

DETROIT'S STRATEGIC NEIGHBORHOOD FUND

RE-EVALUATING VARIATION IN NEIGHBORHOOD SENTIMENTS AMONG SNF RESIDENTS - FALL 2019

JUNE 2024 By Lydia Wileden



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 placebased 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 <u>Detroit Metro Area</u> <u>Communities Study</u> (DMACS) and <u>Invest Detroit</u> 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 <u>initial report on this topic, published in 2020</u>, 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 satisfaction and positive signs of neighborhood change, including more people moving in, more businesses opening,



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.

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 stage²—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 <u>recently announced third</u> <u>phase of investment in SNF</u>, funded by the Gilbert Family Foundation.

In this report, we re-examine data from 2019 to see if the patterns of variation previously reported hold when we distinguish between "more advantaged" and "less advantaged" SNF 2.0 communities. This reassessment reflects additional

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Residents in SNF 1.0 neighborhoods—the first three neighborhoods targeted by SNF investments—and SNF 2.1 neighborhoods—the more advantaged SNF 2.0 neighborhoods—were significantly more likely to report greater overall neighborhood satisfaction and better neighborhood reputation than other Detroiters.
- SNF 2.2 residents—the less advantaged SNF 2.0 neighborhoods—had significantly less positive sentiments about their neighborhoods. Residents of SNF 2.2 neighborhoods were 1.5 times more likely to express dissatisfaction with their neighborhoods and were two times more likely to report their neighborhood had a bad or very bad reputation compared to other Detroiters.
- On many measures of neighborhood quality—including satisfaction with parks, streets and sidewalks, or affordable housing, three main investment areas targeted by SNF residents of the 10 SNF neighborhoods did not express greater satisfaction with neighborhood amenities than other Detroit residents. However, SNF 1.0 and 2.1 residents did express greater satisfaction with the availability of local businesses—another SNF investment target compared to other Detroiters.
- SNF 2.2 residents generally were the least satisfied with their neighborhood amenities.

analysis (see Appendix A) suggesting that baseline conditions in Grand River/Northwest, Jefferson Chalmers, and East Warren/Cadieux (herein, SNF 2.1 neighborhoods) may have been substantively different than conditions in Warrendale/ Cody Rouge, Russell Woods/Nardin Park, Campau/Banglatown, and Gratiot/7 Mile (herein, SNF 2.2 neighborhoods).³ Shifting our analysis from looking at three groups of residents to four groups of residents (SNF 1.0, SNF 2.1, SNF 2.2, and non-SNF neighborhoods), we find that the positive sentiments associated with more advantaged SNF 2.1 neighborhoods were muted in our initial report by the considerably more negative sentiments associated with less advantaged SNF 2.2 neighborhoods. These differences in sentiment might also reflect a later investment timeline in SNF 2.2 neighborhoods. This is an important fact to establish as subsequent reports in this series drawing on DMACS data collected in 2021, 2022, and 2023 maintain this four-group comparison. The data in this report were collected between August and December 2019 and capture the perspectives of 1,835 Detroit residents, including an oversample of those living in SNF communities. The data have been weighted to reflect city demographics.⁴

- SNF 1.0 and 2.1 neighborhoods reported more positive signs of neighborhood change—increasing neighborhood attractiveness, more businesses opening, more people moving in—than other neighborhoods in the city. In SNF 2.2 neighborhoods, residents were significantly less likely to report positive signs of neighborhood change.
- SNF residents were significantly more likely to report that their property values had risen in the five years prior to the survey compared to other Detroiters. This difference was driven primarily by perceptions of increasing prices within SNF 1.0 neighborhoods, where 62% of residents reported rising property values.
- Safety was a greater concern among SNF 2.2 residents than other Detroiters. Residents in SNF 2.2 neighborhoods were twice as likely as others to report feeling unsafe in their homes at night and unsafe walking in their neighborhoods during the day.

FINDINGS

NEIGHBORHOOD SATISFACTION, QUALITY OF LIFE, AND REPUTATION

On the whole, in 2019 the majority (70%) of Detroit residents said they were somewhat, mostly, or very satisfied with their neighborhoods as a place to live.⁵ Just 5% of Detroiters said they were very dissatisfied with their neighborhoods. While residents of SNF neighborhoods, collectively, were not more likely to be satisfied with their neighborhoods than non-SNF residents, there was considerable variation in satisfaction between SNF residents. Residents in SNF 1.0 neighborhoods (the first three neighborhoods targeted by SNF investments) and SNF 2.1 neighborhoods (the more economically advantaged SNF 2.0 neighborhoods) reported greater levels of local satisfaction than residents of non-SNF neighborhoods. Meanwhile, residents of SNF 2.2 neighborhoods (the less economically advantaged SNF 2.0 neighborhoods) reported significantly lower neighborhood satisfaction.⁶ Nearly one-third (30%) of residents of SNF 2.2 neighborhoods reported they were dissatisfied with their neighborhoods as a place to live, meaning they were 1.5 times more likely to express dissatisfaction than other Detroiters. Just 59% of residents of SNF 2.2 neighborhoods were satisfied with their neighborhoods. By comparison, 78% of residents of SNF 1.0 and 2.1 neighborhoods reported being satisfied with their neighborhoods and 71% of residents of non-SNF neighborhoods reported being similarly satisfied with where they live (Figure 2).

When assessing the quality of life in their neighborhoods whether quality of life was improving, declining, or staying the same—Detroit residents overall were split. A near equal proportion believed quality of life was improving (39%) or staying the same (38%). Just 17% of Detroiters said they felt quality of life in their neighborhood was declining. This tepid perception was not shared uniformly across neighborhoods. Residents of SNF 1.0 neighborhoods were significantly more likely than other Detroiters to say quality of life was improving (52%) and significantly less likely to say it was declining (7%). By contrast, residents of SNF 2.2 neighborhoods were significantly less likely than other Detroiters to report quality of life in their neighborhood was improving (29%) (see Figure 3).

Examining neighborhood reputation, the majority (51%) of Detroit residents said their neighborhood had a good or very good reputation.7 Just 14% believed their neighborhood had a bad or very bad reputation and 34% reported their neighborhood's reputation was neutral. Like neighborhood satisfaction and quality of life, these positive assessments of reputation were strongest among residents of SNF 1.0 and SNF 2.1 neighborhoods, while residents of SNF 2.2 neighborhoods reported significantly less positive perceptions of their neighborhoods' reputation. Sixty percent of residents of SNF 1.0 and 56% of residents of SNF 2.1 neighborhoods said their neighborhood had a good reputation, compared to 38% of residents of SNF 2.2 neighborhoods. Conversely, residents of SNF 2.2 neighborhoods were roughly twice as likely as other Detroiters to report their neighborhood had a bad or very bad reputation (Figure 4).



Figure 2: Satisfaction with Neighborhood as a Place to Live



Figure 3: Neighborhood Quality of Life



Figure 4: Perceived Neighborhood Reputation

SATISFACTION WITH NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES

SNF funds were 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, in this 2019 survey we generally do not observe that residents of SNF neighborhoods expressed greater satisfaction with the availability of parks and playgrounds, the condition of streets and sidewalks, or the availability of affordable housing compared to residents of non-SNF neighborhoods.⁸ That local investments in these areas had yet to be reflected in resident satisfaction with amenities may be due to the fact that SNF investments were still in the early or planning stages. By 2019, only the three SNF 1.0 neighborhoods (Southwest/Vernor, Livernois/McNichols, and Islandview/Greater Villages) and one SNF 2.0 neighborhood (Grand River/Northwest) had completed their planning process and moved into the implementation phase.

Considering different types of neighborhood amenities, Figure 5 illustrates that one point of difference was satisfaction with the availability of local stores. 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 could regularly shop. Sixty-four percent of residents of SNF 1.0 neighborhoods and 63% of residents of SNF 2.1 neighborhoods reported feeling satisfied with local stores, compared to 53% of residents of non-SNF neighborhoods. Residents of SNF 2.1 neighborhoods were also significantly more likely to say they were satisfied with their access to public facilities like libraries (56%), the condition of most houses in their neighborhood (54%), and the use of vacant lots (45%) than residents of non-SNF neighborhoods.

KEY: SNF 1.0 SNF 2.1	SNF 2.2 Non-SNF				
Affordable Housing	Public Facilities				
34% 😩 💲 🎓 🎓 🎓 💲	46% â â â â â â â â â â â â				
38% 🚯 🏠 🏠 🏠 🏠 🏠 🏠	56% 俞俞俞俞俞俞 俞俞俞俞				
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34% 👔 👔 👔 🏦 😭 🎓 🍙 🏠	45% 前前前前前前前前				
Streets and Sidewalks	Condition of Houses				
50% <u> </u>	49% 🖄 🖄 🖄 🏠 🖄 🖄 🖄 🖄				
58% <u>* * * * * * * *</u> *88	54% 🏠 🟠 🏠 🏠 🏠 🖄 🖄				
42% <u>* * * * * * * * *</u>	39% 🙆 🏠 🏠 🏠 🖄 🖄 🖄 🏠				
49% <u>* * * * * * * *</u>	44% 🙆 🟠 🏠 🏠 🏠 🖄 🖄 🏠				
Parks and Playgrounds	Use of Vacant Lots				
	38% E E E E E E E E E E				
	45% <u>t t t t t t t t t t t t</u>				
43% *** ********	27% 📜 📜 📜 📜 📜 📜 📃				
	32% <u>E E E E E E E E E</u> E				
Available Stores	Public Transit				
64% 🛄 🔄 🔄 🔄 🖬 🖓 🖓	$53\% \square \square$				
63% 🚥 🚥 🚥 🚥 🚥 🚥 🚥	53% \square				
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Figure 5: Satisfaction with Neighborhood Amenities

Another theme apparent in Figure 5 is that residents of SNF 2.2 neighborhoods generally were less satisfied with neighborhood amenities than other residents. In most cases, this difference is not statistically significant and may reflect the disadvantage faced by SNF 2.2 neighborhoods compared to other communities. However, residents of SNF 2.2 neighborhoods were significantly less likely than other Detroiters to be satisfied with the availability of parks and playgrounds in their neighborhoods. Figure 5 also emphasizes differences in satisfaction between residents of SNF 2.2 and SNF 2.1 neighborhoods, a fact not captured in our original 2019 report that combined all SNF 2.0 residents into a single group. Compared to residents of SNF 2.1 neighborhoods, residents of SNF 2.2 neighborhoods were significantly less satisfied in terms of the condition of streets and sidewalks and the way vacant lots were maintained.

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. In 2019, 40% of Detroiters said they noticed their neighborhood had grown more attractive in the previous five years. Residents of SNF 1.0 neighborhoodswhere SNF's place-based investment strategy had been in place the longest—were significantly more likely to say their neighborhood had grown more attractive. Fifty-eight percent of residents of SNF 1.0 neighborhoods had noticed positive change in the appearance of their neighborhoods, 38% in non-SNF neighborhoods, and 29% in SNF 2.2 neighborhoods (Figure 6). Additionally, residents of SNF 1.0 neighborhoods were significantly less likely to report decline in neighborhood appearance (11%), while residents of SNF 2.2 neighborhoods were significantly more likely than other Detroiters to say the appearance of their neighborhood had declined (26%).

This less positive outlook among SNF 2.2 residents was also true when examining perceptions of business openings and closings. Just 28% of SNF 2.2 residents said they had seen more businesses opening in their neighborhood in the previous five years, making them significantly less likely than other Detroiters to sense an increasing local business presence (Figure 7). By comparison, 55% of residents of SNF 1.0 and 60% of residents of SNF 2.1 neighborhoods reported they'd noticed more businesses opening in their neighborhoods in the previous five years. Just 5% of residents of SNF 1.0 and 12% of residents of SNF 2.1 neighborhoods reported they had noticed a decline in local businesses compared to 18% of residents of SNF 2.2 neighborhoods.

Nearly half (48%) of Detroit residents perceived more people had moved into their neighborhoods in the previous five years. Fewer than 1 in 5 (16%) Detroiters reported more people had moved out of their neighborhoods and one-quarter (26%) had noticed no change in the local population over the same period. Like with business growth, residents of SNF 1.0 and 2.1 neighborhoods were more likely to report population growth (SNF 1.0: 57%; SNF 2.1: 52%) than residents of non-SNF neighborhoods (47%), though the difference is not significant (Figure 8). Residents of SNF 2.2 neighborhoods were the least likely to perceive that the population in their neighborhood had increased (43%) and the most likely to report the population in their neighborhood had decreased (17%).



Figure 6: Perceived Change in Neighborhood Attractiveness







Figure 8: Perceived Change in Neighborhood Population

PERCEIVED CHANGE IN NEIGHBORHOOD RENT AND PROPERTY VALUES

The Detroit housing market has experienced major fluctuations in the cost of housing in recent years. Among Detroit renters, just 4% said in 2019 that they had noticed rent costs had gone down in the previous five years while 40% said their rent had increased and 44% said rent costs hadn't changed. Considering variation in rent costs across SNF and non-SNF neighborhoods, we observe no significant differences between resident groups, though a larger proportion of residents of SNF 2.2 neighborhoods (48%) reported rising rents compared to other Detroiters (Figure 9).

Perceptions of change in property values among homeowners showed greater variation. Forty-five percent of property owners reported their home's value had risen in the previous five years, while 20% reported their property's value had gone down and 19% reported no change in value. Residents of SNF neighborhoods were significantly more likely to report that their property values had risen. This difference is driven primarily by increasing prices within SNF 1.0 neighborhoods, where 62% of residents reported rising property values and only 19% reported their home values had dropped or not changed. This is significantly greater than the 41% of residents of non-SNF neighborhoods who reported increasing property values. In contrast, residents of SNF 2.2 neighborhoods were significantly less likely to report increasing property values and were the most likely to say they thought the value of their home had declined. Just 33% of residents of SNF 2.2 neighborhoods reported rising property values while 25% thought the value of their home had fallen in the previous five years. As with other indicators of neighborhood health, SNF 2.1 residents' perceptions more closely resembled SNF 1.0: 52% reported their property values had risen while 21% reported their home values had dropped or not changed (Figure 10).









PERCEPTIONS OF NEIGHBORHOOD CRIME AND SAFETY

Safety is an ever-present issue among Detroiters and greatly affects how they experience their neighborhoods. In general, in 2019 Detroit residents reported that they felt secure in their homes but less safe walking in their neighborhoods, and few detected meaningful change in neighborhood safety. Half (50%) of Detroiters said they felt very safe in their homes at night compared to 43% who said they felt somewhat safe and 6% who said they did not feel safe. When it comes to feelings of safety walking around in their neighborhood, 29% of Detroiters said they felt very safe while 52% said somewhat safe and 13% said not safe.

Residents of SNF neighborhoods on the whole were not more likely to report feeling safe at home or walking in their neighborhoods than other Detroiters. However, this lack of variation masks the reality that residents of SNF 2.2 neighborhoods were significantly more likely to report feeling unsafe. Eleven percent of residents of SNF 2.2 neighborhoods said they felt unsafe in their homes at night compared to 6% of residents of SNF 1.0 neighborhoods, 4% of residents of SNF 2.1 neighborhoods, and 5% of residents of non-SNF neighborhoods (Figure 11). Similarly, 21% of residents of SNF 2.2 neighborhoods said they felt unsafe walking in their neighborhoods during the day compared to 10% of residents of SNF 1.0, 8% of residents of SNF 2.1, and 12% of residents of non-SNF neighborhoods (Figure 12).

In terms of how residents perceived safety had changed over time, 41% of Detroiters reported that safety in their neighborhood hadn't changed in the previous five years while 30% reported their neighborhood had gotten safer and 18% reported their neighborhood had gotten less safe. There was no significant variation in perceived change in neighborhood safety between SNF and non-SNF neighborhoods.







Figure 12: Feelings of Safety Walking in Neighborhood

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. <u>Strategic</u> <u>Neighborhood Fund 2.0: One City</u>. 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 <u>Wave 6 Survey Toplines</u>.
- 5 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.
- 6 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.
- 7 In the original survey, 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.
- 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 report satisfaction with amenities as a binary variable, reflecting if a respondent said they were 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.

	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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