DETROIT'S STRATEGIC NEIGHBORHOOD FUND

EVALUATING VARIATION IN NEIGHBORHOOD SENTIMENTS AMONG SNF RESIDENTS - SUMMER 2022

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DETROIT METRO AREA COMMUNITIES STUDY

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

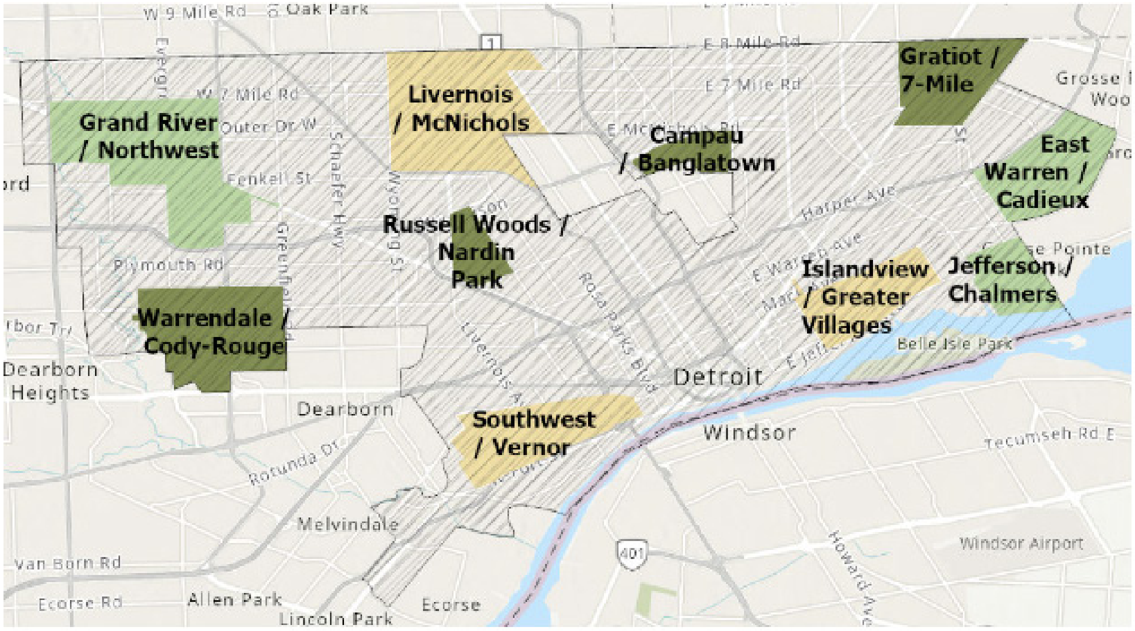


Figure 1 Notes: Map illustrates SNF neighborhood locations by their funding phase. Yellow neighborhoods are part of the first phase of SNF (SNF 1.0) announced in 2016. Green neighborhoods are part of the second phase of SNF (SNF 2.0) announced in 2018. In this report, we characterize SNF 2.0 neighborhoods 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 are releasing a series of reports that revisit and update our 2020 findings. The goal of these reports is to gain insight into the impacts of SNF's targeted neighborhood investments on Detroiters' experience of their changing communities and to 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.

In this report, we draw on data collected between June and August 2022 to replicate our analyses of the 2019 and 2021 data. The summer 2022 data capture the perspectives of 2,332 Detroit residents. In our analysis, we examine differences in perspectives between residents of SNF and non-SNF neighborhoods as well as compare and contrast perceptions of residents of SNF 1.0, SNF 2.1, and SNF 2.2 neighborhoods. 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.[3] The data have been weighted to reflect city demographics.[4]

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Residents of SNF neighborhoods overall did not hold more positive sentiments about their neighborhoods than residents of non-SNF neighborhoods. This lack of difference was in part due to the heightened levels of dissatisfaction among residents of SNF 2.2 neighborhoods, which muted the greater sense of satisfaction with neighborhood life for residents of SNF 1.0 and 2.1 neighborhoods.
- More than one-third of residents of SNF 2.2 neighborhoods were dissatisfied with their neighborhoods, significantly more than in other Detroit neighborhoods. Residents of SNF 2.2 neighborhoods were also roughly as likely to think quality of life in their neighborhood was declining as improving.
- In 2022, residents of SNF neighborhoods generally did not express greater satisfaction with local amenities compared to the rest of the city. For example, when asked to rate their satisfaction with the availability of affordable housing, condition of streets and sidewalks, and the quality of parks and playgrounds—main investment areas targeted by SNF—residents of SNF neighborhoods were no more likely to be satisfied than other residents.
- Residents of SNF 2.2 neighborhoods were generally less satisfied with neighborhood amenities than other residents.
- Residents of SNF 1.0 and 2.1 neighborhoods were significantly more likely to say in 2022 that their neighborhood had grown more attractive in the past year. In SNF 2.2 neighborhoods, residents were significantly less likely to report positive signs of neighborhood change.
- Perceptions of neighborhood safety varied considerably between SNF neighborhoods. In SNF 1.0 neighborhoods, residents were significantly more likely to feel very safe in their homes and neighborhoods compared to other Detroiters. Residents of SNF 2.2 neighborhoods were significantly less likely to say they feel very safe.

FINDINGS

NEIGHBORHOOD SATISFACTION AND QUALITY OF LIFE[5]

Overall, Detroit residents expressed satisfaction with their neighborhoods in summer 2022. Sixty-four percent said they were very, mostly, or somewhat satisfied with their neighborhoods, compared to 11% who were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 25% who were very, mostly, or somewhat dissatisfied.[6] While residents of SNF neighborhoods overall expressed slightly greater levels of neighborhood satisfaction (67%) compared to residents of non-SNF neighborhoods, this difference was not statistically significant.[7] This lack of significant difference was due in part to the heightened levels of dissatisfaction among residents of SNF 2.2 neighborhoods, which muted the greater sense of satisfaction with neighborhood life for residents of SNF 2.1 and 1.0 neighborhoods. Thirty-five percent of residents of SNF 2.2 neighborhoods—those living in the four less advantaged neighborhoods tapped for strategic investments starting in 2018—were very, mostly, or somewhat dissatisfied with their neighborhoods. This was significantly greater than all other Detroit residents (see Figure 2). On the other hand, residents of SNF 2.1 neighborhoods were the most likely to express satisfaction with their neighborhoods as a place to live. Seventy-seven percent of residents of SNF 2.1 neighborhoods said they were satisfied with their neighborhoods, slightly more than the 70% of residents of SNF 1.0 neighborhoods and significantly greater than the 64% of residents of non-SNF neighborhoods who expressed similar satisfaction with their neighborhoods. Fifty-three percent of residents of SNF 2.2 neighborhoods said they were satisfied with their neighborhoods.

When it comes to assessing the quality of life in their neighborhoods—whether quality of life was improving, declining, or staying the same—Detroit residents' views were somewhat less positive. While 35% of Detroiters believed quality of life in their neighborhood between 2021 and 2022 was improving, 42% believed it was staying the same and 20% thought quality of life was declining. Residents of SNF 1.0 neighborhoods had a more optimistic outlook and were significantly more likely than other Detroiters to say quality of life was improving (45%). As with satisfaction, there was a deep divide in perspectives between residents of SNF 2.1 and 2.2 neighborhoods, emphasizing the difference in those neighborhoods despite entering the SNF program at the same time. While residents of SNF 2.1 neighborhoods were twice as likely to say quality of life in their neighborhood was improving (40%) than declining (18%), residents of SNF 2.2 neighborhoods were nearly as likely to say quality of life was improving (28%) as declining (22%) (Figure 3).

Figure 2: Satisfaction with Neighborhood as a Place to Live

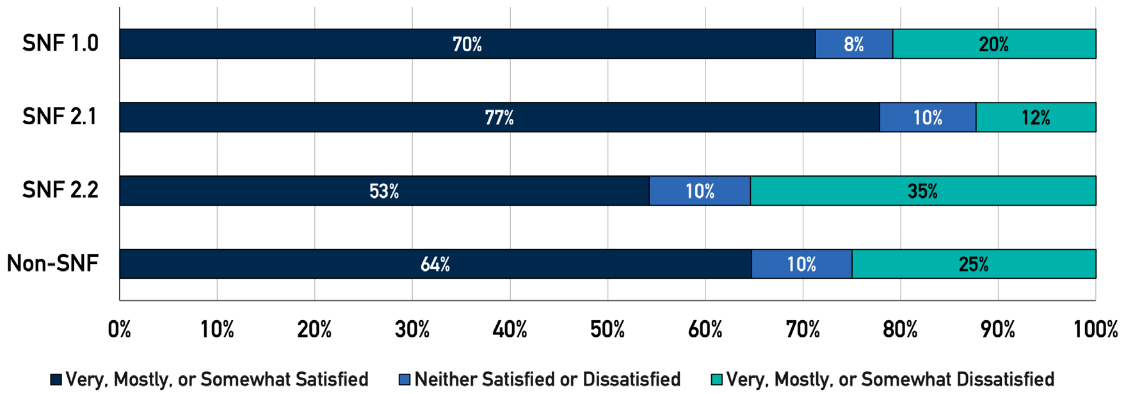
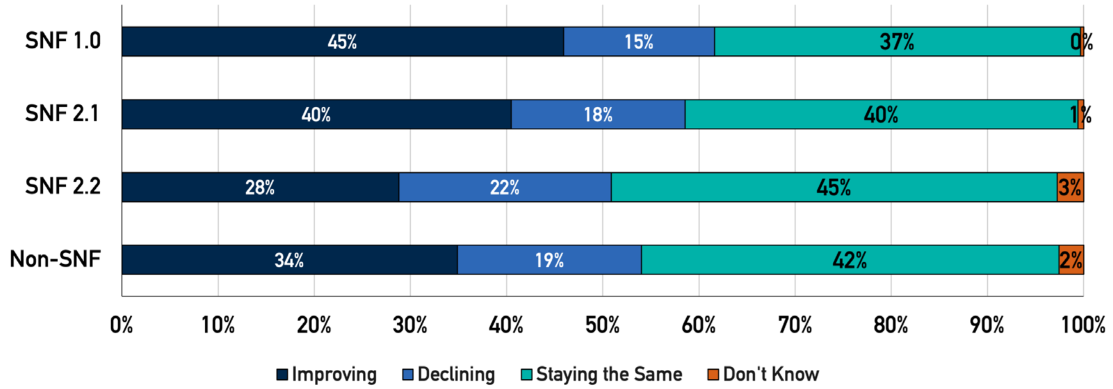


Figure 3: Neighborhood Quality of Life



SATISFACTION WITH NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES

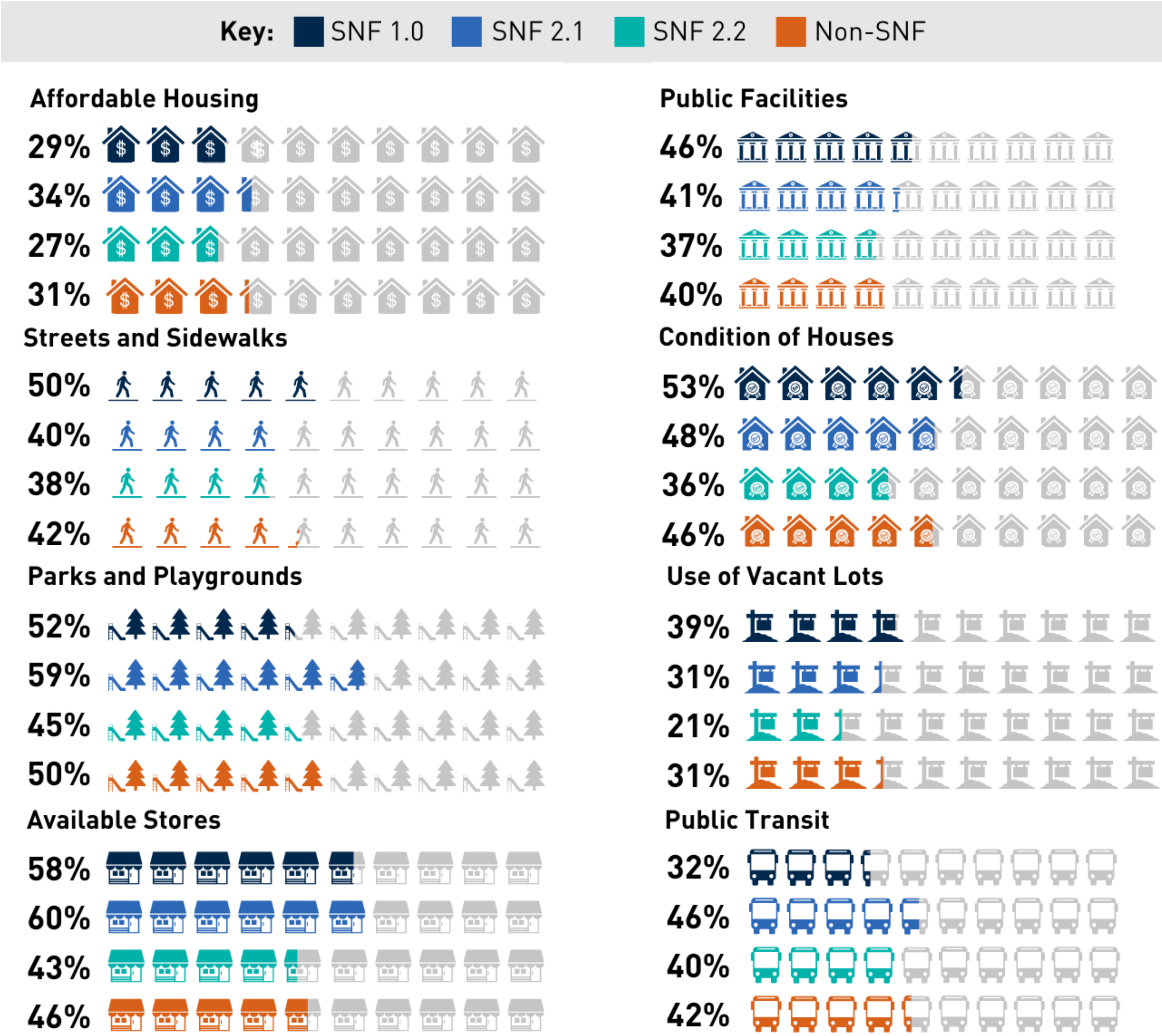
SNF funds are intended to focus on community-driven projects in four specific areas—park improvements, streetscape improvements, commercial corridor development, and affordable single-family home stabilization. Despite the targeted nature of these investments, we generally do not find that residents of SNF neighborhoods expressed greater satisfaction with local amenities compared to the rest of the city. For example, when asked to rate their satisfaction with the availability of affordable housing, condition of streets and sidewalks, and the quality of parks and playground, residents of SNF neighborhoods were no more likely to be satisfied than other Detroit residents.[8]

One place where we do observe differences in satisfaction with amenities is around access to local stores. As shown in Figure 4, residents of SNF 1.0 and SNF 2.1 neighborhoods were significantly more likely than residents of non-SNF neighborhoods to express satisfaction (to say they were very or somewhat satisfied) with the availability of stores where they can regularly shop. Fifty-eight percent of residents of SNF 1.0 neighborhoods and 60% of residents of SNF 2.1 neighborhoods reported feeling satisfied with local stores.

Beyond access to local stores, there were a few significant differences where SNF neighborhoods fared worse than the city as a whole. For example, residents of SNF 1.0 neighborhoods were significantly less satisfied with the availability of public transportation. Additionally, we observe that residents of SNF 2.2 neighborhoods were less satisfied with neighborhood amenities than other residents. This was true in every category, though the difference is only significant in terms of satisfaction with the condition of houses and the use of vacant lots.

As the city continues to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and SNF investments take root, it will be interesting to observe if this lack of difference in satisfaction with amenities persists or if place-based investments can shift the sentiments of residents by changing local infrastructure.

Figure 4: Satisfaction with Neighborhood Amenities



PERCEIVED CHANGE IN NEIGHBORHOOD ATTRACTIVENESS, POPULATION, AND BUSINESS PRESENCE

A major focus of the SNF effort is neighborhood beautification, including improvements to local infrastructure and investments in streetscaping. While 31% of Detroiters overall said in 2022 that they noticed their neighborhood had grown more attractive in the last year (between 2021 and 2022), residents of SNF 1.0 and 2.1 neighborhoods were significantly more likely to say their neighborhood had grown more attractive. Thirty-eight percent of residents of SNF 1.0 and SNF 2.1 neighborhoods noticed positive change in the appearance of their neighborhoods compared to 29% of residents of non-SNF neighborhoods and 26% of residents of SNF 2.2 neighborhoods (Figure 5). Additionally, residents of SNF 2.1 neighborhoods were significantly less likely to report decline in neighborhood appearance (11%) compared to residents of non-SNF neighborhoods, while residents of SNF 2.2 neighborhoods were significantly more likely (26%) than other Detroiters to say the appearance of their neighborhood had declined.

This less positive outlook among residents of SNF 2.2 neighborhoods was also true when examining perceptions of business openings. Just 24% of residents of SNF 2.2 neighborhoods said they had seen more businesses opening in their neighborhood in the past year, making them significantly less likely than other Detroiters to sense an increasing business presence in 2022 (Figure 6). By comparison, 56% of residents of SNF 1.0 neighborhoods, 44% of residents of SNF 2.1 neighborhoods, and 31% of residents of non-SNF neighborhoods reported they noticed more businesses opening in their neighborhoods in the last year.

Two in five (39%) Detroit residents reported that they noticed more people moving into their neighborhoods in the last year, while 14% reported more people moving out of their neighborhoods and 35% noticed no change. Like with neighborhood attractiveness, residents of SNF 1.0 neighborhoods were significantly more likely to report population growth (51%) than residents of non-SNF neighborhoods (37%). Forty-two percent of residents of SNF 2.1 neighborhoods and 36% of residents of SNF 2.2 neighborhoods reported more people moving into their neighborhood in the past year (Figure 7).

Figure 5: Perceived Change in Neighborhood Attractiveness

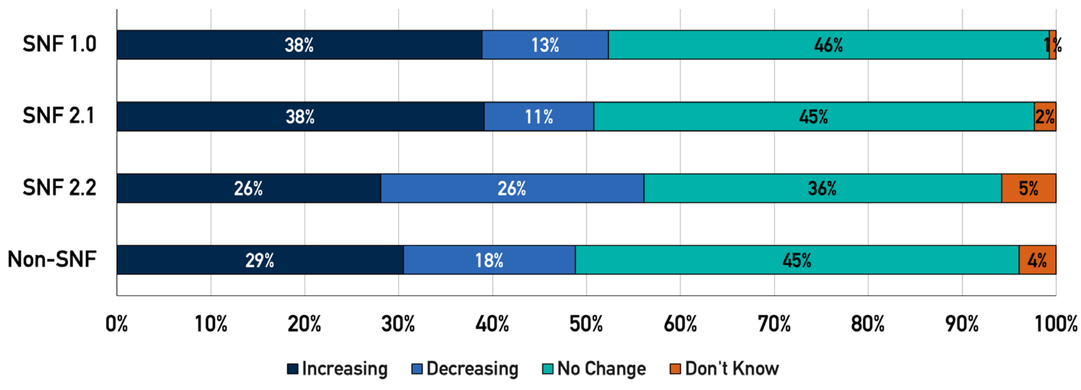
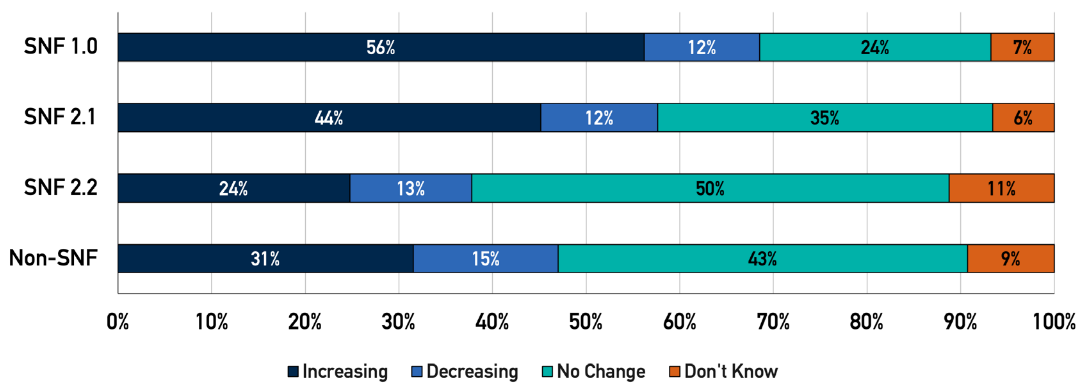
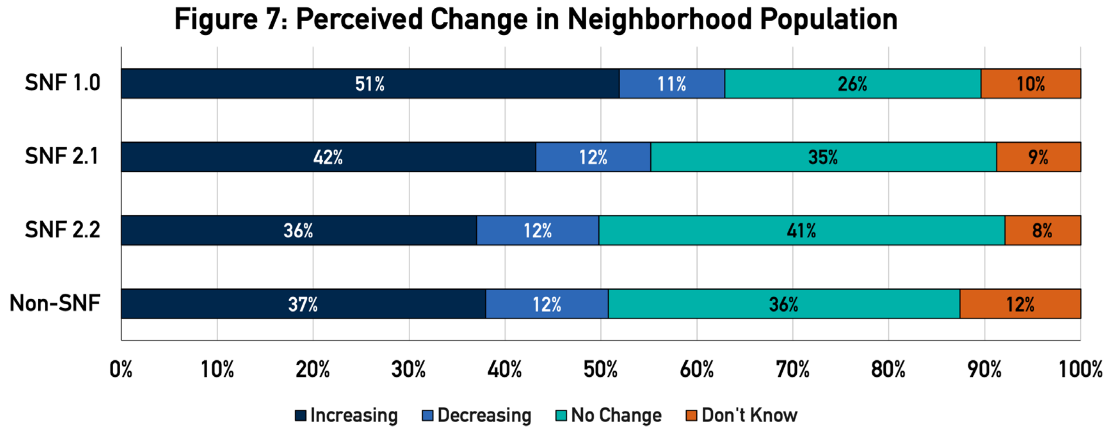


Figure 6: Perceived Change in Business Presence





PERCEPTIONS OF NEIGHBORHOOD CRIME AND SAFETY

When it came to assessing local safety in summer 2022, Detroit residents in general reported that they felt secure in their homes. Nearly half (45%) of Detroiters said they felt very safe in their homes at night, 45% said they felt somewhat safe, and 8% said they did not feel safe in their homes. However, many fewer Detroiters reported feeling safe walking around their neighborhoods during the day. Just one-quarter (25%) of Detroiters said they felt very safe walking around their neighborhood during the day, while 53% said somewhat safe and 17% said not safe.

Perceptions of safety varied considerably between SNF neighborhoods. In SNF 1.0 neighborhoods, residents were significantly more likely to say they felt very safe in their homes and in their neighborhoods compared to other Detroiters. Residents of SNF 2.2 neighborhoods were significantly less likely to say they felt very safe. Per Figure 8, 54% of residents of SNF 1.0 neighborhoods said they felt very safe in their homes at night compared to 44% of residents of non-SNF neighborhoods and 33% of residents of SNF 2.2 neighborhoods. What's more, residents of SNF 2.2 neighborhoods were twice as likely (10%) to say they did not feel safe in their homes as residents of SNF 1.0 (5%) or SNF 2.1 (4%) neighborhoods. Residents' sense of safety walking in their neighborhoods followed a similar pattern. Residents of SNF 1.0 and 2.1 neighborhoods were roughly half as likely (10% and 8%, respectively) to say they felt unsafe walking in their neighborhood compared to residents of non-SNF (17%) and SNF 2.2 neighborhoods (22%) (Figure 9).

In general, few residents detected meaningful change in neighborhood safety between 2021 and 2022. More than half (57%) of Detroiters reported that safety in their neighborhood hadn't changed over time, while 17% reported their neighborhood had gotten safer and 17% reported their neighborhood had gotten less safe. Significantly fewer residents of SNF 1.0 neighborhoods reported declining safety conditions than residents of non-SNF neighborhoods. Just 11% of residents of SNF 1.0 neighborhoods said they felt less safe in their neighborhood compared to the previous year, while 20% believe their neighborhood safety had improved. (Figure 10).

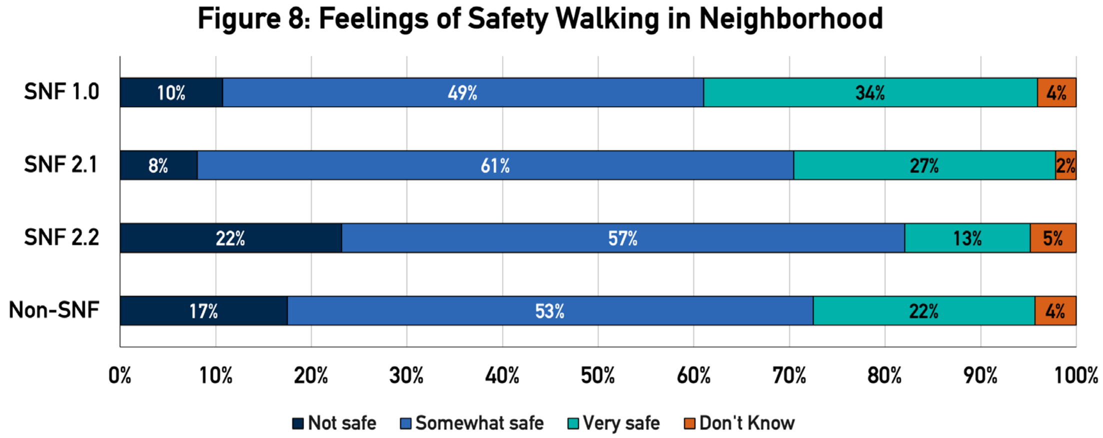


Figure 9: Feelings of Safety at Home at Night

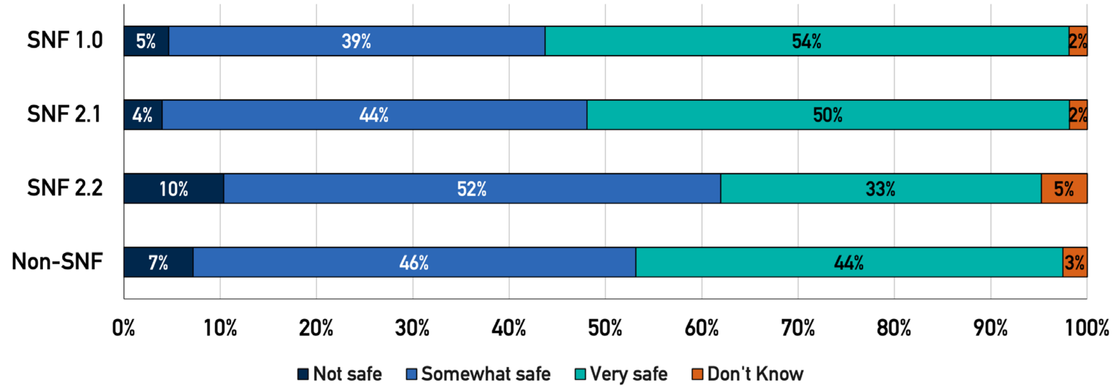
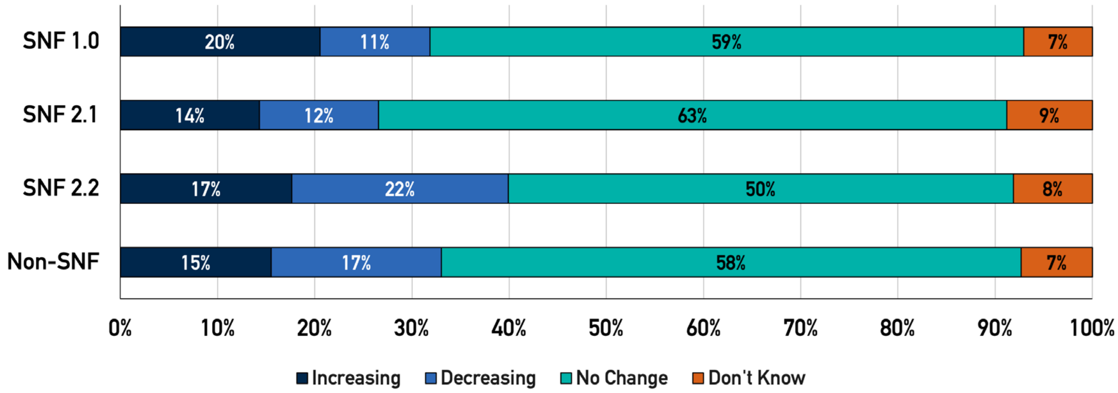


Figure 10: Perceived Change in Neighborhood Safety



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 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.

4 For more on the sampling and weighting approach, as well as results for the full sample of Detroit residents, see Wave 15 Survey Toplines.

5 Reports from other waves of DMACS data include analysis of residents' perceptions of neighborhood reputation, but this question was not included on the summer 2022 survey. This survey wave (Wave 15) also did not include questions on perceived change in rent and property values.

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 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 report significant results based on logistic regression models that control for variation in respondent demographics. We report differences in estimated group means if they reflect statistically significant differences at the 95% confidence level.

8 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 measure satisfaction with amenities as a binary variable, reflecting if a respondent says they are somewhat or very satisfied with an amenity.

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 are 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 are 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.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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