detroiters say they are likely to remain in the city in the next five years, while roughly a quarter (24%) say they are unlikely to remain in the city. Residents of SNF neighborhoods are similarly divided in their reported likelihood of remaining in the city. While a majority say they plan to remain in Detroit, roughly a quarter say they anticipate leaving the city in the next five years (**Figure 14**). When asked to select all of the reasons they would consider moving, Detroiters most often chose crime/safety (58%), cost of living (43%), and job or business opportunities (42%). Relatively few residents listed transportation issues (14%) or cultural activities (15%) among reasons for considering a move.





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cy, and Afton Branche-Wilson, strategic projects manager at Poverty Solutions, and is a collaborative effort of numerous colleagues and stakeholders, including professor Elisabeth Gerber, professor Jeffrey Morenoff, DMACS project manager Sharon Sand, and associate director of the Detroit Partnership on Economic Mobility Patrick Cooney.

ENDNOTES

- 1 For more on selection criteria for the Strategic Neighborhood Fund, as well as background on the initiative and its timeline, see Invest Detroit.2019.
 One City. For all of us.
 Because of these selection criteria, SNF neighborhoods likely differ from non-SNF neighborhoods in two ways: (1) they are outside of areas in Detroit like downtown and Midtown that have seen the bulk of private investment and (2) they possess greater amenities than other Detroit neighborhoods. For these reasons, one should be cautious in interpreting results as implying that early SNF efforts, and not underlying dimensions of the neighborhood, are the cause of observed differences.
- 2 For more on sampling and weighting approach, as well as results for the full sample of Detroit residents, see <u>Wave 6 Survey Toplines</u>.
- 3 Unless otherwise noted, descriptive analyses throughout this report comparing group means represent statistically significant differences at the 95% confidence level.
- 4 For more on resident engagement efforts and the timing of neighborhood planning studies, see Invest Detroit. 2019. Strategic Neighborhood Fund 2.0: One City. For all of us.
- 5 Elliott, Meagan. 2018. "Imagined Boundaries: Discordant Narratives of Place and Displacement in Contemporary Detroit," PhD diss., (University of Michigan, 2018)





FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please contact Sharon Sand, DMACS project manager, at $\underline{\mathsf{slsand@umich.edu}}$.

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Learn more at www.detroitsurvey.umich.edu

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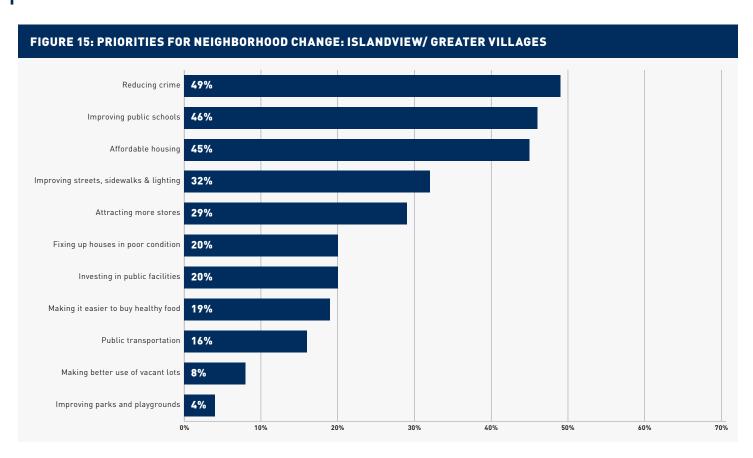


APPENDIX

PRIORITIES FOR NEIGHBORHOOD CHANGE, BY SNF NEIGHBORHOOD

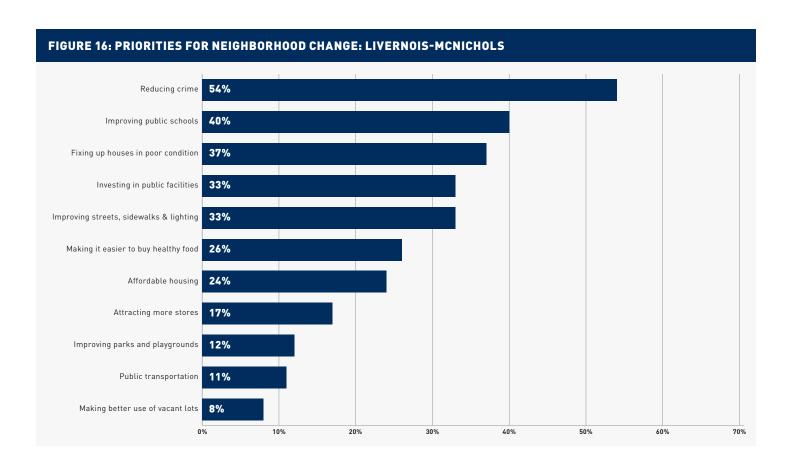
Overall, Detroit residents rank reducing crime and addressing blighted homes as their top priorities for neighborhood change, but within each SNF area, residents ranked priorities differently. In the following graphs, we see what percentage of residents place reducing crime, improving public schools, etc., among their top priorities for change.

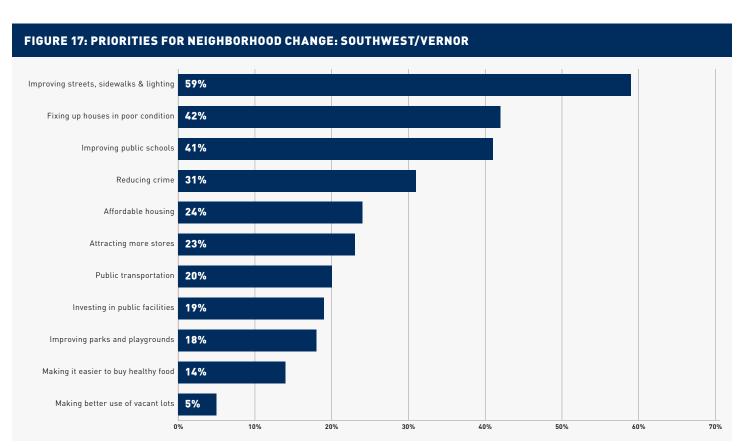
SNF 1.0 NEIGHBORHOODS















SNF 2.0 NEIGHBORHOODS

