DETROIT'S STRATEGIC NEIGHBORHOOD FUND

EXAMINING SHIFTS IN NEIGHBORHOOD SENTIMENTS AMONG RESIDENTS OF SNF NEIGHBORHOODS OVER TIME

JUNE 2024
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BACKGROUND

In 2016, the City of Detroit, Invest Detroit, and other nonprofit and private sector partners announced the Strategic Neighborhood Fund (SNF) initiative, an effort to improve the lives of Detroiters through investments in the local built environment. The initiative's guiding theory is that place-based investments—including funding for local affordable housing, retail, streetscapes, and parks—can foster and catalyze dense, safe, mixed-income neighborhoods, thereby boosting local economic opportunity and improving the quality of life for all residents. Putting this theory into action, SNF has targeted strategic investment toward 10 Detroit neighborhoods outside of the greater downtown area, selected based on their likelihood to quickly benefit from localized investment.[1] The first round of SNF investments, announced in 2016, targeted improvements in the Southwest/Vernor, Livernois/McNichols, and Islandview/Greater Villages neighborhoods (referred to here as SNF 1.0 neighborhoods). In 2018, seven additional SNF neighborhoods (referred to here as SNF 2.0 neighborhoods) were announced: Grand River/Northwest, Warrendale/Cody Rouge, Russell Woods/Nardin Park, Campau/Banglatown, Jefferson Chalmers, East Warren/Cadieux, and Gratiot/7 Mile.

This report is part of an ongoing effort and partnership between the University of Michigan's Detroit Metro Area Communities Study (DMACS) and Invest Detroit to study SNF investments, test this theory of change, and gauge the impact of the SNF initiative on residents. Starting in 2019—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—DMACS has surveyed an oversample of residents in SNF neighborhoods to understand the relationship between this place-based investment strategy and resident perceptions. By comparing residents of SNF neighborhoods to non-SNF neighborhoods, as well as examining variation in perspectives among residents of different SNF neighborhoods, we can assess whether and how SNF investments appear to shape local sentiments.

An initial report on this topic, published in 2020, offered a snapshot of the relationship between neighborhood conditions and resident perceptions at the early stages of the SNF program. The report found that residents of the first three SNF neighborhoods (SNF 1.0)—where the place-based investment process was further along—were significantly more likely than other Detroiters to report greater overall neighborhood

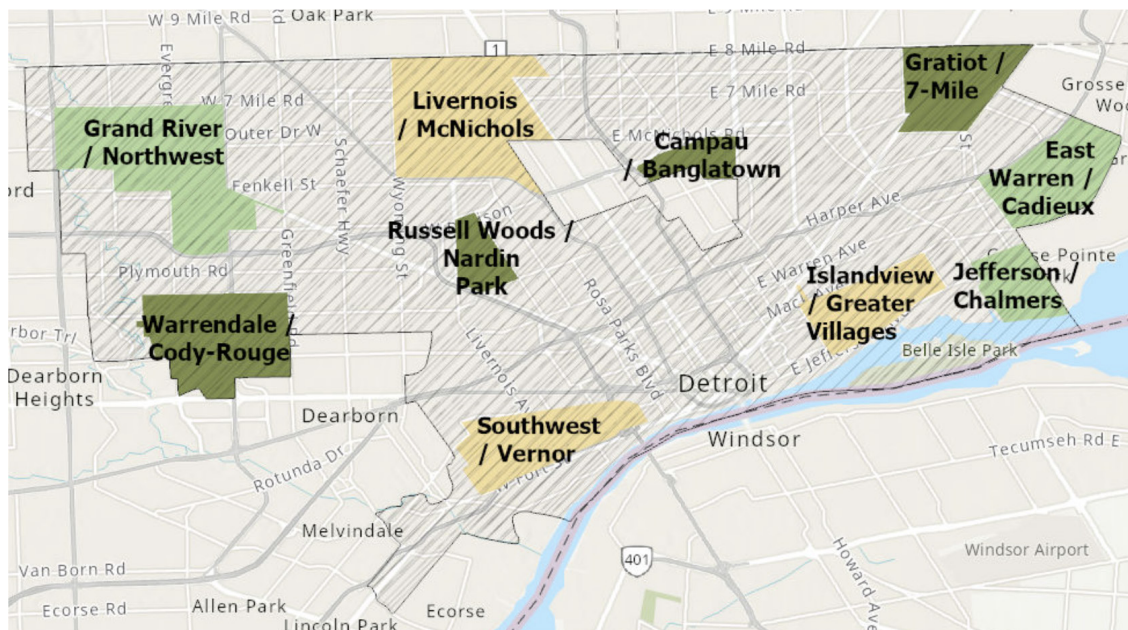## Figure 1: Map of SNF Neighborhoods by Phase

Figure 1 Notes: Map illustrates SNF neighborhood locations by their funding phase. Yellow neighborhoods are part of the first phase of SNF (SNF 1.0) announced in 2016. Green neighborhoods are part of the second phase of SNF (SNF 2.0) announced in 2018. In this report, we characterize SNF 2.0 neighborhoods by their level of advantage to help explain differences in our findings between these resident groups. The light green SNF neighborhoods are referred to in this report as "more advantaged" SNF 2.1 neighborhoods. The darker green SNF neighborhoods are referred to as "less advantaged" SNF 2.2 neighborhoods.

satisfaction and positive signs of neighborhood change, including more people moving in, more businesses opening, increasing property values, and increasing neighborhood attractiveness. By comparison, residents in the second set of SNF neighborhoods (SNF 2.0)—where strategic investments were mainly in the planning stage[2]—perceived that the local quality of life was no different from the rest of the city.

Since then, DMACS has collected additional data annually to further explore the relationship between the SNF initiative and local sentiments. Drawing on those additional survey waves, DMACS researchers released a series of reports that revisit and update our 2020 findings. By extending our initial findings with additional data collected in 2021, 2022, and 2023, these reports offered further insight into the impacts of SNF's targeted neighborhood investments on Detroiters' experience of their changing communities and can inform future efforts and policies to drive neighborhood change, including the recently announced third phase of investment in SNF funded by the Gilbert Family Foundation.

This is the final report in this series. In contrast to the other reports in the series that examine variation in resident sentiments at a single point in time, this report offers a clearer longitudinal picture of how resident sentiments have changed over time for the city as a whole and within and between SNF neighborhoods. It also offers a unique look at the effects of and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of resident sentiment. The data consist of nearly 9,000 observations captured at four points in time from 4,012 Detroiters. The four periods of data collection were August to December 2019, January to March 2021, June to August 2022, and June to August 2023. In our analysis—which relies primarily on statistical models that capture variation in perceptions across neighborhood types over time and controls for variation driven by respondent characteristics[3]—we examine differences in perspectives between residents of SNF and non-SNF neighborhoods, and we compare and contrast perceptions of SNF 1.0, SNF 2.1, and SNF 2.2 residents. We divide SNF 2.0 communities into two groups—SNF 2.1 neighborhoods are "more advantaged" SNF 2.0 communities: Grand River/Northwest, Jefferson Chalmers, and East Warren/Cadieux; SNF 2.2 neighborhoods are "less advantaged" SNF 2.0 communities: Warrendale/Cody Rouge, Russell Woods/Nardin Park, Campau/Banglatown, and Gratiot/7 Mile—based on additional analysis (see Appendix A) suggesting that neighborhood conditions in SNF 2.1 neighborhoods are substantively different than conditions in SNF 2.2 neighborhoods.[4] The data have been weighted to reflect city demographics.[5]

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Residents' general satisfaction with their neighborhoods and satisfaction with many specific local amenities declined steeply and significantly between 2019 and 2021, likely due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Between 2019 and 2021, the proportion of Detroiters reporting no change in neighborhood conditions increased, suggesting that the pandemic stalled rather than reversed residents' perceptions of positive neighborhood change.

- After 2021, many resident sentiments appear to have rebounded, returning to pre-pandemic levels. This is true of satisfaction with many local amenities like the availability of parks and playgrounds and the conditions of streets and sidewalks

- In some cases, like neighborhood satisfaction, change in quality of life, and perceived change in neighborhood safety, observations after 2021 remain mostly level,

suggesting that COVID-19 established a new baseline for sentiments that persisted in the ensuing years.

- Resident perceptions of rising housing costs are the only case where perceptions in 2023 far surpass their baseline observation in 2019.

- The clearest pattern of variation between SNF neighborhoods is of stratification. Across many measures, residents of SNF 1.0 and 2.1 neighborhoods hold rosier perceptions or more positive neighborhood sentiments than SNF 2.2 residents or non-SNF residents.

- In many cases, the gap in sentiments between SNF 1.0 and 2.1 neighborhoods and SNF 2.2 neighborhoods is significant and remains significant over time.

- SNF residents assessments of quality of life and neighborhood crime conditions remained flat between 2019

and 2023, suggesting no change in perceptions over that period.

- SNF residents' satisfaction with local amenities—including SNF core investment areas like streets and sidewalks and parks and playgrounds—recovered faster and earlier than non-SNF residents. This was especially true of SNF 1.0 residents, suggesting that the advanced stage of local

investments made it easier for those communities to shift resident sentiment in the post-pandemic period.

- Though SNF 2.2 residents were often significantly less likely than other SNF residents to report positive signs of change in their neighborhood in 2019, by 2023 these differences were in many cases no longer significant, suggesting a brightening outlook among those residents.

SUMMARY

No evaluation of change over time between 2019 and 2023 can ignore the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The emergence of COVID-19 in early 2020 and the social, economic, and health shocks that accompanied it had an unmistakable impact on Detroit residents. Recognizing this citywide impact is essential even in an assessment focused on SNF's local effects because these trends are the backdrop against which we must evaluate SNF investments and related trends of neighborhood change.

The data summarized in this report reveal two key citywide trends in terms of the effect of the pandemic on residents' neighborhood sentiments. First, residents' satisfaction with their neighborhoods generally and satisfaction with many specific local amenities declined steeply and significantly between 2019 and 2021. Whether due to residents' evolving relationships with their neighborhoods, the closure of businesses, or other factors, it appears that as stay-at-home orders, the financial toll of the pandemic, and rising rates of infection and death took their toll, resident satisfaction fell. Second, when asked to report their sense of local progress over time—including changes in quality of life broadly defined as well as specific changes in neighborhood population, business presence, appearance, and crime—the pandemic seems to have stalled rather than reversed residents' perceptions of positive neighborhood change. Between 2019 and 2021, Detroiters increasingly reported stasis in their environments. This is important because it means that rather than losing ground, local investments may have helped stabilize communities in the face of tumult, a finding particularly relevant in a city often combatting narratives of decline.

Given the anomaly of the COVID-19 shock, it is useful to also think of our findings as capturing two phases—the arrival and peak of COVID-19 between 2019 and 2021 (discussed above), and the emergence of a new normal between 2021 and 2023. Focusing on this recovery period, we again highlight two trends in the citywide data: the leveling off or rebounding of sentiments. In some cases, like neighborhood satisfaction, change in quality of life, and perceived change in neighborhood safety, observations after 2021 remain

mostly level, suggesting that COVID-19 established a baseline for sentiments that persisted in the ensuing years. On the other hand, we observe ways in which resident sentiments rebounded, either returning to pre-pandemic levels (in the case of residents' satisfaction with many local amenities like the availability of parks and playgrounds and the conditions of streets and sidewalks) or showing signs of positive change (in the case of positive neighborhood indicators like perceived change in population and neighborhood attractiveness). Only in the case of housing costs do we find resident perceptions that far surpass their baseline observation. In 2023, residents were significantly more likely than they were in 2019 to perceive rents and housing values were rising.

Against the backdrop of these citywide trends, this report examines trends within and between SNF neighborhood groups. The most notable pattern we observe among SNF neighborhoods is a pattern of stratification. Across many measures, residents of SNF 1.0 and 2.1 neighborhoods hold rosier perceptions or more positive sentiments about their neighborhoods, while SNF 2.2 residents tend to be the least positive when assessing neighborhood conditions. In many cases, the gap between SNF 1.0 and 2.1 neighborhoods and SNF 2.2 neighborhoods is significant and remains significant over time. For example, in every survey year in which they were asked to rate their neighborhood's reputation, residents of SNF 1.0 and 2.1 neighborhoods were significantly more likely to report their neighborhood had a good or very good reputation compared to SNF 2.2 neighborhoods. In other cases, while the data follow a similarly stratified pattern, the differences between neighborhoods are illustrative but not statistically significant.

Beyond this pattern of stratification, our analysis of SNF neighborhoods suggested three other notable trends:

1. When citywide trends are decomposed into neighborhood groups, we often observe little change in resident sentiments within a given neighborhood over time. For example, when examining assessments of quality of life

or neighborhood crime conditions separately for residents of SNF 1.0, SNF 2.1, SNF 2.2, and non-SNF neighborhoods, we find that resident assessments within a neighborhood group remain relatively flat or within their 95% confidence intervals across our study period.

2. We observe in the case of satisfaction with some local amenities—notably SNF core investment areas including streets and sidewalks and parks and playgrounds—that SNF residents' sentiments recovered faster and earlier compared to non-SNF neighborhoods. This was especially true of SNF 1.0 residents, whose neighborhoods had been in the implementation phase for the longest. This suggests that these SNF 1.0 neighborhoods were the most resilient to the shock of the pandemic and that the advanced stage

of their investments made it easier for those communities to shift resident sentiment in the post-pandemic period.

3. A third trend among SNF neighborhoods is a trend of convergence with regard to perceptions of change. Though SNF 2.2 residents were often significantly less likely than other SNF residents to report positive signs of change in their neighborhood in 2019, by 2023 these differences were in many cases no longer significant. These converging outlooks often result from the dampening of perceptions among SNF 1.0 and 2.1 residents and stable or brightening perceptions of SNF 2.2 residents. Still, they suggest an evening of perceptions across the neighborhoods, which may point to a more equal and positive impact of future investments.

FINDINGS

NEIGHBORHOOD SATISFACTION, QUALITY OF LIFE, AND REPUTATION

In general, the majority of Detroit residents express satisfaction with their neighborhoods as a place to live. Across all waves of data, more than 60% of residents report they are very, mostly, or somewhat satisfied with their neighborhoods (Figure 2).[6] However, neighborhood satisfaction declined significantly between 2019 and 2023. In 2019, 69% of Detroiters said they were satisfied with their neighborhood compared to 62% in 2023. This shift is due to both a rise in dissatisfaction—which grew from 23% to 26% between 2019 and 2023—and a rise in neutral assessments—which grew from 8% to 12% between 2019 and 2023. This downward trend in neighborhood satisfaction is maybe not surprising given the co-occurring economic and cultural headwinds over the study period including the COVID-19 pandemic, growing attention to racial and social injustice via the Black Lives Matter movement, feelings of scarcity driven by inflation and the rising cost of goods and housing, and concerns about crime rates and policing tactics. It is particularly notable that the decline primarily occurred between 2019 and 2021, after which point reported satisfaction stabilized, suggesting a strong effect of the pandemic in shaping residents' assessments of their neighborhoods.

While the trend of decline in satisfaction was true of SNF and non-SNF neighborhoods, it was most pronounced—and indeed only statistically significant—in non-SNF neighborhoods (Figure 3). In those neighborhoods, satisfaction fell from 69% in 2019 to 60% in 2023. Over the same time period, satisfaction fell from 80% to 71% in SNF 1.0 neighborhoods, 74% to 70% in SNF 2.1 neighborhoods, and 58% to 51% in SNF 2.2 neighborhoods.[7]

A persistent theme throughout our study of SNF neighborhoods is the pattern of stratification between neighborhood groups. Across many measures, residents of SNF 1.0 and 2.1 neighborhoods hold rosier perceptions while SNF 2.2 residents tend to have the least positive assessments of neighborhood conditions. That pattern holds true when examining neighborhood satisfaction over time, as shown in Figure 3. Though satisfaction declined, the differences in satisfaction between neighborhoods generally persisted. Residents of SNF 1.0 and 2.1 neighborhoods—those further along in their strategic investment timelines or more economically advantaged to begin with—generally expressed significantly greater satisfaction with their neighborhoods compared to non-SNF residents or residents of SNF 2.2 neighborhoods. Moreover, SNF 2.2 residents were significantly less likely to be satisfied with their neighborhoods than other Detroit residents at every point in time. The gap in satisfaction between SNF 2.2 residents and other groups does not appear to have narrowed between 2019 and 2022 and instead grew slightly between SNF 2.1 and 2.2 residents in that time. Similarly, the gap in satisfaction between SNF 2.1 residents and non-SNF residents also increased from 5 percentage points in 2019 to 9 percentage points in 2023.

When asked to evaluate their neighborhood's trajectory— whether local quality of life is improving, declining, or staying the same—Detroiters generally report quality of life is either improving or staying the same.[8] As shown in Figure 4, at each survey period Detroiters were about equally as likely to say quality of life in their neighborhood was improving or staying the same. One in 5 residents (20%) reported in each survey year their neighborhood quality of life was declining, making them half as likely to perceive decline compared to improvement or
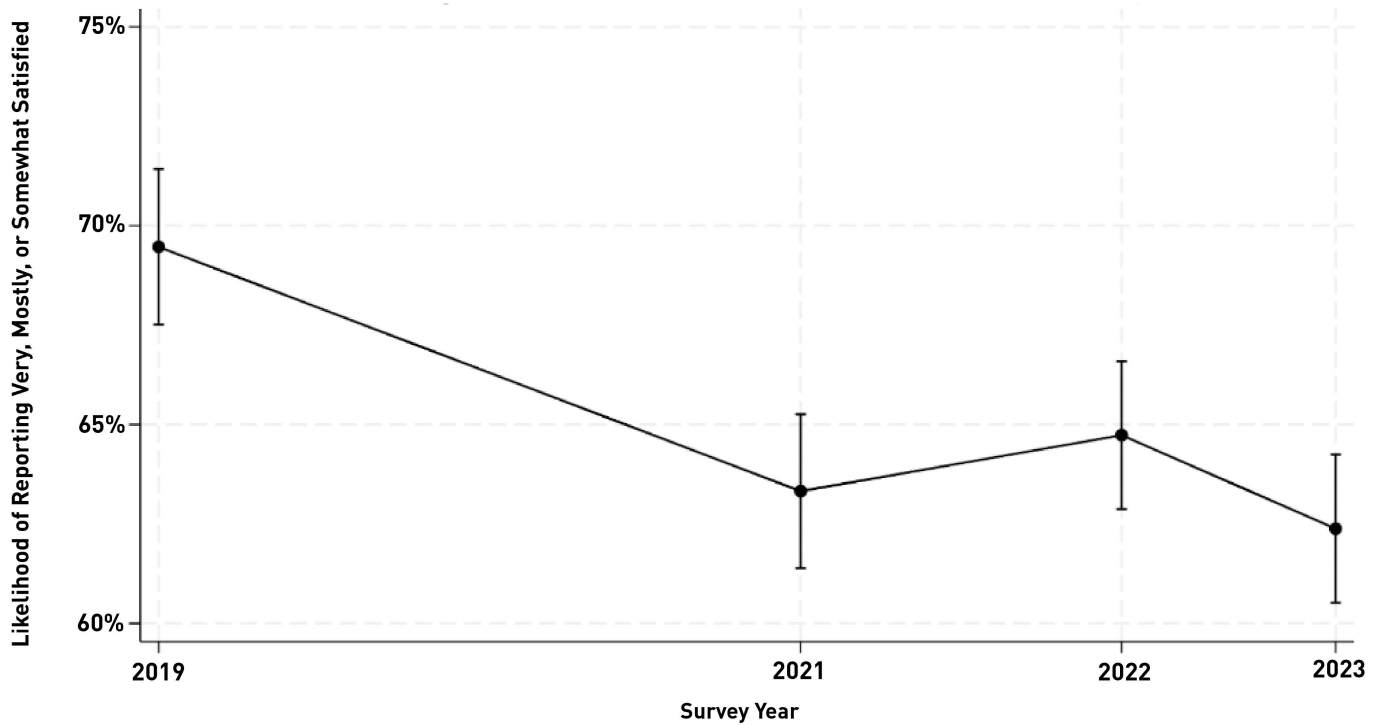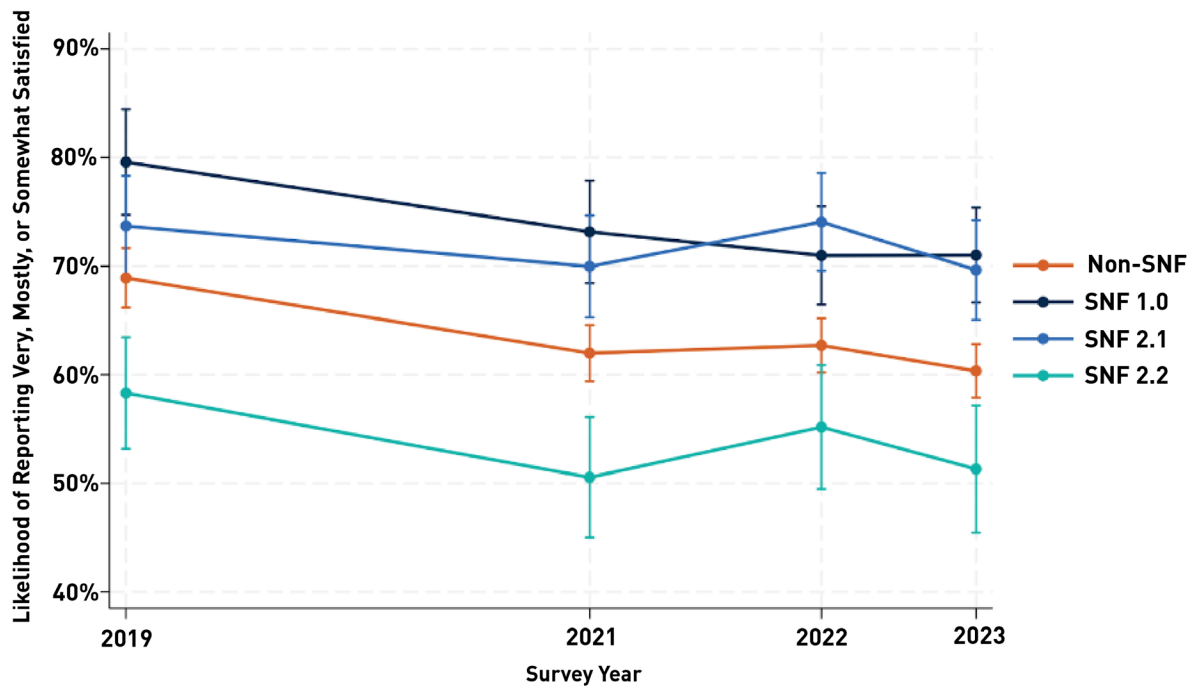
Figure 2. Detroiters' Satisfaction with Neighborhood as a Place to Live Over Time

Figure 3. SNF and Non-SNF Resident Satisfaction with Neighborhood as a Place to Live Over Time

Figure 4. Detroiters' Perceptions of Neighborhood Quality of Life Over Time
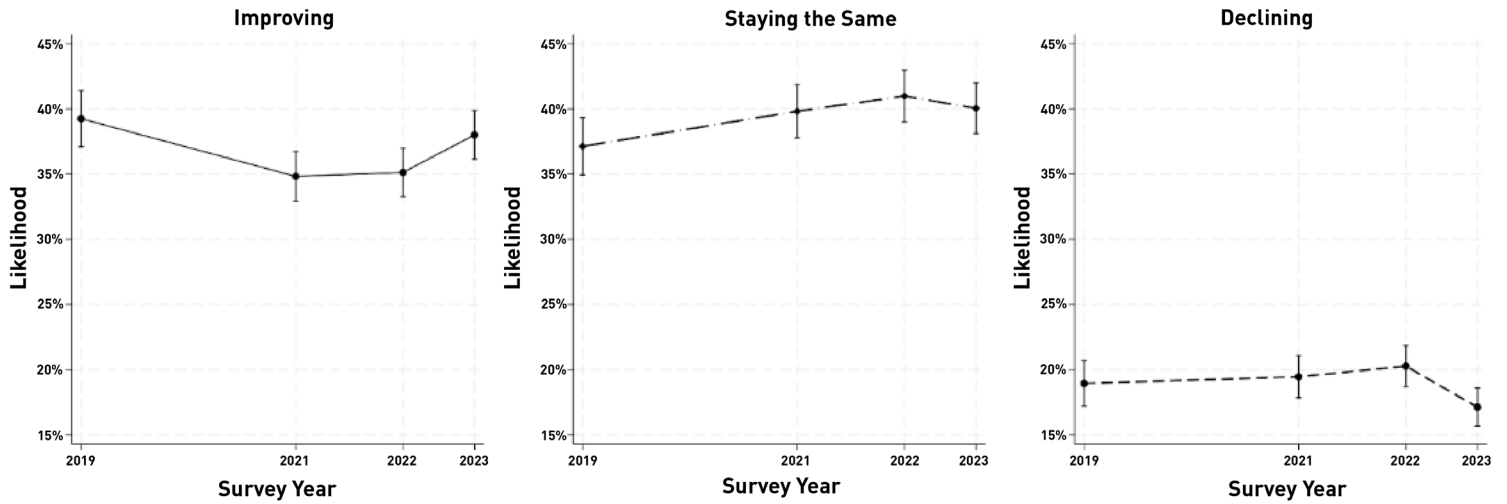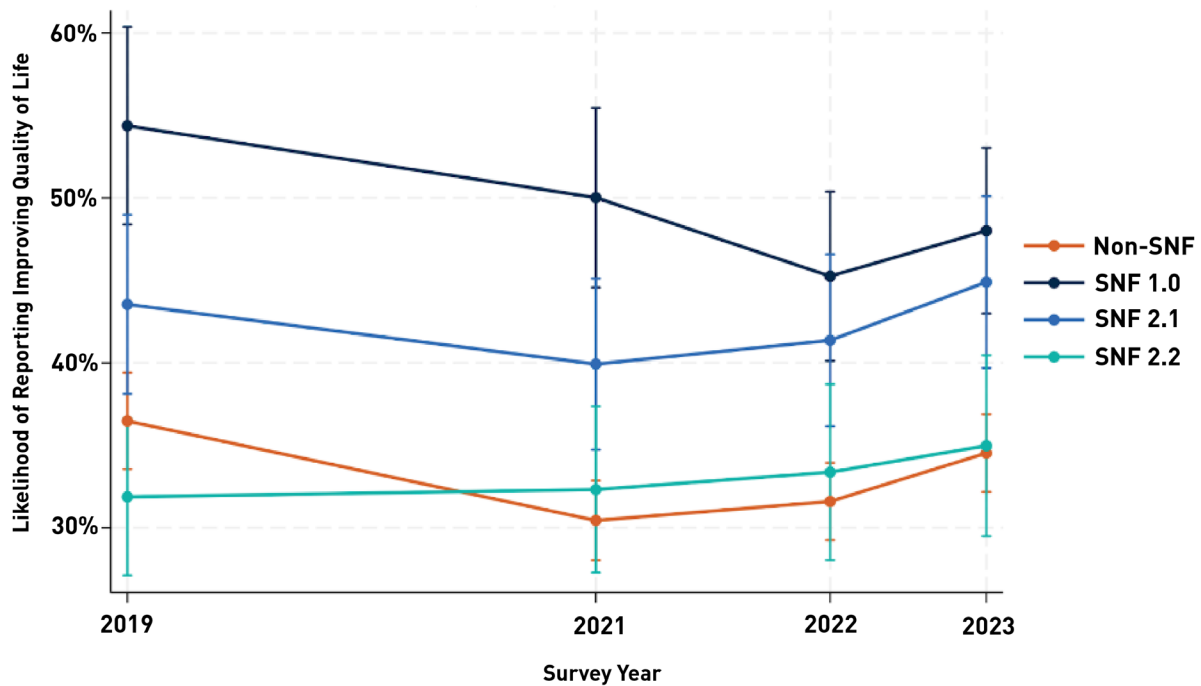Neighborhood Quality of Life

Figure 5. SNF and Non-SNF Residents' Perceptions of Improving Neighborhood Quality of Life Over Time

stability. Unlike satisfaction, perceived quality of life showed little change over time.

The stability in quality of life is true across neighborhoods. As shown in Figure 5, when separating out responses among residents of SNF 1.0, SNF 2.1, SNF 2.2, and non-SNF neighborhoods, assessments of improving quality of life remain relatively flat or within their 95% confidence intervals, meaning there is no statistically significant difference between time points. Graphs capturing residents' perceptions that quality of life has stayed the same (not shown) or declined (Figure 6) reflect similarly stable trends over time. The one exception is that SNF 1.0 residents were significantly more likely to report declining quality of life in 2022 than in 2019.

As with satisfaction, the pattern of stratification across neighborhoods is again apparent in Figures 5 and 6: SNF 1.0 residents are the most likely to perceive local quality of life is improving, followed by SNF 2.1 residents. In fact, compared to non-SNF residents and SNF 2.2 residents, residents of SNF 1.0 neighborhoods are significantly more likely to sense quality of life is improving at every time point. Differences between SNF 2.1, SNF 2.2, and non-SNF residents are not significant. Turning to perceptions of decline in quality of life, we observe a convergence of perspectives over time where residents of SNF 2.2 and non-SNF neighborhoods—who in 2019 were significantly more likely than SNF 1.0 or 2.1 residents to say quality of life is

declining—soften their outlook and become no more likely than other residents to report declining quality of life.

Like assessments of quality of life, Detroiters' perceptions of neighborhood reputation remained flat over time (Figure 7).[12] In every survey year in which they were asked to rate their neighborhood's reputation, residents were significantly more likely to report their neighborhood had a good or very good reputation compared to a neutral or bad reputation.

The stability of these perceptions of reputation over time held among SNF and non-SNF residents. As shown in Figure 8, shifts in reputational assessments within each SNF neighborhood group were small. The general stratification between neighborhoods observed earlier—with SNF 1.0 neighborhoods reporting the most positive conditions, followed by SNF 2.1, non-SNF, and SNF 2.2 neighborhoods—also holds when it comes to assessments of reputation. Still it is notable that the reputational advantage enjoyed by SNF 1.0 and 2.1 neighborhoods appears to grow over time, becoming significantly different from non-SNF neighborhoods by 2023, while the gap between SNF 2.2 neighborhoods and non-SNF neighborhoods narrows over time. These shifts in the reputational hierarchy might suggest some positive effects of local investments compared to non-SNF neighborhoods.

Figure 6. SNF and Non-SNF Residents' Perceptions of Declining Neighborhood Quality of Life Over Time
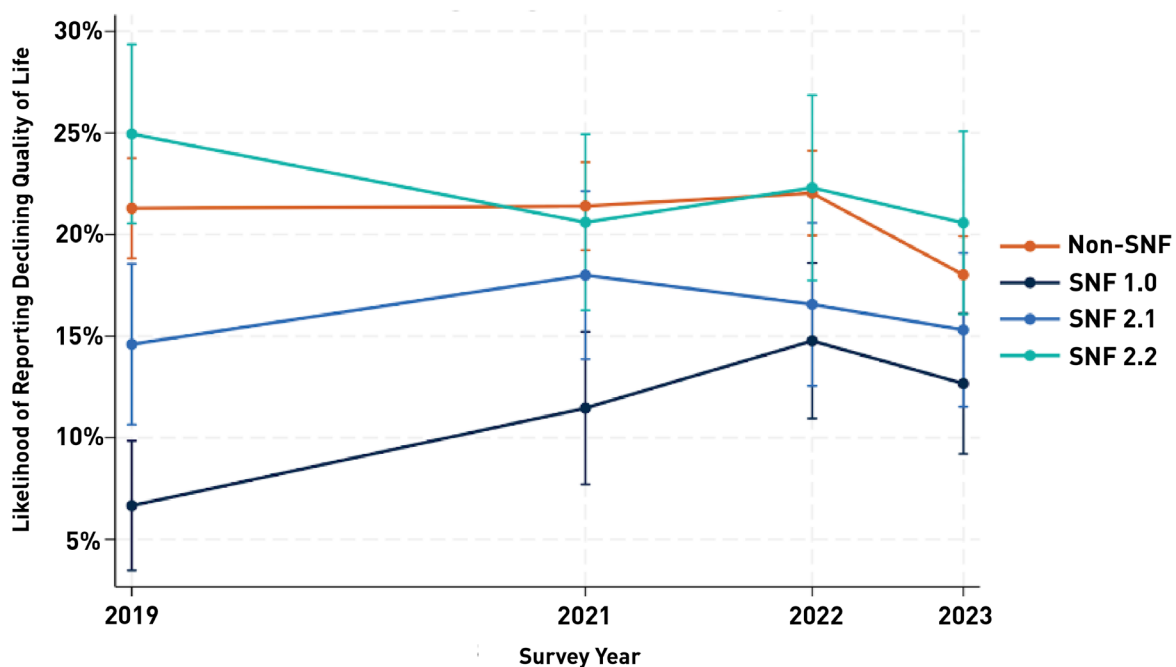
Figure 7. Detroiters' Perceptions of Neighborhood Reputation Over Time
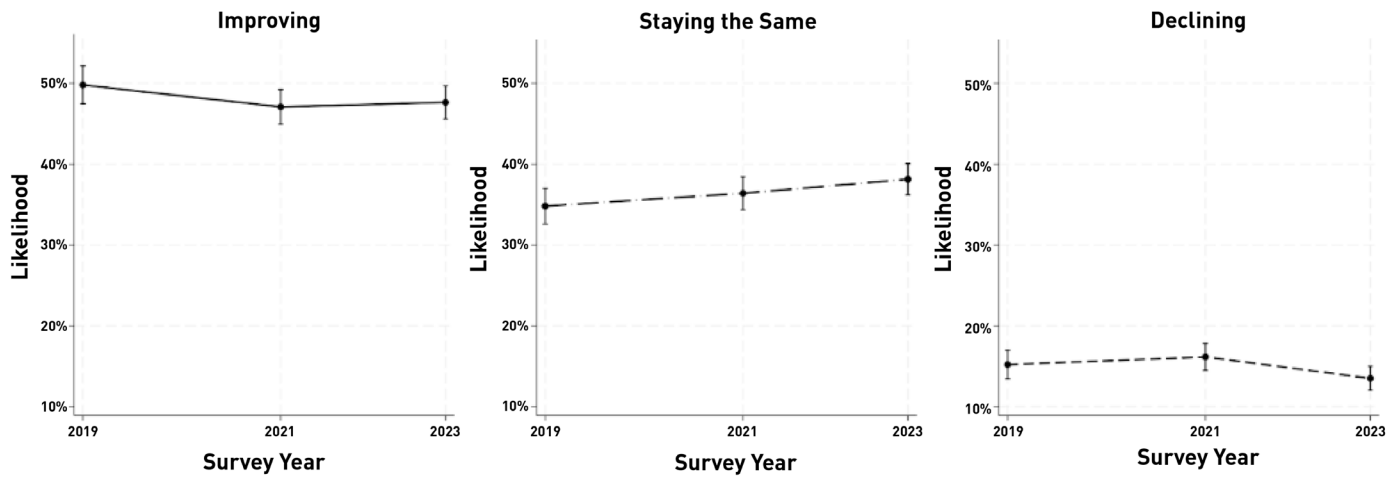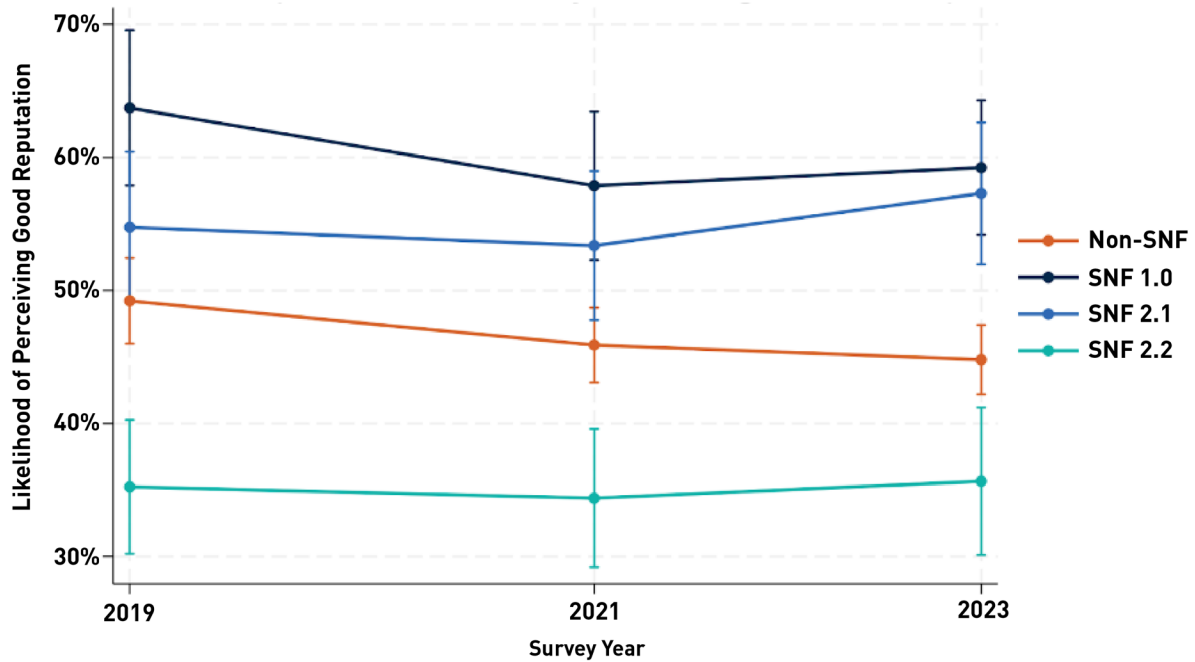Perceived Neighborhood Reputation

Figure 8. SNF and Non-SNF Residents' Perceptions of Good or Very Good Neighborhood Reputation Over Time

SATISFACTION WITH NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES

A main focus of the SNF initiative is to use place-based investments in infrastructure—including park improvements, streetscape improvements, commercial corridor development, and the development of affordable single-family housing—to drive change in neighborhood conditions. Thus, a hope of this evaluation was to find evidence that such investments are reflected in residents' increasing satisfaction with local amenities including the availability of affordable housing, condition of streets and sidewalks, quality of parks and playgrounds, and availability of stores, especially in SNF neighborhoods. However, as Figure 9 makes clear, one effect of the pandemic was the general dampening of resident satisfaction with local amenities.[9] In some cases, including access to public facilities, the availability of parks and

Figure 9. Detroiters' Satisfaction with Local Amenities Over Time
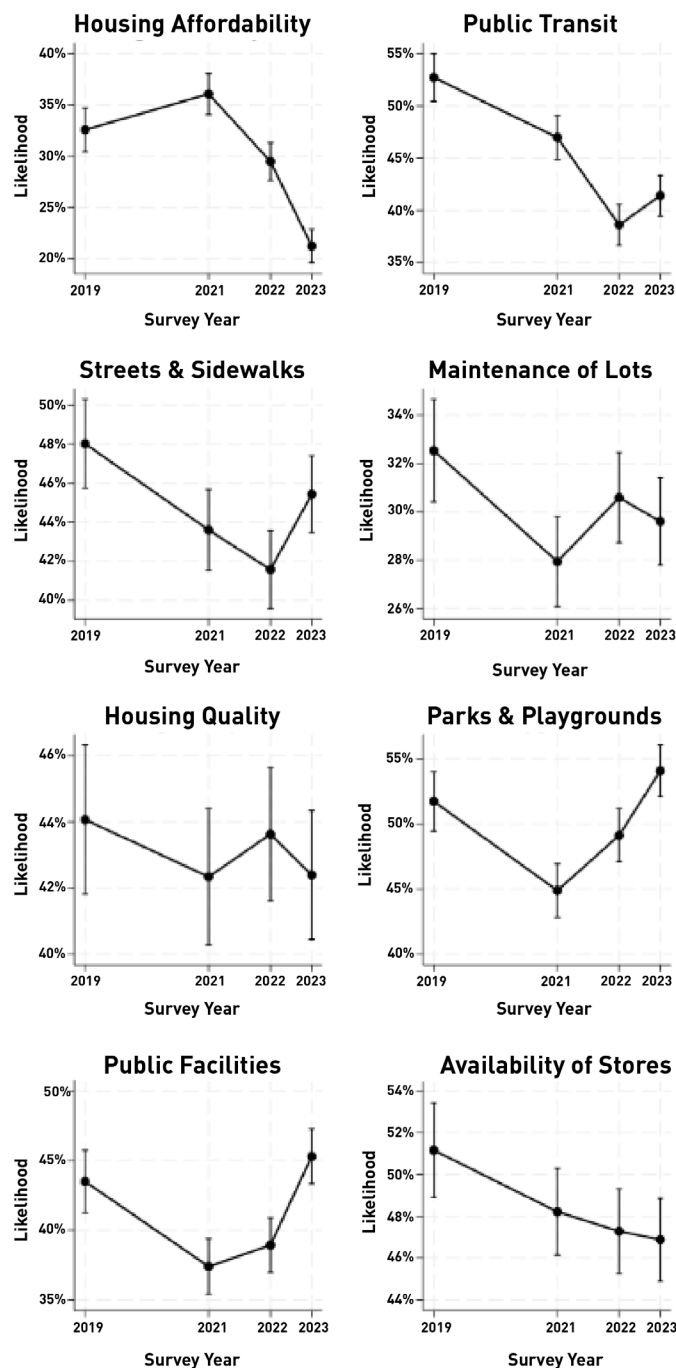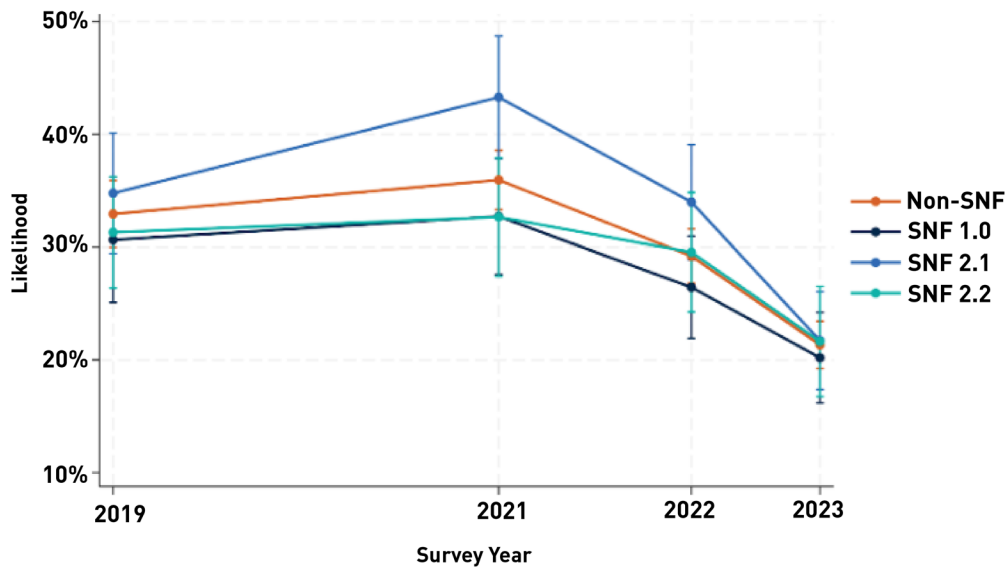**Satisfaction with Neighborhood Amenities**

Figure 10. SNF and Non-SNF Residents' Satisfaction with the Availability of Affordable Housing Over Time

playgrounds, the conditions of streets and sidewalks, and the maintenance of vacant lots, initial significant drops in satisfaction between 2019 and 2021 were countered by rising satisfaction between 2021 and 2023, such that residents' satisfaction was not significantly different in 2019 and 2023. In other cases, most notably with housing affordability, access to public transit, and the availability of local stores to shop, the drop in satisfaction with these amenities among residents' from 2019 remains in 2023.

Examining variation by neighborhood group for those amenities where satisfaction in 2023 remained lower than in 2019, we find two broad patterns. On the one hand, the patterns of declining satisfaction with the availability of affordable housing and access to public transit are driven by significant shifts in every neighborhood. As Figure 10 illustrates, the significant drop in satisfaction in the availability of affordable housing between 2019 and 2023 was true across neighborhoods, with no observable differences between SNF and non-SNF neighborhoods. On the other hand, the pattern of decline in residents' satisfaction with the availability of local stores appears to be a citywide effect not reflected by trends within neighborhoods. While we observe a clear pattern of stratification between neighborhoods in terms of satisfaction with local stores where residents can shop—with residents of SNF 1.0 and 2.1 neighborhoods reporting somewhat greater satisfaction compared to SNF 2.2 and non-SNF neighborhoods—there is little change over time in satisfaction within neighborhood groups (Figure 11). We also observe this pattern of stratification by neighborhood and

lack of change over time in residents' satisfaction with the condition of local houses.

Considering amenities where citywide satisfaction in 2023 had recovered to 2019 levels, we find that often residents of SNF 1.0 neighborhoods report the steepest and earliest increases in satisfaction, whereas increasing satisfaction among other Detroiters came later or was more muted. By 2023, residents of SNF 1.0 neighborhoods were significantly more satisfied with the conditions of streets and sidewalks—a key area of investment in SNF neighborhoods—compared to SNF 2.2 and non-SNF neighborhoods (Figure 12). We observe a similar trend in satisfaction with access to parks and playgrounds (Figure 13) and satisfaction with access to public facilities such as libraries, recreation, and community centers (Figure 14). The increase in satisfaction between 2021 and 2023 among residents of SNF 1.0 and SNF 2.1 neighborhoods compared to SNF 2.2 and non-SNF neighborhoods created a widening—and in some cases significant—satisfaction gap. These findings suggest SNF 1.0 neighborhoods especially were the most resilient to the shock of the pandemic and that the advanced stage of their investments made it easier for those communities to shift resident sentiment in the post-pandemic period. Alternatively, this pattern of recovery among SNF 1.0 neighborhoods may suggest that the impact of SNF investments takes time to be realized and reflected by resident sentiment, and that these higher levels of satisfaction reflect efforts put in motion years ago.

Figure 11. SNF and Non-SNF Residents' Satisfaction with the Availability of Stores to Shop at Over Time
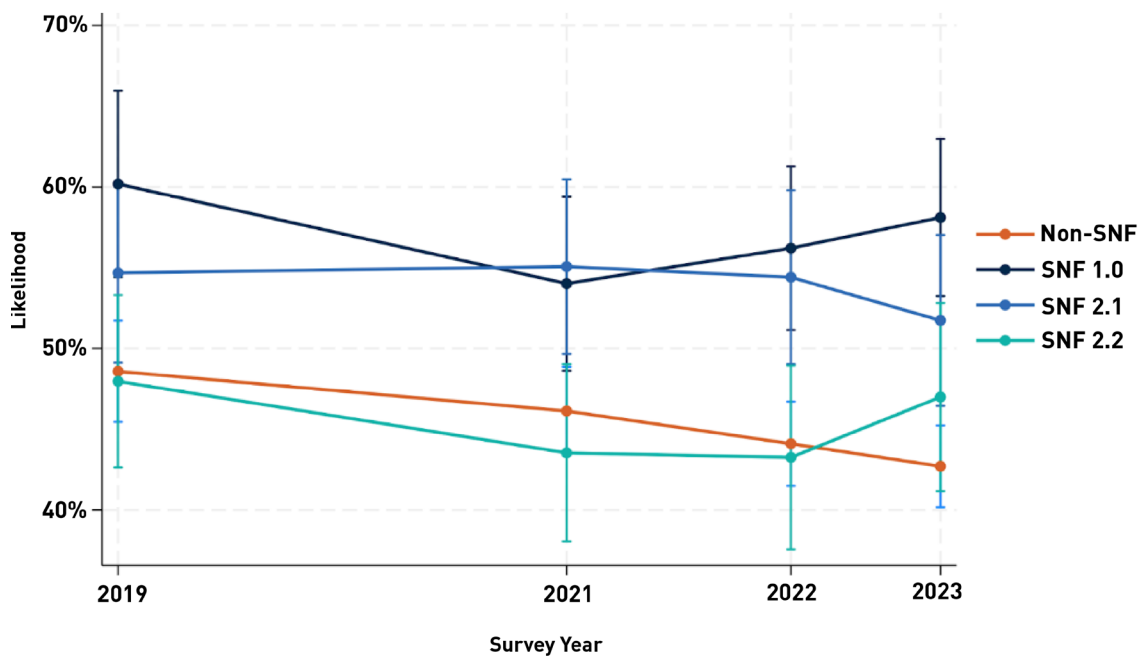

Figure 12. SNF and Non-SNF Residents' Satisfaction with the Condition of Streets and Sidewalks
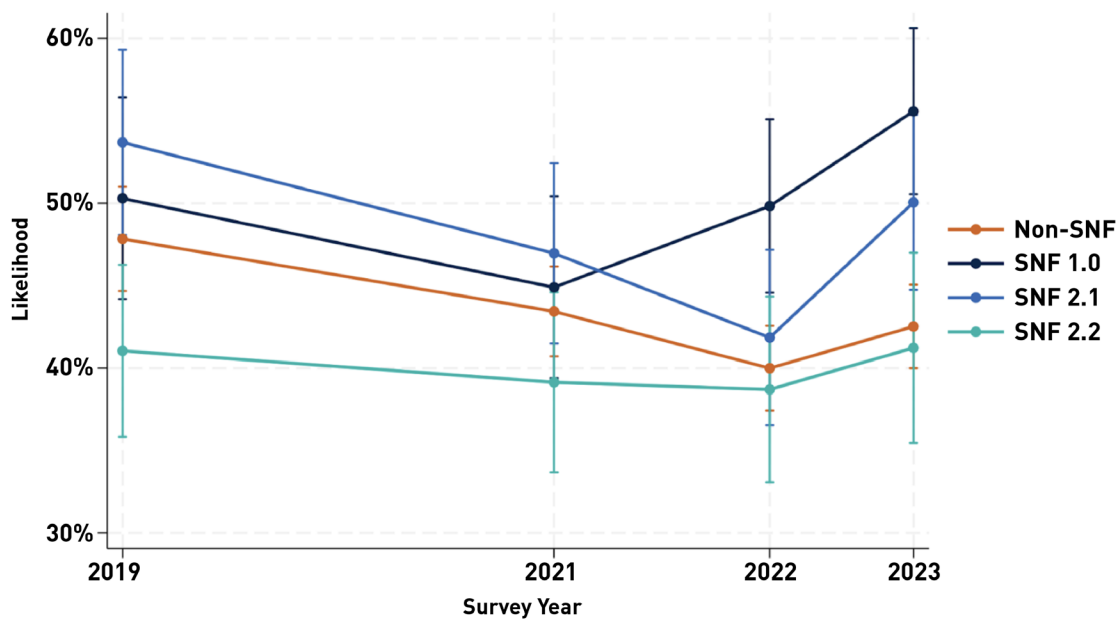
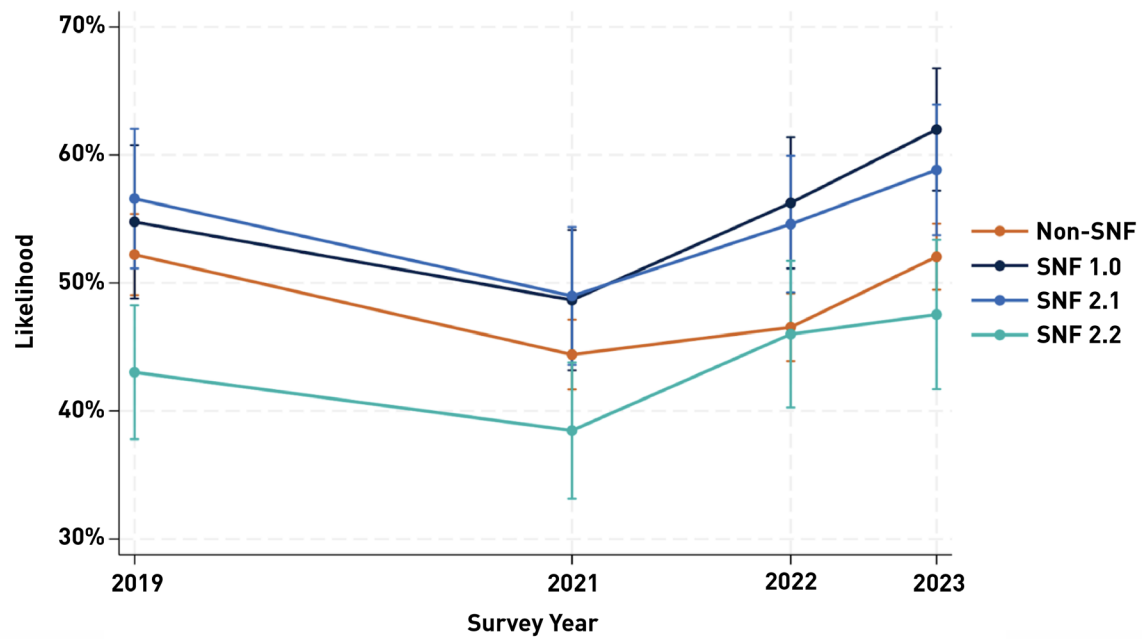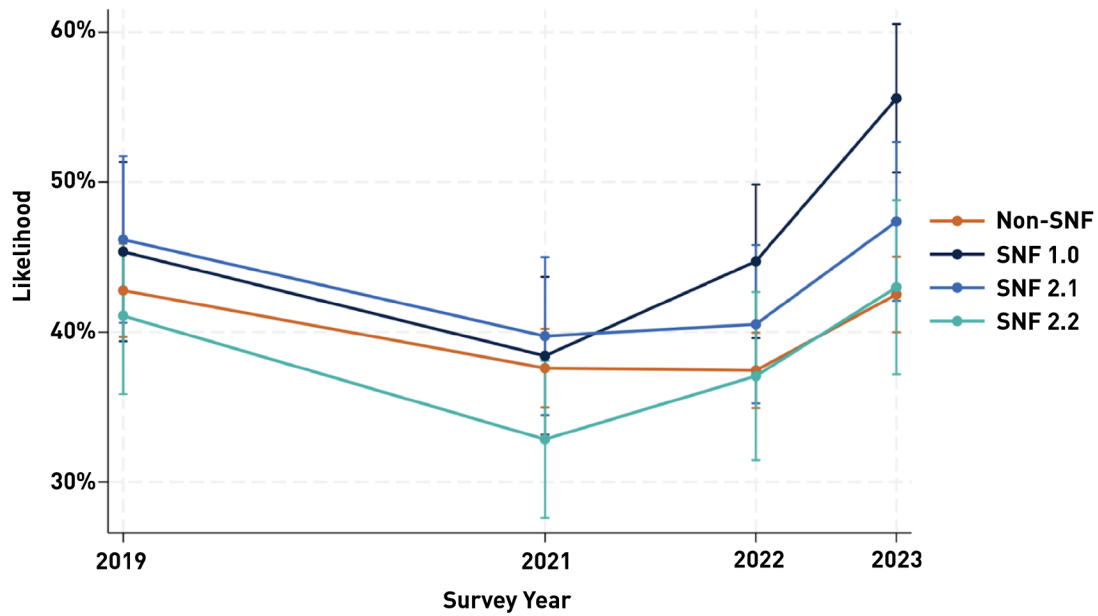**Figure 13. SNF and Non-SNF Residents' Satisfaction with the Availability of Parks and Playgrounds**

Figure 14. SNF and Non-SNF Residents' Satisfaction with the Access to Public Facilities

PERCEIVED CHANGE IN NEIGHBORHOOD ATTRACTIVENESS, POPULATION, AND BUSINESS PRESENCE

The following section highlights trends in Detroiters' perceptions of change in neighborhood conditions. These perceptions, while not necessarily reflective of the objective realities of neighborhoods, offer insight into affective shifts in neighborhoods as sensed by residents. As such, they are a useful barometer of whether and how local investments might be shaping residents' outlook for their neighborhoods. We summarize these perceptions over time for all Detroiters in Figure 15. The first row reflects perceived changes in neighborhood population, the second row captures perceived change in neighborhood business presence, and the third row captures perceived change in neighborhood attractiveness. The columns reflect (from left to right) positive change, stability, and negative change; for example more people moving into a neighborhood, no change in people moving in or out of a neighborhood, or more people moving out of a neighborhood.[10]

Across these dimensions of change we find three notable patterns. First, the percent of Detroiters who perceived positive change in their neighborhoods—more people moving in, more businesses opening, increasing neighborhood attractiveness—declined significantly between 2019 and 2021. Second, at the same time, Detroiters' sense of stability in their neighborhoods (i.e. lack of positive or negative change) increased significantly. And third, after 2021 the percent of Detroiters who perceived positive change increased while the percent of Detroiters who perceived negative change decreased. To put numbers to these patterns, perceptions that more people were moving into one's neighborhood dropped from 48% to 40% between 2019 and 2021 before recovering to 44% in 2023. Perceptions of more businesses opening in one's neighborhood dropped from 43% to 29% between 2019 and 2021 before recovering to 36% in 2023. Perceptions that one's neighborhood is growing more attractive dropped from 39% to 26% before recovering to 33% in 2023. These fluctuations point to a clear effect of the pandemic on Detroiters' views of positive change. At the same time, the fact that perceptions of stability rose between 2019 and 2021 while perceptions of decline—in population and attractiveness—remained flat suggests that the pandemic stalled rather than reversed positive trends in perceived change. In fact, by 2023, Detroiters' overall perceptions of decline in population and neighborhood attractiveness had fallen significantly from 2019, while perceptions of business decline had returned to 2019 levels.

Figure 16 shows the patterns of perceived improvements in neighborhood conditions by SNF neighborhood group. One notable pattern across all three graphs is the stratification

by neighborhood group observed earlier in the report. SNF 1.0 neighborhood residents consistently perceive more positive signs of change than residents of non-SNF neighborhoods or SNF 2.2 neighborhoods. That difference is significant across categories in 2019 and remains significant at all time points for perceptions of increasing local business presence and increasing neighborhood attractiveness. The graphs also show that SNF 2.1 neighborhoods are more likely to be perceived positively compared to SNF 2.2 neighborhoods. Beyond this pattern of stratification, another notable pattern is that the drop in perceptions of positive change in neighborhood conditions between 2019 and 2021 is most pronounced among SNF 1.0 neighborhoods. This suggests that the pandemic had the greatest effect in terms of stalling progress for neighborhoods furthest along in the investment process. The recovery of SNF 1.0 neighborhoods more closely resembles the recovery experienced across all neighborhood groups.

By 2023, perceptions that more people were moving into one's neighborhood had returned to pre-pandemic levels for SNF 2.1, 2.2, and non-SNF neighborhoods. However, SNF 1.0 residents remained significantly less likely to perceive local population growth in 2023 compared to 2019. As was true for the city overall, the change in perceptions of population growth was mostly due to a sense of increasing stability in population, not a loss in population. In SNF 1.0 neighborhoods and non-SNF neighborhoods, the proportion of residents who report perceiving no change in population increased significantly between 2019 and 2021. Across all resident groups, we observe no significant differences over time in perceptions of population loss.

By 2023, perceptions that more businesses were opening in one's neighborhood had returned to pre-pandemic levels among SNF 2.1 and 2.2 residents. SNF 1.0 and non-SNF residents were significantly less likely in 2023 to report positive trends in business openings compared to 2019. Unlike perceptions of population change, where the drop in perceived growth was predominantly due to a growing sense of stability, in SNF 1.0 neighborhoods the shifts in perceptions of change in local business presence were due primarily to a rising sense of business loss. While 5% of SNF 1.0 residents perceived more local businesses to have closed in the recent past in 2019, by 2021 that had grown to 19% before settling around 11% in 2023.

Like the declining sense of business growth in SNF 1.0 and non-SNF neighborhoods, the sense that those neighborhoods were becoming more attractive in 2023 remained significantly lower than in 2019. In SNF 1.0 neighborhoods, 57% of residents perceived their neighborhood was growing more attractive in 2019 compared to 44% in 2023. This shift in perceptions was not driven by a rising sense of blight or decline. We observe no significant increase in the percent of residents who think their neighborhood was becoming less attractive between
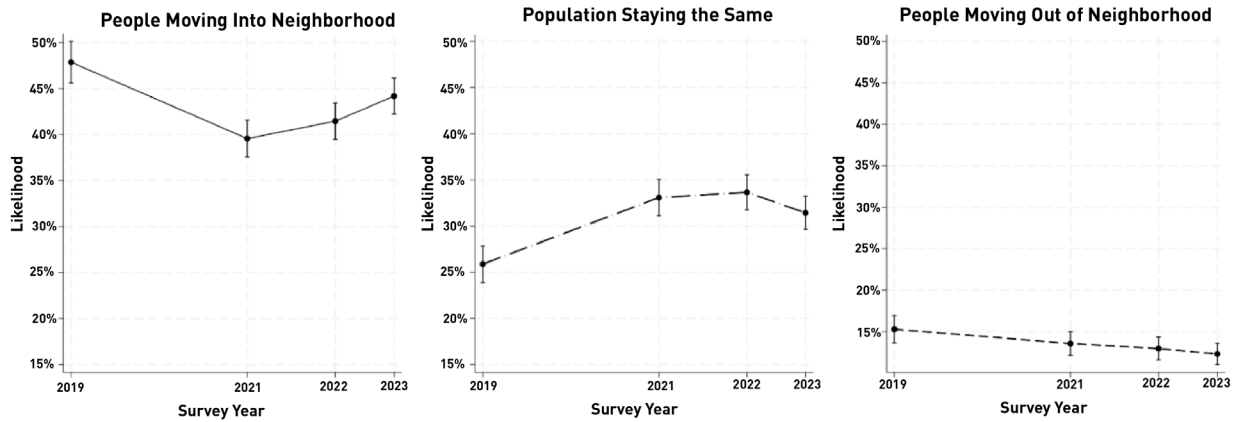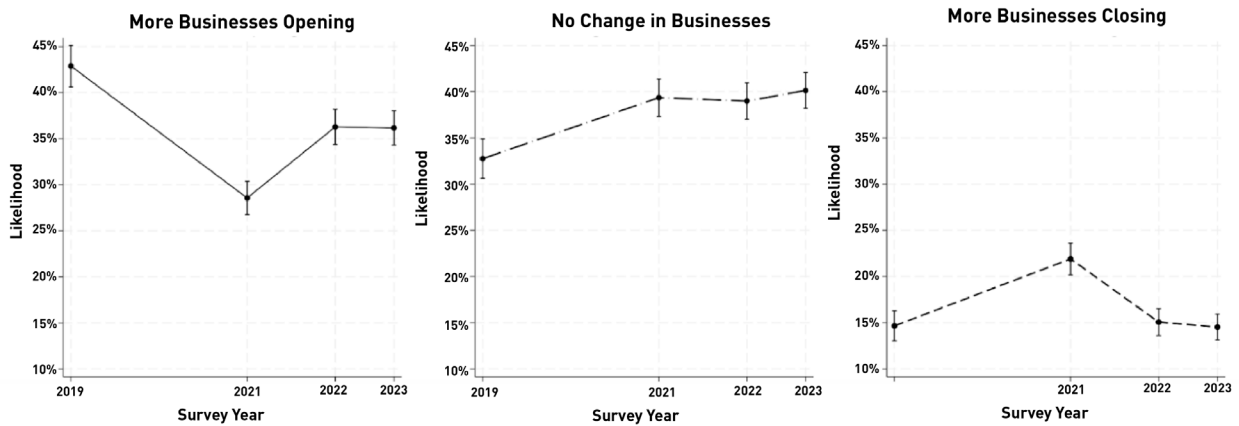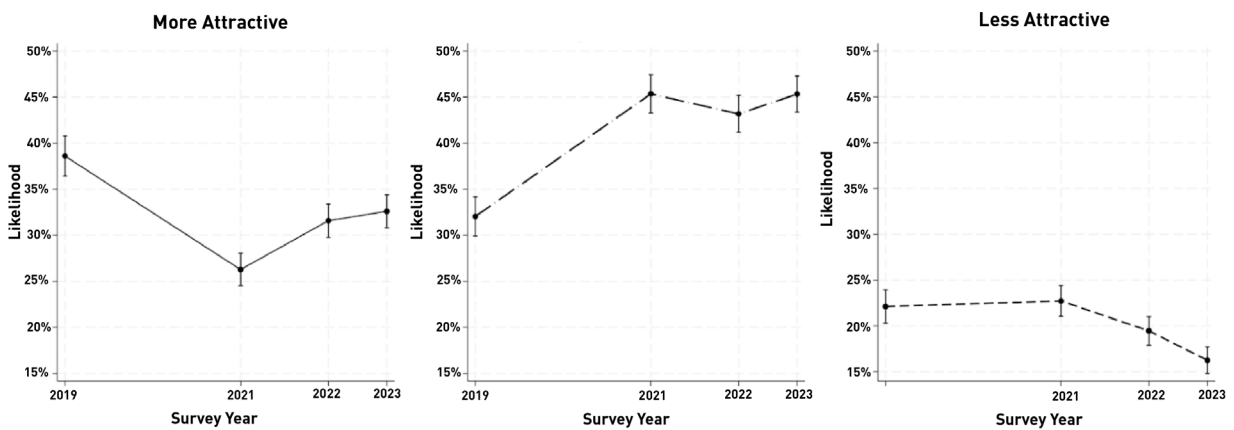
Figure 15. Detroiters' Perceptions of Change in Neighborhood Conditions Over Time

Perceived Change in Neighborhood Population

Perceived Change in Neighborhood Business Presence

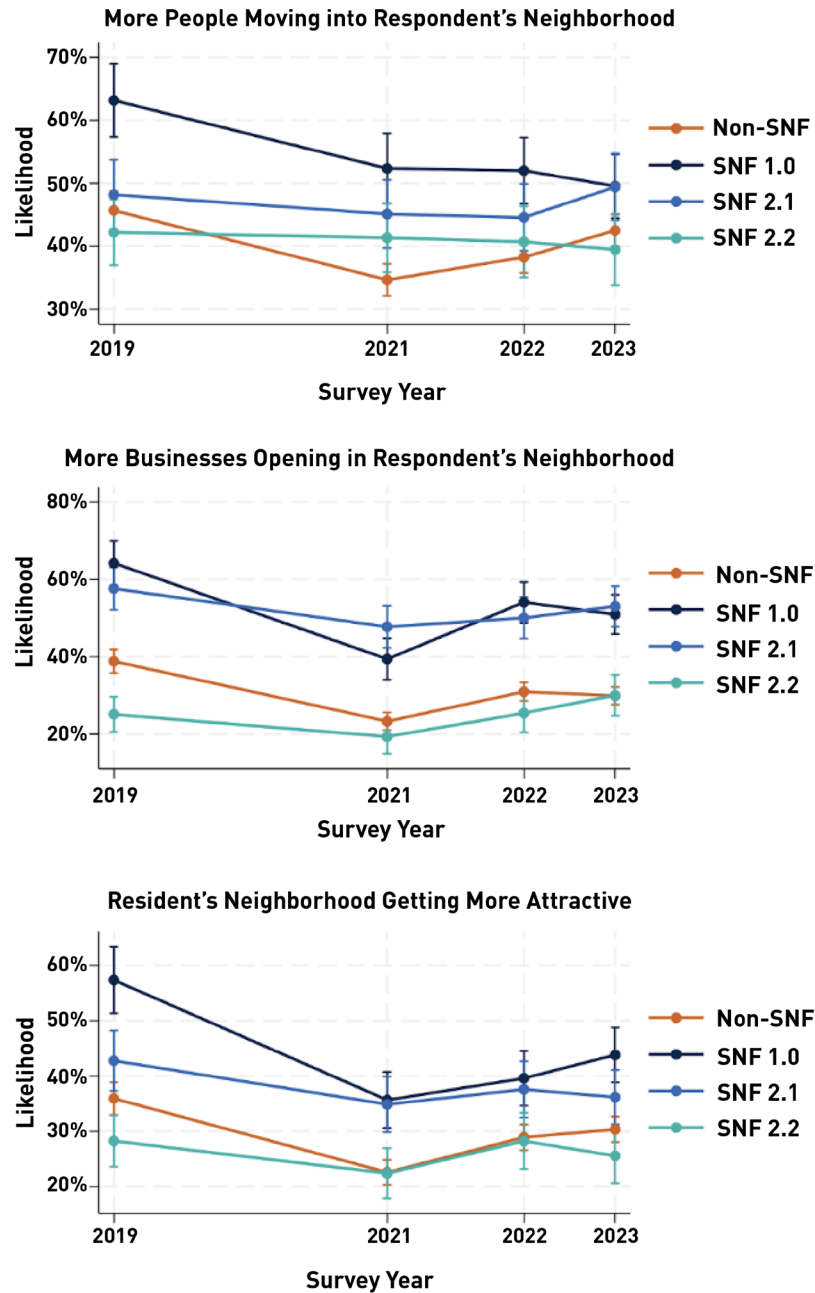### Perceived Change in Neighborhood Attractiveness

Figure 16. SNF and Non-SNF Residents' Perception of Positive Neighborhood Change
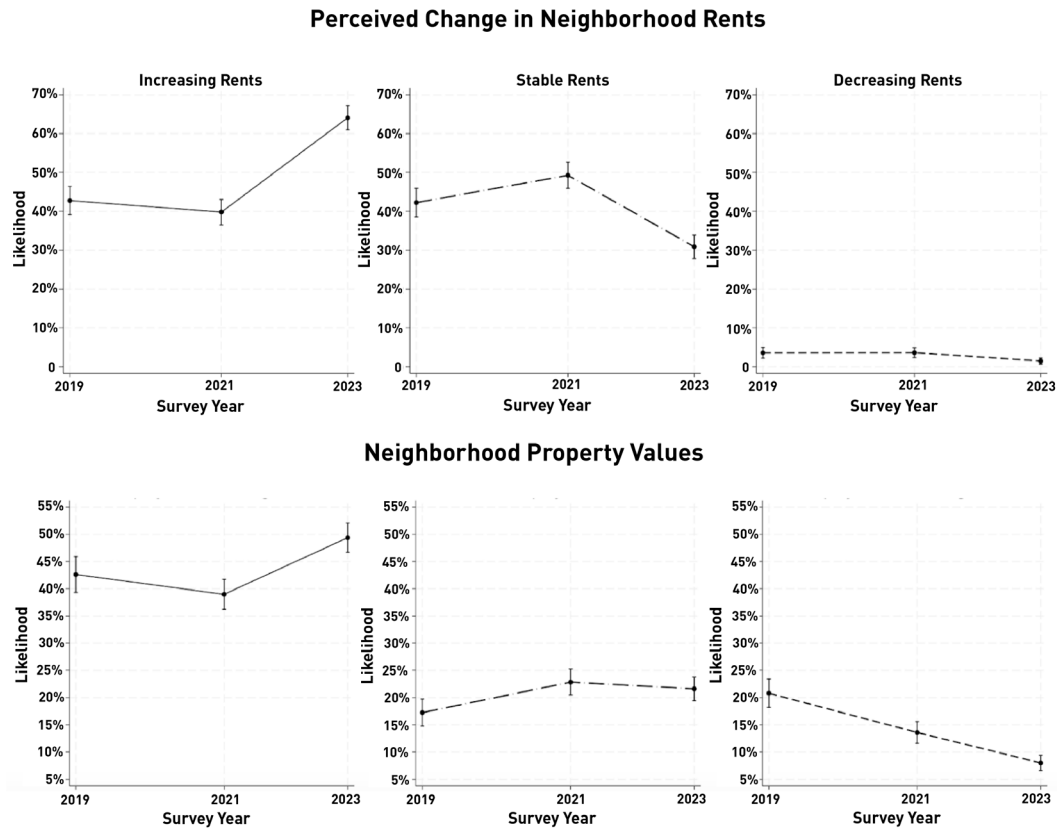

More People Moving into Respondent's Neighborhood

More Businesses Opening in Respondent's Neighborhood

Resident's Neighborhood Getting More Attractive

Figure 17. Detroiters' Perceptions of Neighborhood Rents and Property Values Over Time

Perceived Change in Neighborhood Rents

Neighborhood Property Values

Figure 18. SNF and Non-SNF Residents' Perceptions of Increasing Rents Over Time
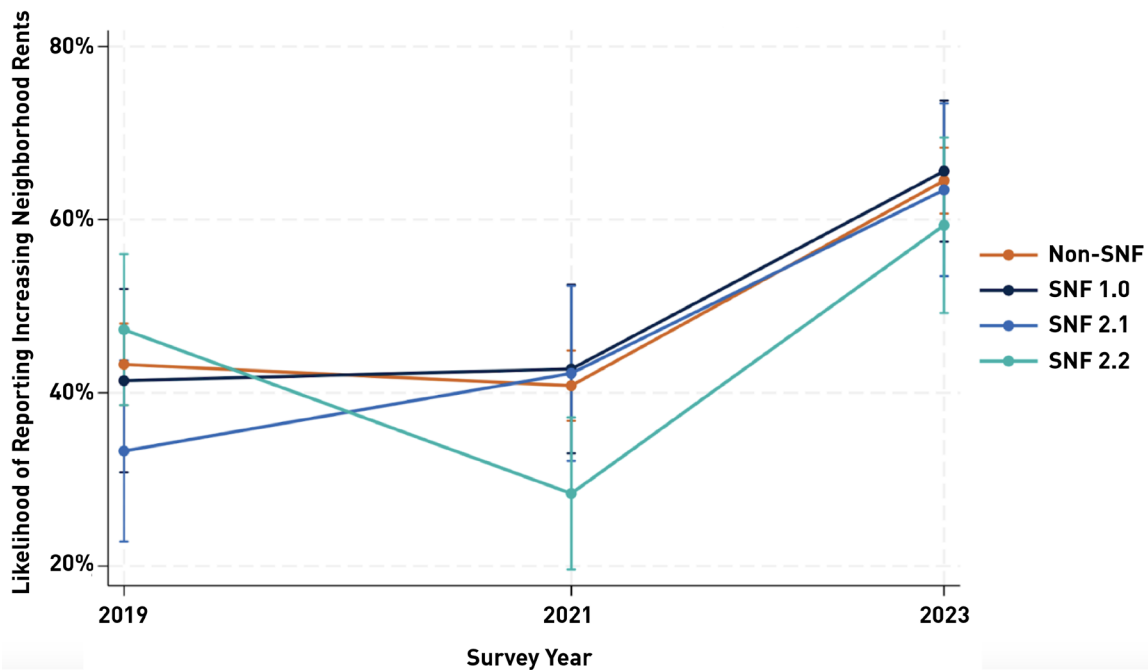
Figure 19. SNF and Non-SNF Residents' Perceptions of Increasing Property Values Over Time
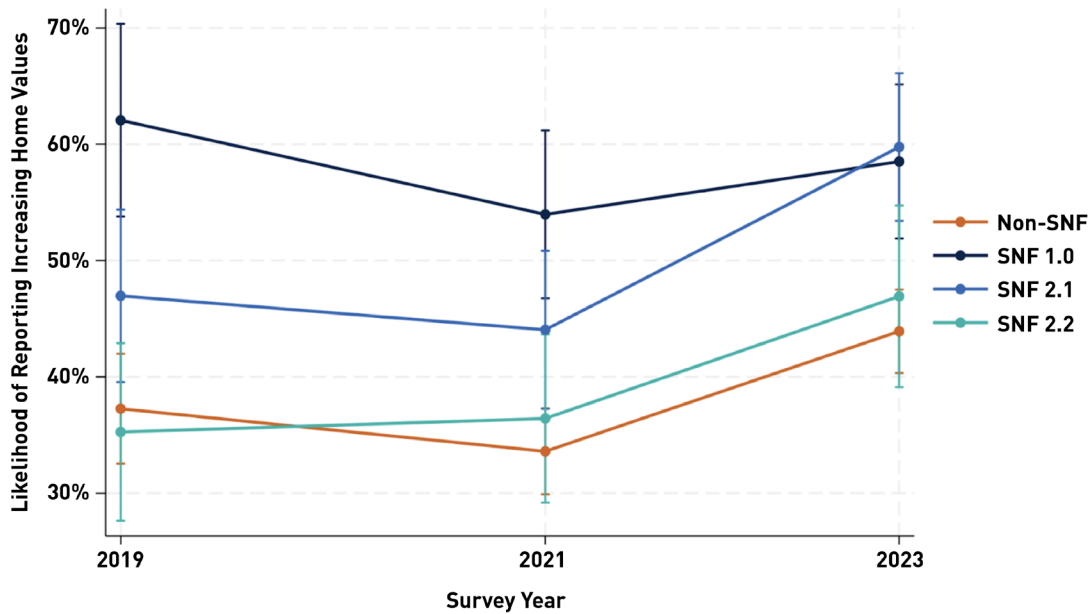
PERCEPTIONS OF NEIGHBORHOOD CRIME AND SAFETY

Crime in Detroit has long been a point of concern. A past DMACS report found that addressing crime was one of the most pressing issues in the eyes of residents. Examining how safe residents say they feel at home at night or walking in their neighborhoods during the day is important within the context of SNF—though it is not an area of focus for SNF investments—as safety perceptions may be a barrier to improving general resident sentiment and neighborhood attachment. The predominant trend observed in the longitudinal data on safety perceptions is persistence. Despite a spike in violent crime in Detroit in 2020, residents' sense of safety shows few fluctuations. Per Figure 20, Detroiters reported no significant changes over time in how safe they felt in their homes at night (top row). Though residents were significantly more likely to say they felt not safe walking in their neighborhoods in 2021 compared to 2019, by 2023 feelings of risk returned to baseline levels.

While no neighborhood reported significant shifts over time in how safe residents feel walking in their neighborhood, Figure 21 suggests that this story of persistence in local crime perceptions is especially true among SNF 1.0 neighborhoods. Residents of SNF 1.0 neighborhoods were the most likely to say they felt very safe walking in their neighborhood during the day, and this sense of safety changed little over time, sitting at

roughly 33% across all waves of the survey. Among residents of SNF 2.1 and 2.2 neighborhoods, we observe slight fluctuations in the percent who said they feel very safe walking in their neighborhood during the day. Perceptions of safety in those neighborhoods decreased between 2019 and 2021—though this shift was not significant—before increasing between 2021 and 2023. Because of this fluctuation, in 2021, residents of SNF 1.0 neighborhoods were significantly more likely to report feeling very safe walking in their neighborhood than other Detroiters, but this gap disappeared by 2023.

The general stability of residents' reports of how safe they feel in their homes and neighborhoods is further reflected in residents' perceptions of how neighborhood safety has or hasn't changed over time. When asked if they thought their neighborhood had grown safer, less safe, or if safety hadn't changed,[13] Detroiters increasingly report that safety in their neighborhoods hasn't changed. In 2019, 26% of residents thought local safety was improving, but by 2023, just 15% similarly thought their neighborhood was growing safer. Over that same period, the perception that neighborhood safety hadn't changed increased from 45% to 59%. Like perceptions of change in population growth, this rising sense of stability suggests that the pandemic stalled positive progress on crime rather than reversing positive trends.

When broken down by SNF neighborhood groups, the citywide trend of stalled progress reveals two different stories of perceived change in neighborhood safety. Per Figure 23, residents of SNF 1.0, 2.1, and non-SNF neighborhoods had

Figure 20. Detroiters' Feelings of Safety at Home and Walking in Their Neighborhood Over Time

Feelings of Safety at Home at Night

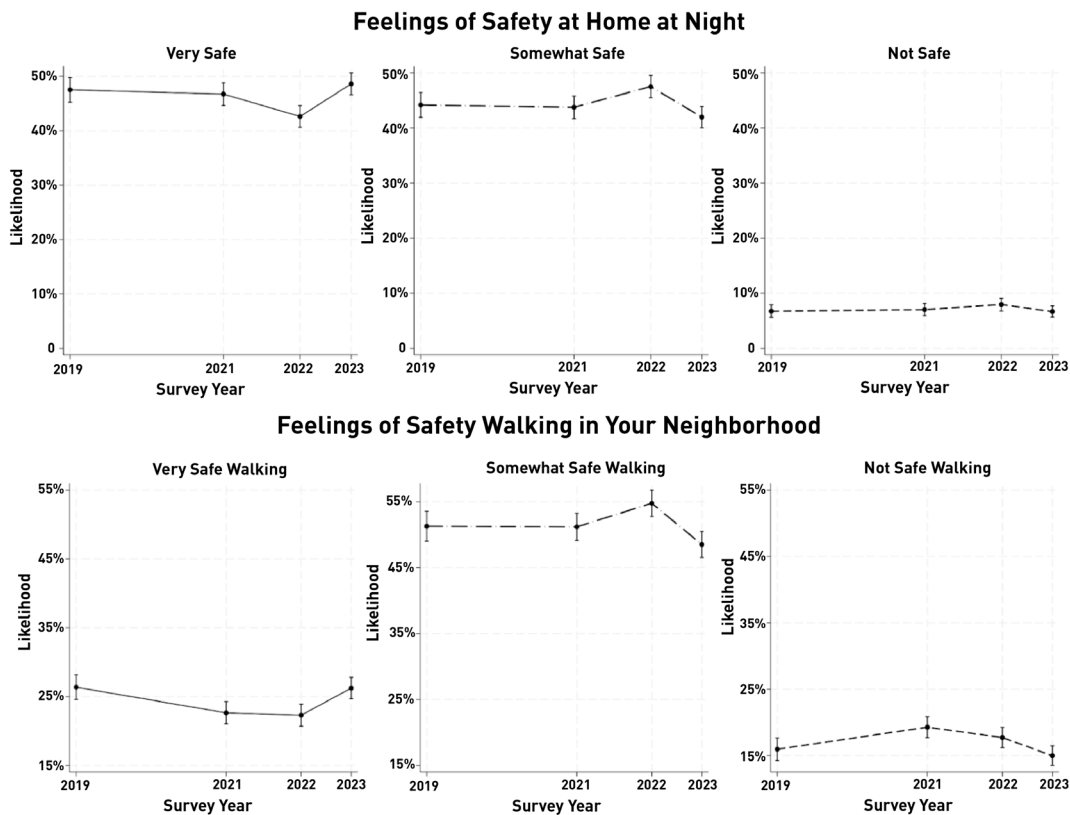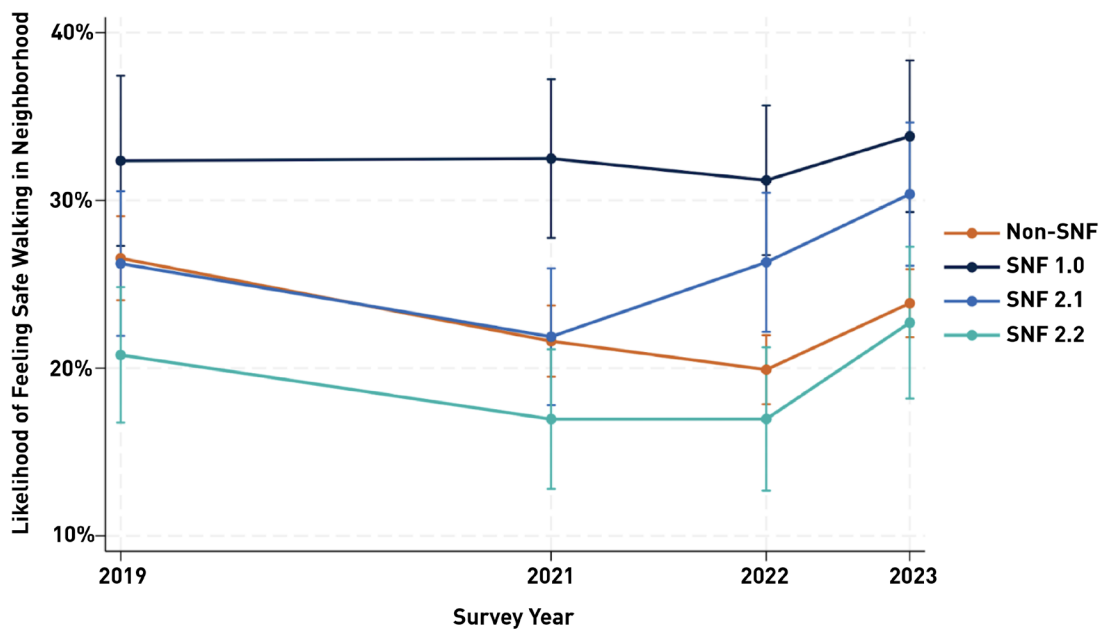### Feelings of Safety Walking in Your Neighborhood

Figure 21. SNF and Non-SNF Residents' Feelings of Safety Walking in Their Neighborhood Over Time

similarly dimmed perceptions that safety was improving in their neighborhoods between 2019 and 2023. In these neighborhoods, there was a significant decline in perceptions of safety between 2019 and 2021 followed by a leveling out between 2021 and 2023. By comparison, residents of SNF 2.2 neighborhoods—who were significantly less likely than residents of SNF 1.0 neighborhoods in 2019 to think their neighborhood was growing safer—held relatively stable perceptions of improving safety conditions over time. The combination of this shift in perceptions among residents of

SNF 1.0, 2.1, and non-SNF neighborhoods and this stability in perceptions among residents of SNF 2.2 neighborhoods resulted in a convergence of views, such that by 2023 there is no significant difference by neighborhood group in perceptions of change in neighborhood safety.

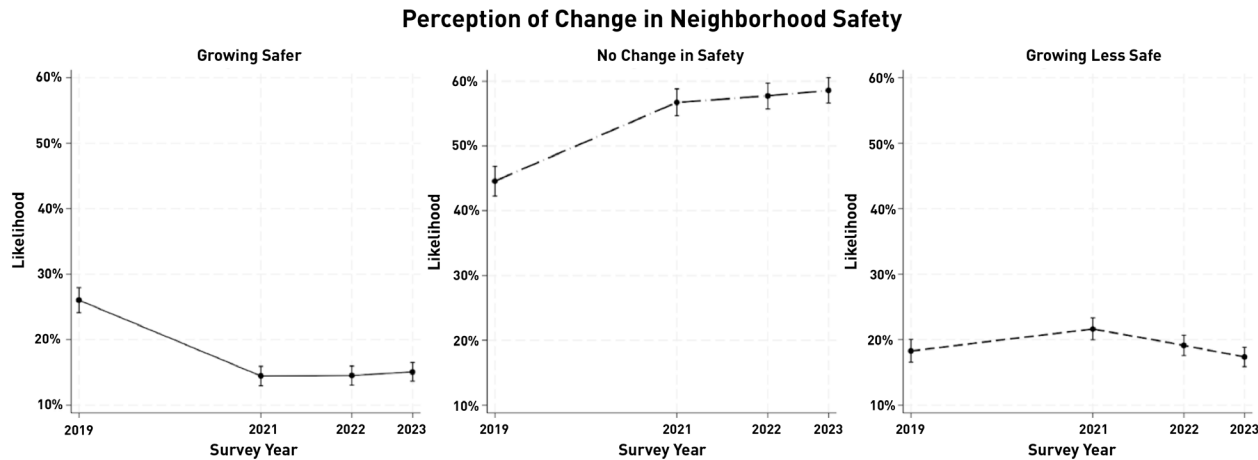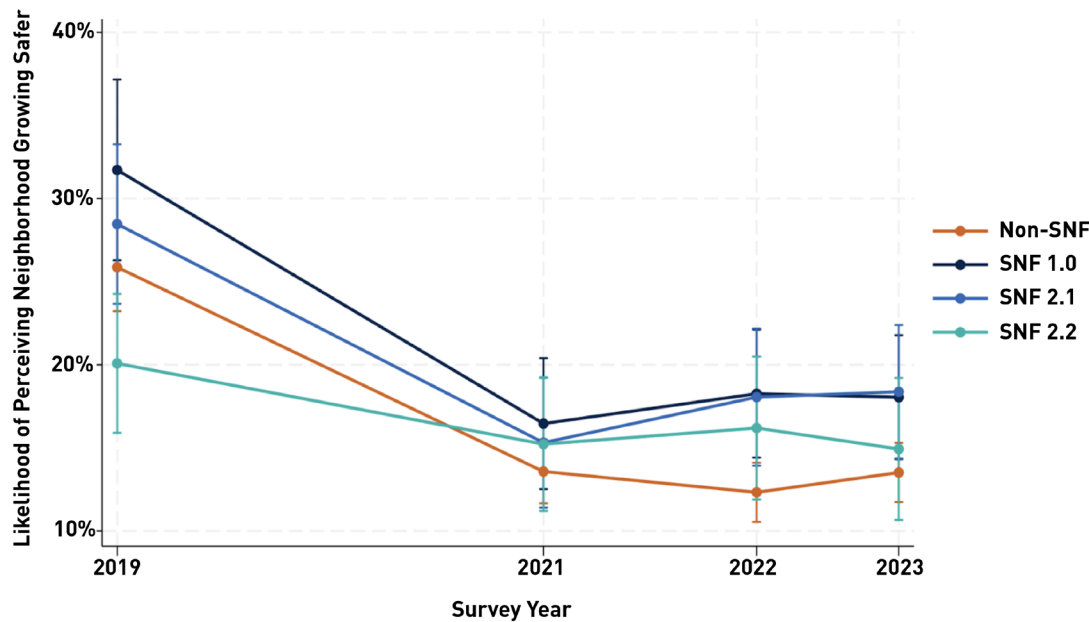**Figure 22. Detroiters' Perceptions of Change in Neighborhood Safety Over Time**

Perception of Change in Neighborhood Safety

Figure 23. SNF and Non-SNF Residents' Perceptions of Increasing Neighborhood Safety Over Time

ENDNOTES

1 The likelihood of benefiting quickly from localized investment was assessed in terms of the neighborhoods' population densities, presence of a central commercial corridor, strong local leadership, and proximity to public assets, along with other characteristics. For more on selection criteria for the Strategic Neighborhood Fund, as well as background on the initiative and its timeline, see Invest Detroit. 2019. Strategic Neighborhood Fund 2.0: One City. For all of us. Because of these selection criteria, SNF neighborhoods likely 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, were the cause of observed differences.

2 SNF projects developed in two phases, a planning phase and an implementation phase. The timing of on the ground investment in each neighborhood depends on the completion of the planning phase. Planning for SNF 1.0 and 2.1 neighborhoods ended earlier (between 2017 and 2019) than in SNF 2.2 neighborhoods (between 2019 and 2021), meaning SNF 2.2 neighborhoods moved into implementation more recently.

3 The findings in this report rely on the use of multi-level models to estimate variation in resident sentiments across time and by neighborhood group. The multi-level models leverage the nested nature of our longitudinal data where we have multiple observations nested within an individual respondent. The use of multi-level models adjusts for the likelihood that an individual's responses over time are likely correlated with each other. Additionally, to address differences in population composition between SNF neighborhood types—for example, that lower-income residents or minority residents may be more likely to live in SNF 2.2 neighborhoods and also may be more likely to express dissatisfaction—we control for variation in respondent demographics including respondent race, gender, income, education, and age. We primarily use mulit-level logistic regression models and report differences in predicted probabilities if they reflect statistically significant differences at the 95% confidence level.

4 Compared to SNF 2.1 communities, SNF 2.2 communities have significantly lower median household incomes and significantly lower levels of educational attainment. There are no statistically significant socio-economic differences between SNF 1.0 and 2.1 neighborhoods. For more on neighborhood characteristics of SNF 1.0, 2.1, 2.2 and non-SNF neighborhoods, see Appendix A.

5 We include wave specific weights that adjust the sample for each wave of the survey to correct for demographic biases. For more on the sampling and weighting approach of each survey, refer to the survey specific toplines at https://detroitsurvey.umich.edu/

6 In the original survey, satisfaction with one's neighborhood as a place to live was gauged using a seven point scale ranging from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 7 (very satisfied). In this report we have collapsed the categories into a three point scale—pooling very, mostly, and somewhat dissatisfied and very, mostly, and somewhat satisfied—for ease of interpretation.

7 Because of differences in sample size between neighborhoods, changes in satisfaction over time in SNF neighborhoods may be of a similar magnitude as non-SNF neighborhoods but may not be statistically significant due to a lack of statistical power and larger confidence intervals that result in overlapping error bars.

8 In 2019, the survey instrument did not specify a time period over which to assess change in quality of life. Starting in 2021, the survey specified that respondents should consider changes over the past year.

9 Neighborhood reputation was measured in fall 2019, spring 2021, and summer 2023 but was not included on the summer 2022 survey. On the original surveys, neighborhood reputation was measured using a five point scale ranging from 1 (very bad) to 5 (very good). In this report we have collapsed the categories into a three point scale—pooling very bad and bad and very good and good—for ease of interpretation.

10 In the original survey, satisfaction with amenities was measured using a five point scale ranging from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied). In this report we report satisfaction with amenities as a binary variable, reflecting if a respondent says they are somewhat or very satisfied with an amenity.

11 In the fall 2019 survey, perceptions of change were asked in reference to the last five years. Starting in spring 2021, perceptions of change were asked in reference to the past year. Thus, some change in perceptions between 2019 and 2021 may reflect this shift in time window rather than a shift in perception.

12   Perceived change in housing costs were measured in fall 2019, spring 2021, and summer 2023 but were not included on the summer 2022 survey.

13   See endnote 11 for more on shifts in survey question language. It is possible that some of the decline in residents' sense that neighborhoods have grown safer is due to the shortened time horizon rather than a growing sense of stability.

APPENDIX A

In this report and other reports in this series, we split our analysis of SNF 2.0 communities into two groups: SNF 2.1 communities—Grand River/Northwest, Jefferson Chalmers, and East Warren/Cadieux—which we describe as "more advantaged" and SNF 2.2 communities—Warrendale/Cody Rouge, Russell Woods/Nardin Park, Campau/Banglatown, and Gratiot/7 Mile—which we describe as "less advantaged." The grouping of these neighborhoods into more and less advantaged categories was suggested by our partners at Invest Detroit, based on their knowledge of and experience in these communities. The table below provides summary statistics for neighborhood conditions of these neighborhoods to further clarify the socio-economic variation between them. Compared to SNF 2.1 communities, SNF 2.2 communities have significantly lower median household incomes and significantly lower levels of educational attainment. SNF 2.2 neighborhoods also have higher rates of poverty, though this difference is only marginally significant. Residents of SNF 2.2 neighborhoods were not significantly different from SNF 2.1 neighborhoods in terms of their rates of receipt of public assistance, vacant housing, unemployment, or residential stability. The table also shows that SNF 1.0 and SNF 2.1 neighborhoods were demographically comparable, with no statistically significant differences in these socio-economic indicators.

Table 1. Census Characteristics of SNF and Non-SNF Neighborhoods

	NON-SNF		SNF 1.0		SNF 2.1		SNF 2.2	
	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev
Median Household Income	$34,416.32	$14,652.30	$43,617.14	$25,328.16	$44,619.35	$15,025.69	$35,151.62	$7,469.49
% in Poverty	33.37%	12.08%	26.84%	13.60%	26.90%	14.85%	33.32%	13.73%
% Vacant Housing	25.51%	14.38%	21.23%	12.70%	19.07%	10.54%	25.27%	15.83%
% Public Assistance	4.46%	4.18%	4.24%	3.83%	4.44%	2.90%	5.30%	5.60%
% Unemployed	16.32%	9.11%	13.58%	5.69%	14.61%	8.74%	17.10%	6.64%
% HS or Less Education	52.02%	14.83%	50.19%	21.54%	44.29%	14.21%	54.44%	10.70%
% Movers in Last Year	13.15%	9.05%	12.24%	6.45%	11.27%	6.24%	14.54%	14.56%

Source: ACS 2017-2021 5 Year Estimates

Table 1 Notes: This table reports the mean and standard deviation of census tracts that overlap with corresponding SNF 1.0, 2.1, 2.2, and non-SNF neighborhoods. Significant variation is assessed at the p> .05 level.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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