
Reimagining the Civic Commons Metrics Report - Final

Detroit

Reimagining the Civic Commons

Reimagining the Civic Commons is a national initiative to advance ambitious social, economic and environmental goals through revitalized and connected public spaces.

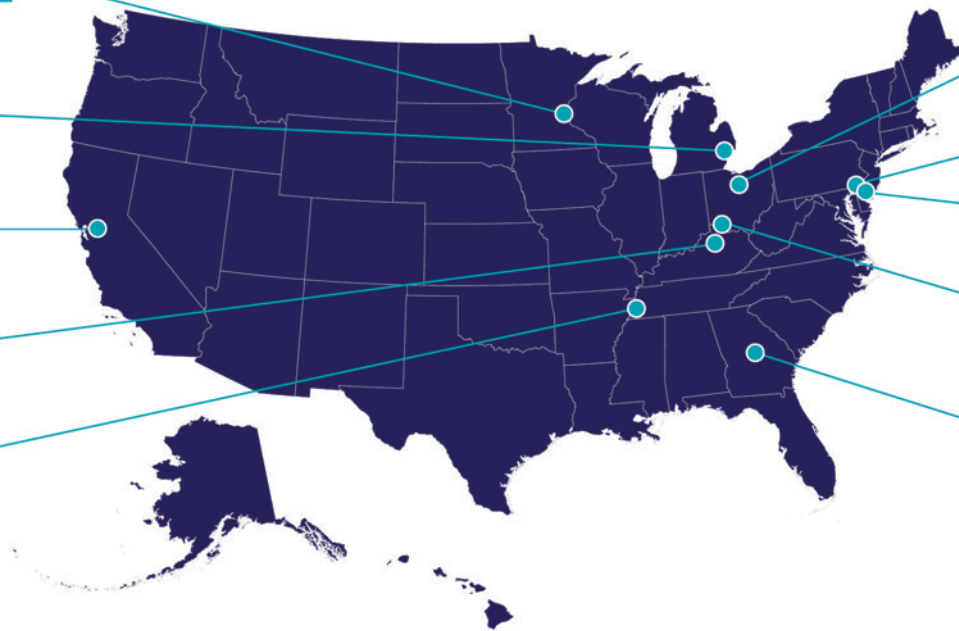
Minneapolis | St. Paul

Detroit

San José

Lexington

Memphis



Akron

Philadelphia

Camden

Cincinnati

Macon

The initiative is a collaboration of The JPB Foundation, Knight Foundation, The Kresge Foundation and William Penn Foundation, alongside local partners to demonstrate the multifaceted value of investing in civic assets.

Launched nationally in 2016 with 5 demonstration cities, including Detroit, the learning network has now grown to 10 cities participating in a robust community of practice.



**Civic
Engagement**



**Socioeconomic
Mixing**



**Environmental
Sustainability**



Value Creation

Outcomes are at the core of Reimagining the Civic Commons.

With a focus on four main outcomes:

- **Civic Engagement**
Building a sense of community that brings people of all backgrounds back into public life as stewards and advocates, shaping their city's future.
- **Socioeconomic Mixing**
Creating places where everyone belongs, and that generate opportunities for shared experience among people of all incomes and backgrounds.
- **Environmental Sustainability**
Increasing access to nature and creating environmentally friendly places, easily reached by walking, biking or transit.
- **Value Creation**
Encouraging additional investments in neighborhoods so that they are better places to thrive.

Cross-sector teams in cities across the U.S. are working to demonstrate that strategic investment in our civic assets is a smart approach to addressing the multiple crises we face.

The outcomes orientation is what defines this work.

Reimagining
the Civic Commons

Measuring the Civic Commons

Reimagining the Civic Commons is a three-year, national initiative that seeks to foster engagement, equity, environmental sustainability and economic development by revitalizing and connecting public places such as parks, plazas, trails and libraries.



Using Data to Illustrate Impact

As we invest in connected sets of public places around the country, we recognize the importance of demonstrating—with data—the outcomes of a reimagined civic commons.

We've designed a measurement system to analyze the impacts of these investments on the sites and in surrounding communities and to track progress toward our four main goals.

This data-driven approach offers a new method for demonstrating the health and vitality of our public places, and the communities in which we live.

Goal: Civic Engagement

Signal: Public Life

| Metric | Description | Source |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Population density | Number of people living in the area | U.S. Census Bureau |
| Population growth | Change in population over time | U.S. Census Bureau |
| Population change | Change in population over time | U.S. Census Bureau |
| Population density | Number of people living in the area | U.S. Census Bureau |
| Population growth | Change in population over time | U.S. Census Bureau |
| Population change | Change in population over time | U.S. Census Bureau |

Signal: Stewardship & Advocacy

| Metric | Description | Source |
|-------------------------------------|---|--------------------|
| Number of stewardship organizations | Number of organizations that focus on stewardship | U.S. Census Bureau |
| Number of stewardship organizations | Number of organizations that focus on stewardship | U.S. Census Bureau |
| Number of stewardship organizations | Number of organizations that focus on stewardship | U.S. Census Bureau |

Signal: Trust

| Metric | Description | Source |
|---------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Trust in government | Level of trust in government | U.S. Census Bureau |
| Trust in government | Level of trust in government | U.S. Census Bureau |
| Trust in government | Level of trust in government | U.S. Census Bureau |

Goal: Socioeconomic Mixing

Signal: Mixing on Site

| Metric | Description | Source |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Population density | Number of people living in the area | U.S. Census Bureau |
| Population growth | Change in population over time | U.S. Census Bureau |
| Population change | Change in population over time | U.S. Census Bureau |

Signal: Reputation

| Metric | Description | Source |
|------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Reputation score | Score based on reputation | U.S. Census Bureau |
| Reputation score | Score based on reputation | U.S. Census Bureau |
| Reputation score | Score based on reputation | U.S. Census Bureau |

Goal: Environmental Sustainability

Signal: Access to Nature

| Metric | Description | Source |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| Number of parks | Number of parks in the area | U.S. Census Bureau |
| Number of parks | Number of parks in the area | U.S. Census Bureau |
| Number of parks | Number of parks in the area | U.S. Census Bureau |

Signal: Ecological Indicators

| Metric | Description | Source |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| Ecological indicators | Indicators of ecological health | U.S. Census Bureau |
| Ecological indicators | Indicators of ecological health | U.S. Census Bureau |
| Ecological indicators | Indicators of ecological health | U.S. Census Bureau |

Signal: Walkability/Bikeability

| Metric | Description | Source |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Walkability/Bikeability | Level of walkability/bikeability | U.S. Census Bureau |
| Walkability/Bikeability | Level of walkability/bikeability | U.S. Census Bureau |
| Walkability/Bikeability | Level of walkability/bikeability | U.S. Census Bureau |

Goal: Value Creation

Signal: Safety

| Metric | Description | Source |
|--------|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| Safety | Level of safety in the area | U.S. Census Bureau |
| Safety | Level of safety in the area | U.S. Census Bureau |
| Safety | Level of safety in the area | U.S. Census Bureau |

Signal: Retail Activity

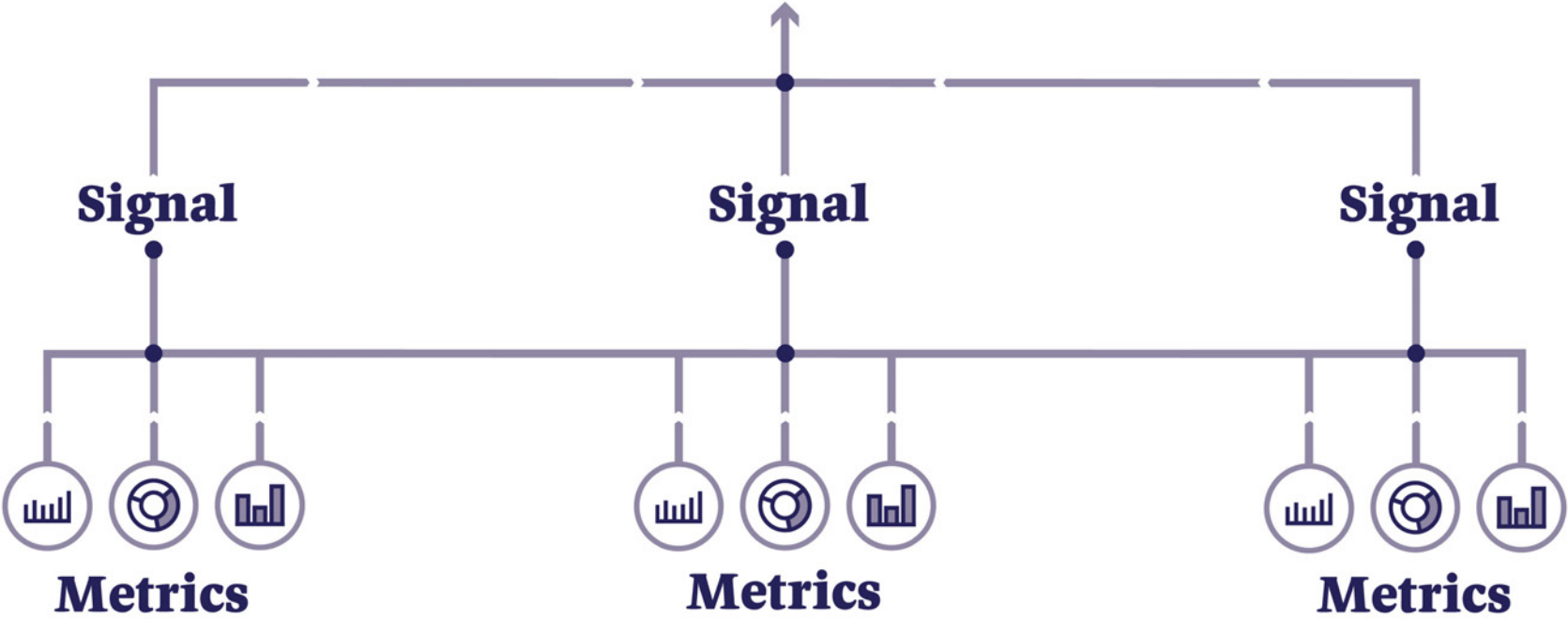
| Metric | Description | Source |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Retail activity | Level of retail activity in the area | U.S. Census Bureau |
| Retail activity | Level of retail activity in the area | U.S. Census Bureau |
| Retail activity | Level of retail activity in the area | U.S. Census Bureau |

Signal: Real Estate Value & Affordability

| Metric | Description | Source |
|---------------------------------|--|--------------------|
| Real estate value/affordability | Value and affordability of real estate | U.S. Census Bureau |
| Real estate value/affordability | Value and affordability of real estate | U.S. Census Bureau |
| Real estate value/affordability | Value and affordability of real estate | U.S. Census Bureau |

Reimagining the Civic Commons designed a practical measurement system to analyze the impacts of investments in public spaces and in surrounding communities, and to track progress over time. This data-driven approach offers a new method for determining the multifaceted value of reinvesting in civic assets.

Goal



Metrics

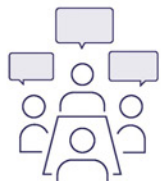
Metrics

Metrics

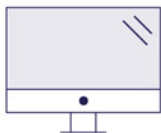
The metrics are organized by the four main goals of Reimagining the Civic Commons: Civic Engagement, Socioeconomic Mixing, Environmental Sustainability and Value Creation.

Within each goal are three to four signals: real-world indicators that relate to the project's overarching objectives. Each signal is associated with one or more metrics designed to measure change on everything from diversity of visitors to tree canopy to perceptions of a neighborhood.

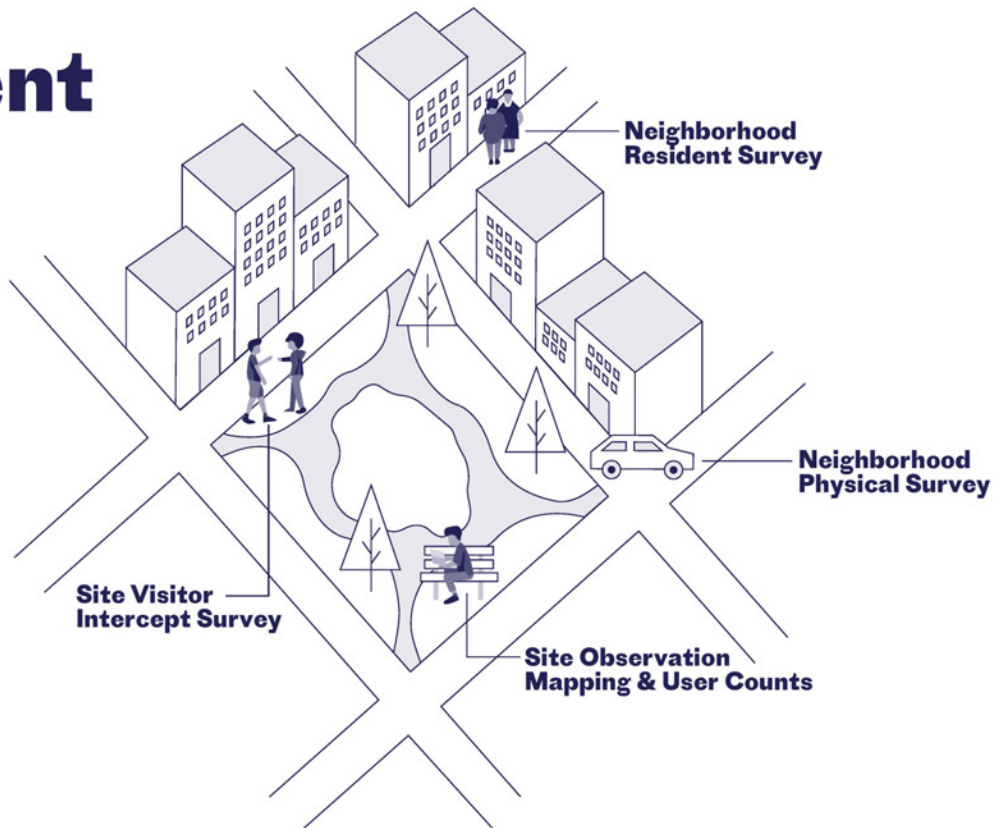
Measurement Tools



**Neighborhood
Focus Groups**



**Third Party
Research**



The following measurement tools are deployed for data collection:

- **Site Visitor Intercept surveys:** Surveys conducted at the project site with people who are engaging with the place
 - **Neighborhood surveys:** Surveys conducted with a sample of community members in a specific neighborhood
 - **Observation mapping:** Visual assessments of how people engage with civic assets
 - **Physical survey:** Visual assessments of the physical conditions of civic assets and surrounding neighborhoods
 - **Neighborhood focus groups:** Qualitative understanding of civic assets of focus and neighborhood conditions via facilitated small group discussions
 - **Third-party data analysis:** Assessment of data collected by outside organizations, such as the U.S. Census
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Ambition

Detroit Civic Commons Work is centered in the Fitzgerald neighborhood on the city's northwest side. The team set out with the ambition of transforming vacant residential lots, commercial storefronts, and streets into new infrastructure that promotes enhanced quality of life, economic opportunity, and social connectivity. Through a seven-year process they have taken vacant land, homes and businesses, and transformed them into neighborhood assets.

Participation and involvement with the national Civic Commons Learning Network has helped to stabilize and establish deep working relationships on the ground and has fostered a new collaborative working model for participating organizations.

By investing in the social infrastructure first, through many community-based activities and a neighborhood-led planning framework, the Detroit team has built the relationships necessary to sustain its work for the long term.

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Timeline

As Detroit emerged from municipal bankruptcy in 2013, and private investment flowed to the city center (Downtown and Midtown) Detroit's Mayor established the Strategic Neighborhood Fund (SNF) around 2015, at the same time, the Live6 Alliance was established. Livernois-McNichols, where the Civic Commons Project is located was designated as one of the first three geographies to receive additional investment to support neighborhood stabilization and growth via SNF.

This coupled with funding from Reimagining the Civic Commons led to the development of the Fitzgerald Revitalization Project which was spearheaded by the City's Planning and Development Department who served as the initial convener of this work. Through a community-informed design process, Ella Fitzgerald Park and Greenway, and Neighborhood Home Base were planned, designed and built, as the first new network of Civic Commons assets.

Summer 2018: **Ella Fitzgerald Park opens**

2019: **Live6 Alliance opens Neighborhood HomeBase**
Ella Fitzgerald Greenway opens

2021-22: **New streetscapes on Livernois and W. McNichols are completed**

2022: **New commercial development projects begin to open**

**With the first being the Detroit Pizza Bar*

Now the team is working to establish models for operating, maintaining, and programming these new neighborhood amenities, as well as planning for the next round of capital projects which include new housing development and additional commercial corridor interventions.



Ella Fitzgerald Park

Before

After



Ella Fitzgerald Park

Ella Fitzgerald Park is the result of repurposing 27 vacant lots of land in the heart of the neighborhood into a 2.5-acre city owned and operated park. The project was informed by the desires of the neighbors and includes: a standard sized full basketball court, ample outdoor picnic/play areas, BBQ pits, public outdoor pavilion, and public art installations

The Ella Fitzgerald Park Conservancy which is comprised of residents and block club leaders now works to program and maintain the park on a routine basis.



Ella Fitzgerald Greenway

Before

After

Ella Fitzgerald Greenway

To create the Ella Fitzgerald Greenway an additional 50+ vacant lots in the neighborhood were repurposed. The Greenway is an outdoor 2-way walking and bike path that connects the park to the nearby University of Detroit Mercy campus and to Marygrove Conservancy campus. It further alleviates the issue of extra-long city blocks in the Fitzgerald neighborhood and connects to new mobility infrastructure along Livernois and McNichols, including bike lanes.

Live6 and the City of Detroit are further discussing future connectivity to the greater Joe Louis Greenway, as was the original plan for this greenway. In addition, Live6 is researching a plan for micro-retail activations along the Greenway.



Before

HomeBase



After

HomeBase

Live6 Neighborhood HomeBase is a collaborative concept developed by Live6 Alliance and the Detroit Collaborative Design Center with financial support from The Kresge Foundation. The team completed the \$900,000 renovation of this storefront space on W. McNichols, with Live6 as the owner/operator.

The goal for the property was to become a neighborhood design center and satellite office for key partners and opened its doors in 2019. Currently HomeBase hosts over 100 events annually, including meetings, private events, rentals, presentations and more, attracting over 2,000 unique visits annually. HomeBase also serves as the main office for Live6 Alliance staff.



McNichols Commercial Corridor

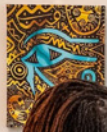
Before

After

McNichols Commercial Corridor

The McNichols corridor underwent an infrastructure overhaul in order to create an environment that supports a more walkable and dense business environment. A 2-way cycle track, new sidewalks, bus islands and shelters, a protected parking lane and improved street and pedestrian scale lighting were completed in 2022. These improvements were made by the City of Detroit and funded through the mayor's road bond.

Live6 is working to sustain a number of programmatic streetscape enhancements which includes clean and safe services, annual events, and new wayfinding and signage that is being co-developed with local neighborhood associations and block club groups.



Holiday on Site Price List



Detroit Civic Commons Team

The Detroit Civic Commons team is diverse in experience, career trajectory and insights. It has intentionally and continuously included neighborhood residents in the planning and design process every step of the way. They have developed mini-grant programs to support resident-led ideas and programs, hired locally to support data collection efforts, and have hosted over 500 community engagement meetings and events.

The Live6 Alliance currently staffs 9 individuals to sustain this work, 7 of whom are local to the area and provide a wealth of knowledge and expertise related to community voice and vision.

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Period of study:

2017 - 2023

In 2017, the Detroit Civic Commons team, with technical assistance from the Civic Commons Learning Network and Interface Studio used the Measuring the Civic Commons framework to collect baseline data on the Fitzgerald neighborhood.

These same metrics were collected again in 2023, using the same methodology (available as an appendix) in order to understand the impact of the investments on the sites and the surrounding neighborhood over a 7-year period.

Recognizing that the impact of the work spans years, if not decades, the following presentation highlights evidence of change over the study period of 2017 – 2023.

We encourage local stakeholders to consider measuring again in 2027 to capture the 10-year story of change.

**Note: Due to well-known abnormalities in the 2020 Census data, we did not provide comparisons on any Census-based metrics at this time. Any Census data referenced in this report is ACS 2015-2019 to avoid questionable data.*



Goal: Civic Engagement

Signal:

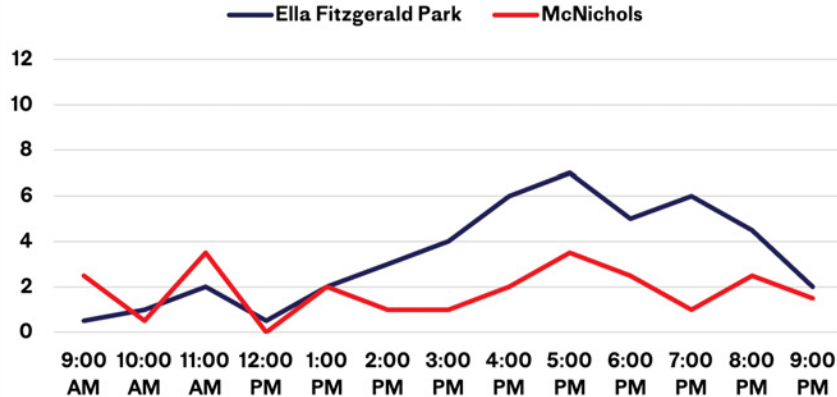
Public Life



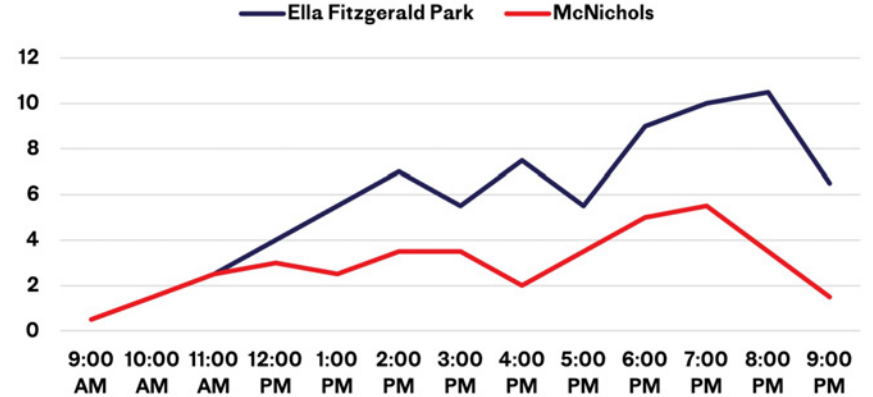
Goal: Civic Engagement

Civic commons visitorship

Weekday Average Visitorship by Hour



Weekend Average Visitorship by Hour



Overall, the levels of public life in Fitzgerald have improved significantly since 2017. Ella Fitzgerald Park has become a well-used public space in the neighborhood, particularly in the afternoon and early evening hours.

Throughout the weekend and weekdays, from 9am till 9pm, there is typically always someone in the park, whereas previously, there was no public recreational space where people could gather at any time of day. During the week, usership peaks in the evening, when you may find about half a dozen people around the park. And during the weekend, park usership roughly doubles, with many people sticking around late into the evening.

According to Placer.ai, on average in 2023 Ella Fitzgerald Park saw visitorship of 516 people per week, with the park's weekly visitorship surpassing 1,000 people 9 separate weeks of the year.

McNichols still has room to grow. While its everyday foot traffic is still quite low, it is seeing an ability to draw people both from the neighborhood and well beyond through programming and events.

*Note: Placer.ai tracks cell phones, so its data only captures visitors who carry a phone. The weekly counts are likely undercounting children, in particular.



Together We Thrive



Regular programming of the sites

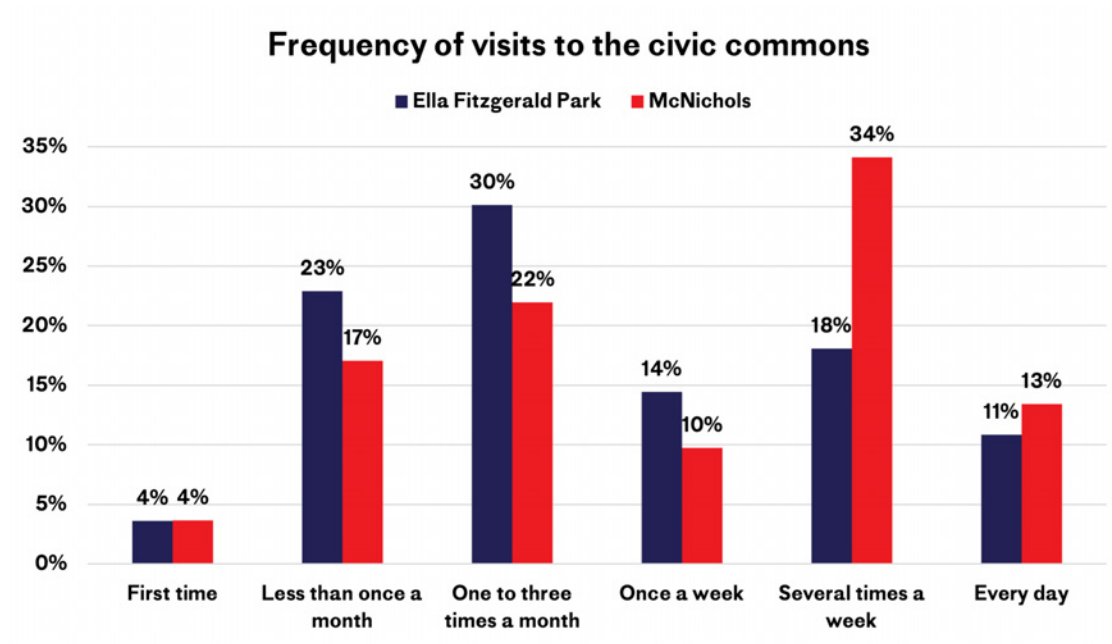
↑ 10 hrs

Programming of the sites increased from zero hours of regularly occurring programming at baseline to an average of 10 hours of public programming per week across the sites.

Goal: Civic Engagement

Visitors who go weekly or more often

50%



Overall, 50% visitors to Ella Fitzgerald Park and McNichols visit the sites weekly or more frequently.

About 4 in 10 visitors say they visit Fitzgerald Park once a week or more. While about 3 in 10 say they visit several times a week or even every day.

Meanwhile about 6 in 10 visitors say they frequent McNichols Street once a week or more, with nearly half saying they visit several times a week or even every day.



Spend at least 30 minutes at the
park each visit

90%

And people are lingering: 90% site visitors in Ella Fitzgerald Park spend at least 30 minutes at the park each visit.



Spend at least 30 minutes on
McNichols each visit

77%

And a similar story for McNichols where 77% of visitors say they spend at least 30 minutes each time – a 21 percentage point increase since 2018.



Fitzgerald residents who visit a public place **↑ 30% pts**
at least once a week

In addition, Fitzgerald residents are out enjoying public space more frequently with 71% of neighborhood residents visiting a public place such as a park, library or community center at least once a week – up a whopping 30 percentage points since 2017.



Overall, public life in the neighborhood appears to have improved throughout the study period. Showing the results of investing in the public realm and its programming encourages people to spend more time out in their neighborhood and beyond.

“My favorite shared space is actually down the street from me. I stay closer to McNichols, there’s vacant lots sitting between two houses. And I love that space because I see parties and so many different things happening on the spot in that shared space. People are still using it to play horseshoes.” –Neighborhood Resident



Goal: Civic Engagement

Signal:

Stewardship & Advocacy





Participation in stewardship or advocacy efforts

87%

People are also caring about the public realm of the neighborhood. The overwhelming majority of site visitors (87%) said they had participated in stewardship or advocacy efforts, up 25 percentage points since 2018. 62% reported that they've picked up a piece of litter in the sites and nearly 1 in 3 visitors said they have volunteered a couple of hours or more per year for public place improvement in the Fitzgerald neighborhood.

*"If I'm talking about being optimistic in what we can do as a group, what we can do as a neighborhood, I'm optimistic in that."
-Neighborhood Resident*



Importance of Ella Fitzgerald Park to
them, the community or the city

90 - 100%

It is almost unanimous among site visitors who say Ella Fitzgerald Park is important to them (98%), to their community (100%) and to their city (90%).



Importance of McNichols to
them, the community or the city

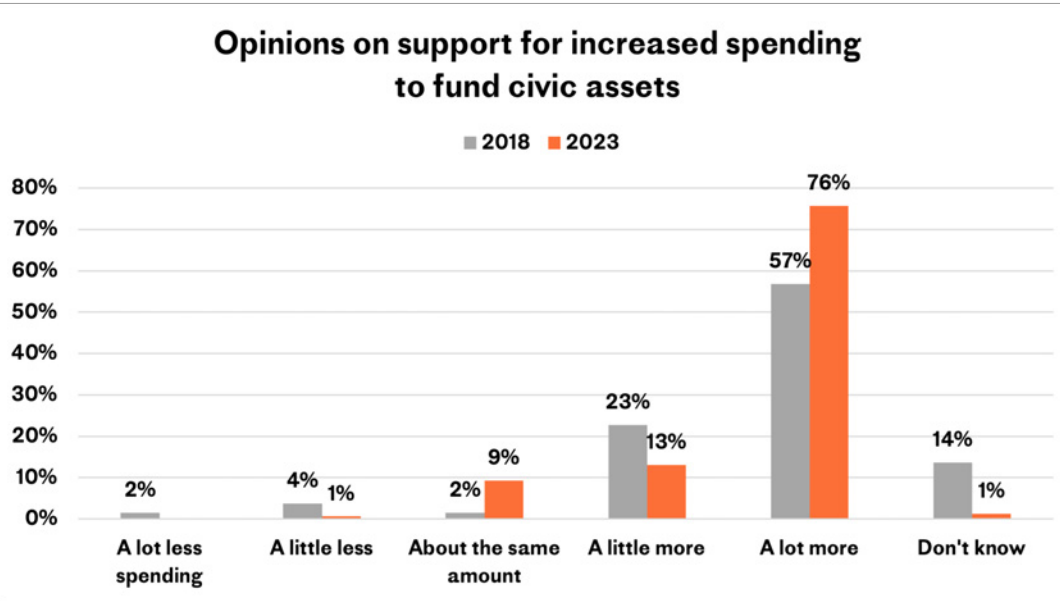
95 - 99%

McNichols is seen similarly: Important to them (96%), to their community (99%) and to their city (95%).

Goal: Civic Engagement

Support for spending on the civic commons (2018 vs. 2023)

89%



At the same time, an increasing portion of site visitors are supportive of more government funding of the civic commons. Nearly 9 in 10 now say that they support increased government spending on these types of assets (89% up from 80% in 2018), and there was a 19 percentage point increase in the proportion of site visitors who said they support “a lot more spending” on civic assets.

“I think there's upward mobility, and it might just come from the fact that the city is pouring in a lot of resources and connecting them to Block Clubs. So there's a lot now that people can actually see and feel the results of what they're doing. As opposed to hoping for something for 10 years and maybe getting it. Now, it's like no, call this person right now, it's in motion.” –Neighborhood Resident



Goal: Civic Engagement

Signal:

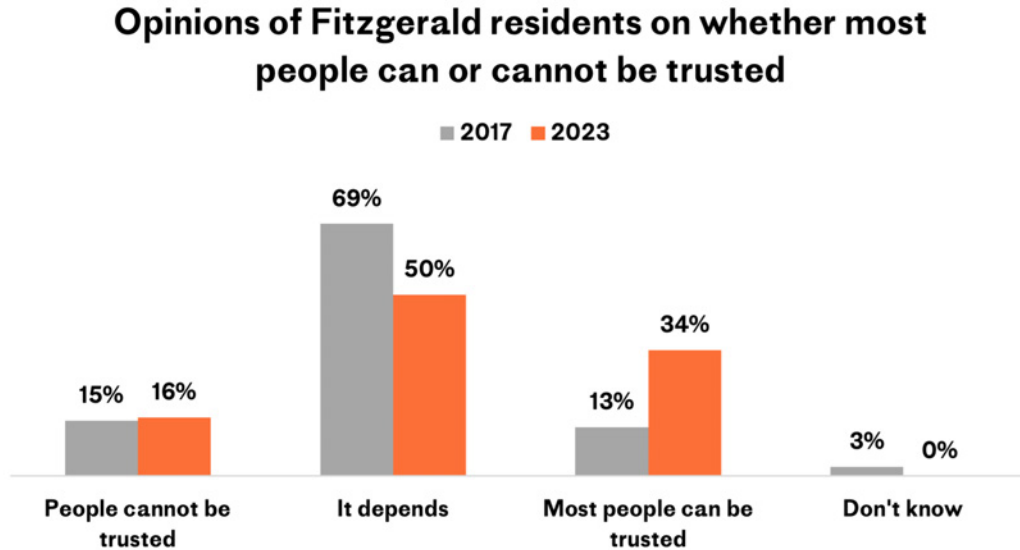
Trust



Goal: Civic Engagement

Fitzgerald residents who say most people can be trusted (2017 vs. 2023)

↑ 21% pts



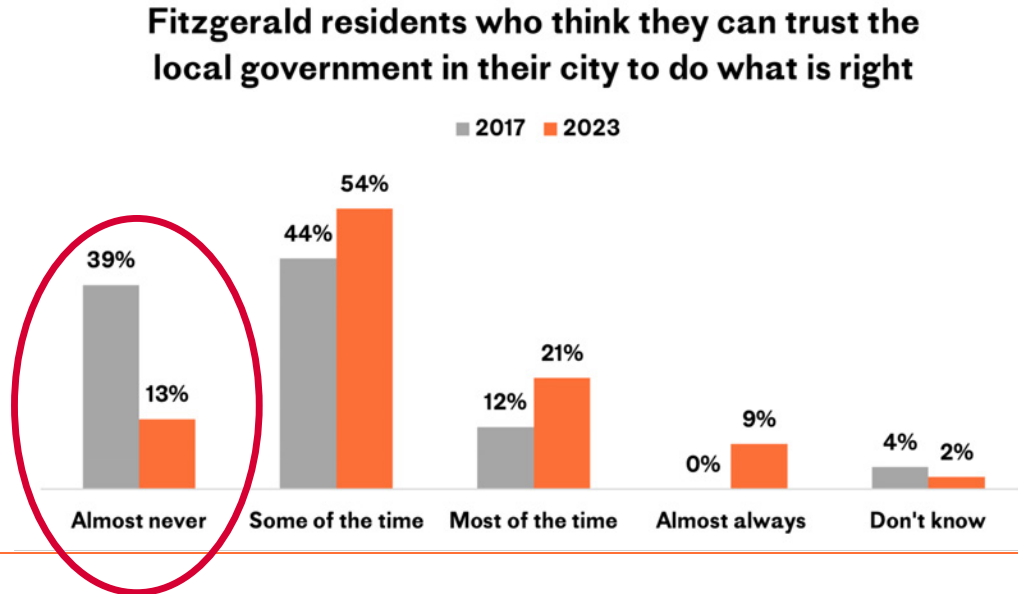
The Fitzgerald neighborhood saw improvements in sentiments of trust over the study period. This was seen for both trust in others and trust in local government.

In fact, neighborhood residents who say that most people can be trusted nearly tripled from from just 13% to 34%.

Goal: Civic Engagement

Fitzgerald residents who say local government can be trusted (2017 vs. 2023)

↑ 18% pts



At the same time these neighbors trust local government more as well – with the percent of residents who think they can trust the local government in their city to do what is right almost always or most of the time more than doubled from 12% to 30%. And particularly powerful is the drop in those who said local government can almost never be trusted – falling from 39% in 2017 to just 13% in 2023.



These stats are an impressive departure from the national headlines on the trajectory of trust, and the impact of the pandemic on trust in government. Reconfirming the importance of investing in the public realm in neighborhoods in ways that actively engage residents in the work.

“As far as trusting the organization, it all depends on who’s running it. And also, if they show an interest in this community, you know, not just passing through, if they really want to put their hands to the plow.” –Neighborhood Resident

“I would say definitely, we got a great set of people in leadership who actually do care about people.” –Neighborhood Resident



Goal: Socioeconomic Mixing

Signal:

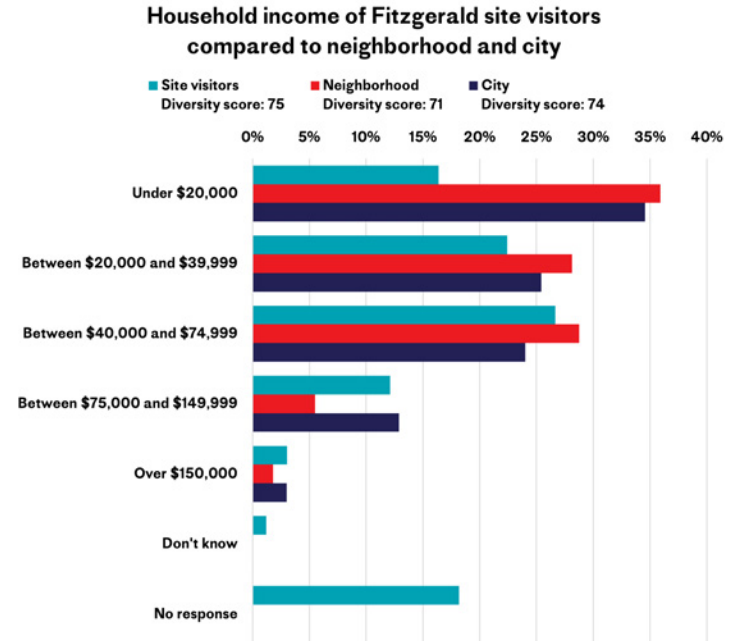
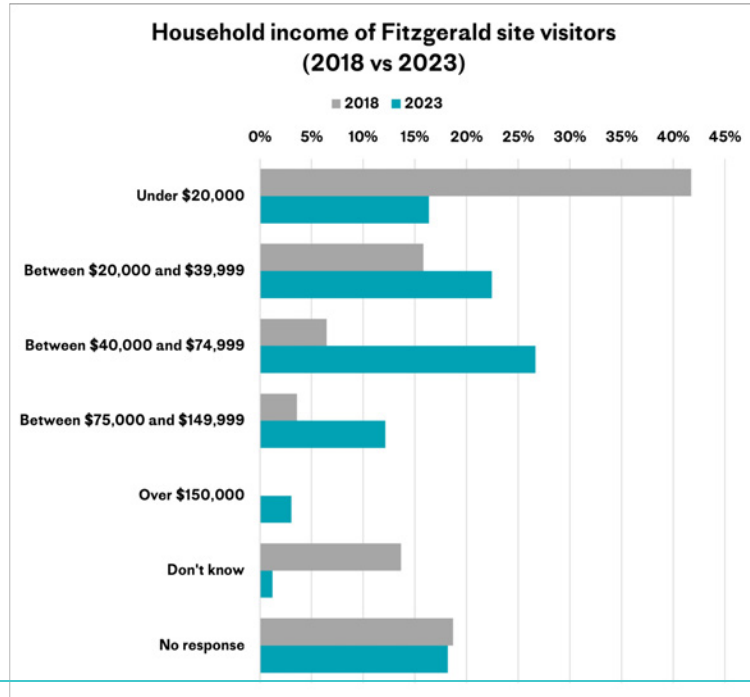
Mixing on Site



Goal: Socioeconomic Mixing

Income diversity of site visitors

75/80



The income diversity of site visitors to Ella Fitzgerald Park and McNichols commercial corridor has increased significantly from 2018 to 2023. The maximum for this index is 80, and a score of 75 indicates that the sites are more diverse in terms of income than the neighborhood and the city as a whole.

This means that the likelihood of any two random people in the sites being from different income groups is very high, reflecting a new ability for these assets to attract a growing proportion of middle and upper income visitors. Note: McNichols corridor visitors skew higher income compared to Ella Fitzgerald Park visitors, but neither are dominated by any single income group.

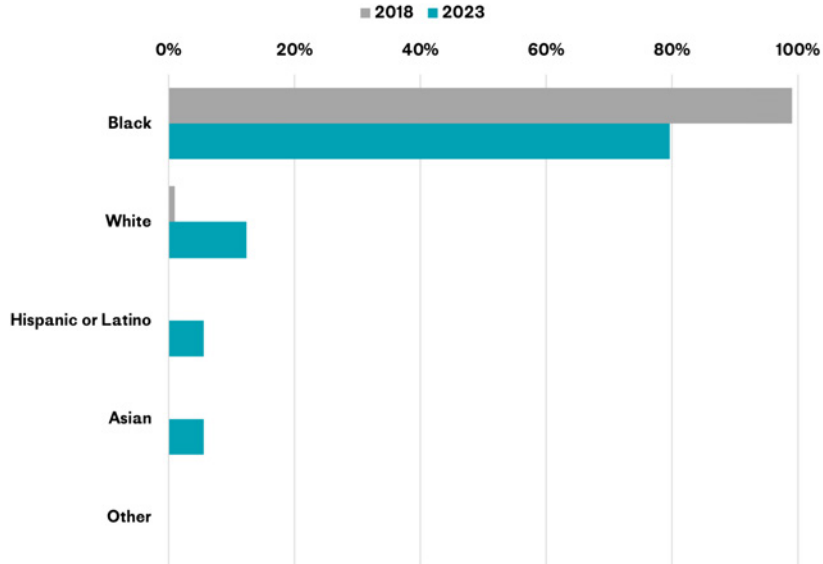
*Note: Using ACS 2019 5-year data for neighborhood and city demographics due to 2020 Census data peculiarities

Goal: Socioeconomic Mixing

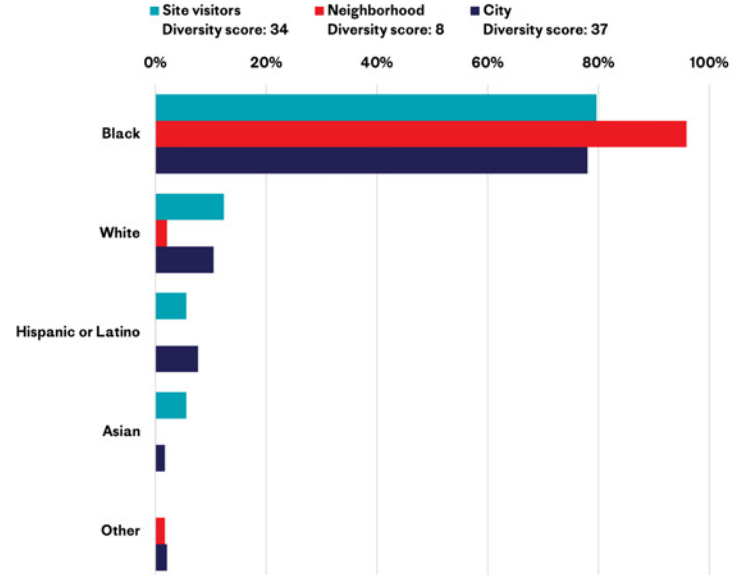
Racial and ethnic diversity of site visitors

34/80

Race and ethnicity of Fitzgerald site visitors
(2018 vs 2023)



Race and ethnicity of Fitzgerald site visitors
compared to neighborhood and city



The racial diversity of the sites has also increased since 2018. While the majority of visitors continue to be Black, the proportion of white, Hispanic or Latino and Asian visitors have all increased from basically 0% to between 6 and 12%. McNichols visitors are more racially diverse than Ella Fitzgerald Park visitors. The current mix is fairly representative of the city's overall racial diversity.

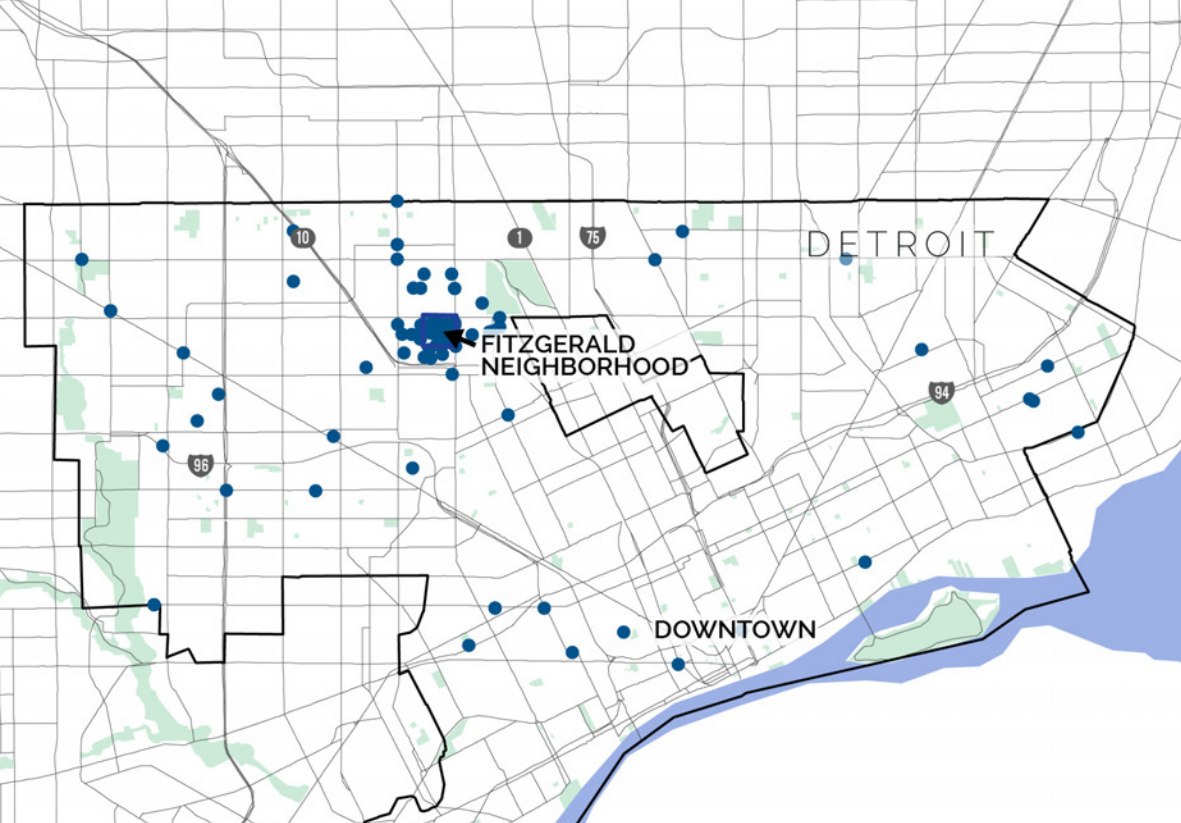
*Note: Using ACS 2019 5-year data for neighborhood and city demographics due to 2020 Census data peculiarities



Citywide site
visitorship

51%

Those coming to the Fitzgerald sites more closely mirror the City of Detroit's overall population, as these assets have become welcoming to those who live in other parts of the city. In fact, the proportion of visitors who live outside of the neighborhood has doubled in recent years to 51%.



Zip codes of visitors to Ella Fitzgerald Park
and McNichols

16

In fact, these sites are seeing people coming from 16 different zip codes across the city. This may also indicate a lack of quality parks and commercial corridors in other parts of the city.



Goal: Socioeconomic Mixing



Signal:

Bridging Social Capital



Ella Fitzgerald Park visitors within
conversational distance of one another

↑ 30% pts

Along with gathering a wider mix of people, Ella Fitzgerald Park and McNichols have seen increases in opportunities for impromptu interactions. The park more than doubled (from 28% to 58%) the proportion of site visitors who are within conversational distance of one another.

McNichols also saw this bump up to 28% in 2023 from 21% in 2018.

So not only are you gathering a diverse group of Detroiters together, the sites are encouraging people to connect based on their design and programming.



Opportunities for meeting new people in
the civic commons sites

82%

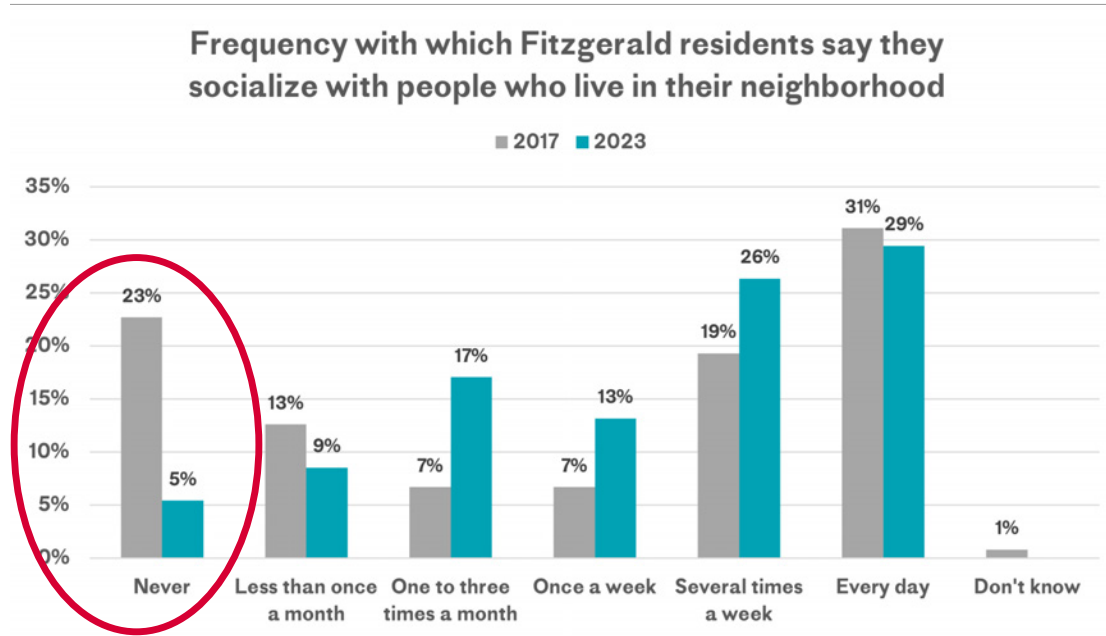


And it is happening – 82% of site visitors say that they have met someone for the first time while in Ella Fitzgerald Park or on McNichols commercial corridor.

Goal: Socioeconomic Mixing

Time spent with neighbors (2017 vs 2023)

69%



Additionally, neighborhood residents are connecting with one another more often. In 2017, more than 1 out of 5 (23%) Fitzgerald residents said they never spent time socializing with their neighbors, now only 5% say that's the case. And on the flip side, the proportion who hang out with their neighbors at least once a week has increased 12 percentage points to 69%.



It is inspiring to see this positive shift in neighborhood social behaviors, especially given the loneliness epidemic pointed out by the U.S. Surgeon General in his recent advisory.



Goal: Socioeconomic Mixing

Signal:

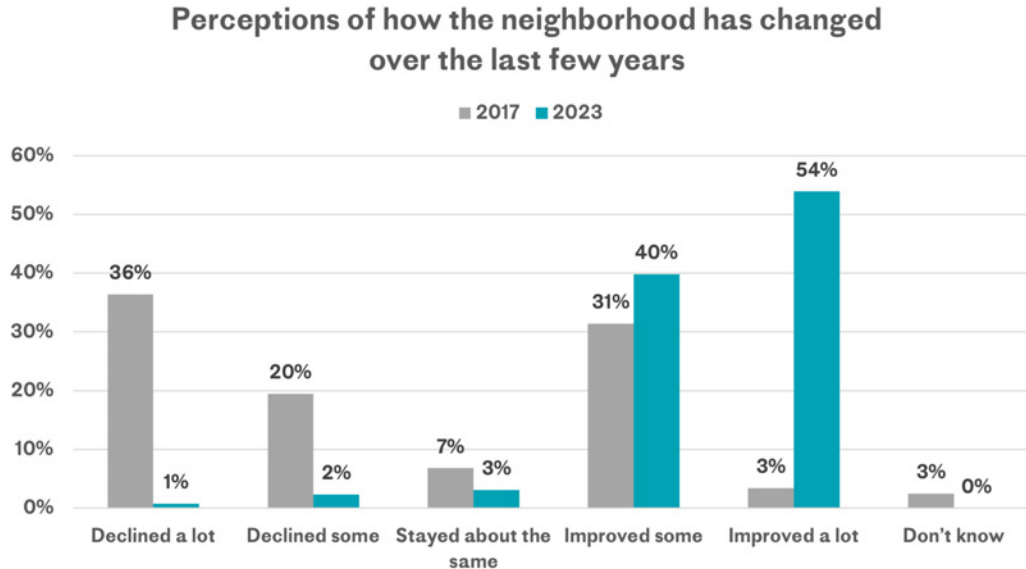
Reputation



Goal: Socioeconomic Mixing

Perceptions of neighborhood change among residents (2017 vs 2023)

↑ 60% pts

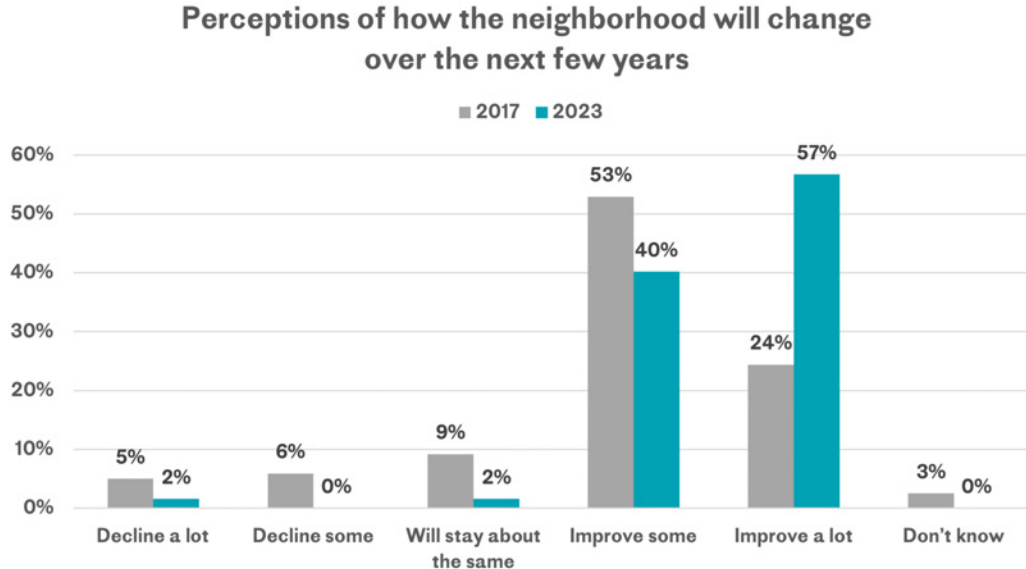


Neighborhood residents are feeling positive about the trajectory of their neighborhood with 94% saying the neighborhood has changed for the better in recent years – up 60 percentage points since 2017.

Goal: Socioeconomic Mixing

Perceptions of the neighborhood's future among residents (2017 vs 2023)

97%



And the overwhelming majority feel particularly hopeful about its future: 97% believe the neighborhood will improve in the next few years (up 20 percentage points since baseline).

Site visitors agree with 89% saying the neighborhood has changed for the better and 88% believing it will continue to improve in the coming years.

Despite COVID-19 and the negative impacts of the pandemic, residents and visitors feel positive about the future of the neighborhood.

'Live 6' promotes rebirth of Livernois and 6 Mile business district

By Ingrid Kelley and David Komer online producer | Published August 11, 2022 | Detroit | FOX 2 Detroit | [↗](#)



Local news articles have positive narrative about sites and the neighborhood



This is also reflected in the larger media coverage as basically all of recent (July 2022-June 2023) local news articles about the sites and nearby neighborhood were positive compared with just 56% during the baseline period.

Though it is important to note that while the recent coverage is positive, there are far fewer stories about the sites and the neighborhood than there was during the interim period of 2017-2019 when there were frequent groundbreaking, ribbon cuttings and the like (the total number of articles is back to level of coverage received in 2015-16 before the project investment started).



Posted on social media or talked to friends
about projects in Fitzgerald

60-65%

Meanwhile, 60% of residents and 65% of site visitors said they posted on social media or talked with friends about projects in the Fitzgerald neighborhood.

People tend to post and talk to their friends about things that are special or interesting, and that they're excited about. This in turn helps support a positive narrative about the Fitzgerald neighborhood.

“[HomeBase] is a place that’s got a lot of energy, and I’m here feeling like dammit, I really should have been holding my class here.”
–University of Detroit Mercy focus group participant



Goal: Socioeconomic Mixing

Signal:

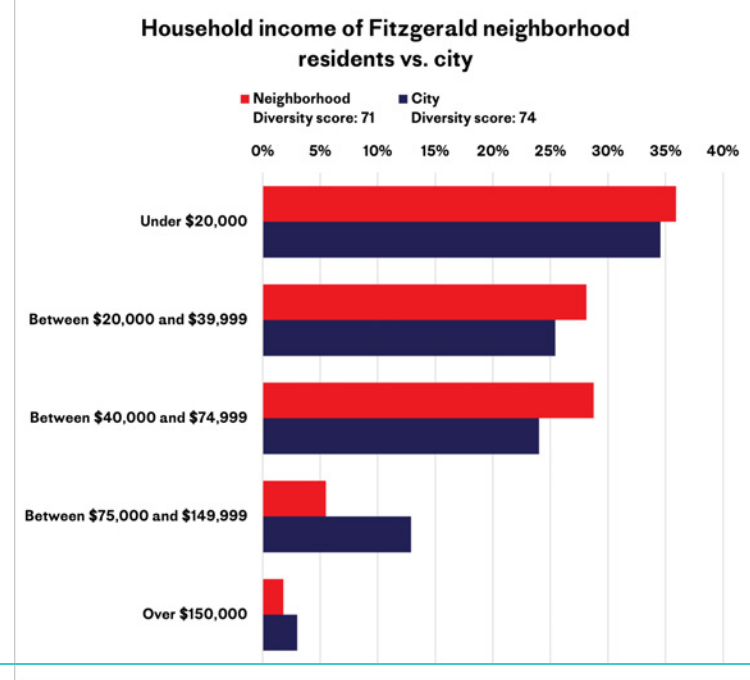
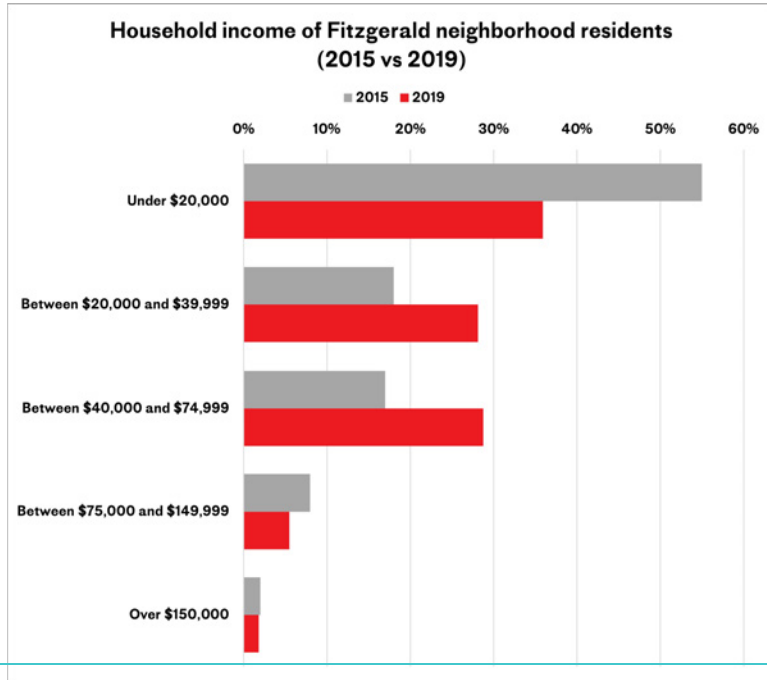
Neighborhood Diversity



Goal: Socioeconomic Mixing

Neighborhood income diversity

71/80



It also appears that the neighborhood has become more diverse in terms of income. From 2015 to 2019 (the last available reliable Census data) its income diversity index increased from 63 to 71, primarily due to an increase in the proportion of households with incomes between \$20,000 - \$75,000 better balancing those with incomes under \$20,000.

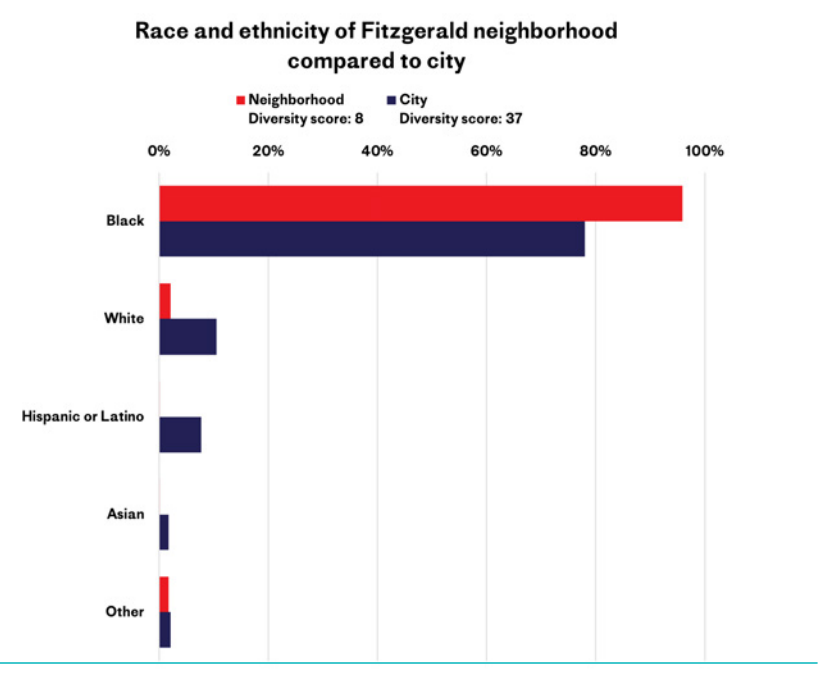
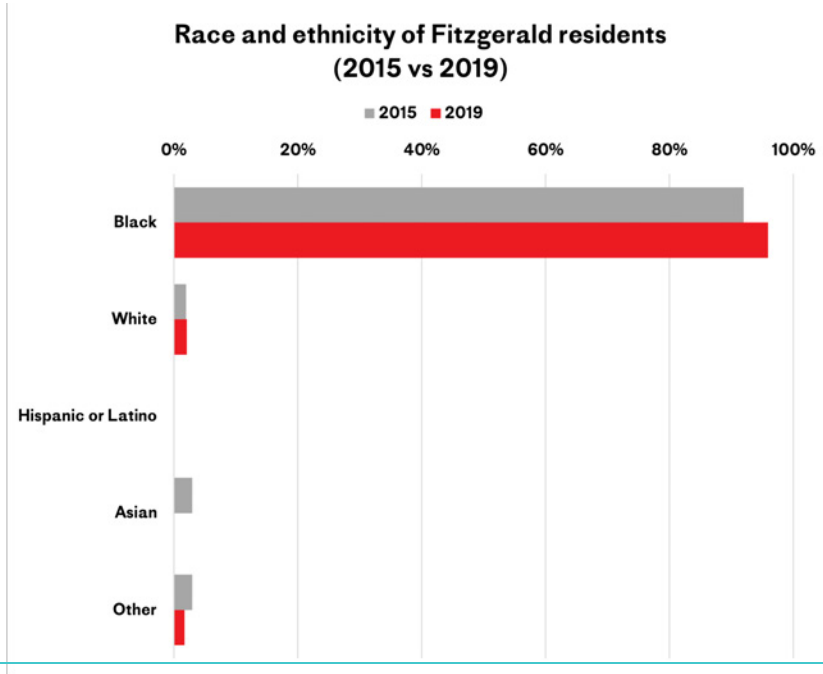
Its income diversity is much closer to the city as a whole, though the proportion of neighborhood households earning above \$75,000 lags behind the city as a whole.

*Note: Using ACS 2019 5-year data for neighborhood and city demographics due to 2020 Census data peculiarities

Goal: Socioeconomic Mixing

Neighborhood racial and ethnic diversity

8/80



At the same time, the racial diversity of the neighborhood has slightly decreased between 2105 and 2019. With Black households remaining the vast majority of the neighborhood.

*Note: Using ACS 2019 5-year data for neighborhood and city demographics due to 2020 Census data peculiarities



If these two trajectories continue it is a good indication that the neighborhood is becoming a better place to thrive, while remaining a solidly Black community.

RESEARCH

Investment without displacement: How a surge of development changed—and didn't change—one Detroit neighborhood

Andre M. Perry and Hannah Stephens

January 24, 2024



Which is exactly what Brookings Institution found in its recent research on the neighborhood.

Brookings research, led by Andre Perry, found that from 2000 through 2020, the Livernois-6 Mile area remained over 90% Black. As of 2020, it retained 41% of legacy residents, and homeownership rates stayed largely unchanged over the study period. Since the onset of investment in 2015, vacancies declined as people moved in, but median income and rent did not spike. At the same time, educational attainment gradually increased over the 20-year period. Overall this indicates that the collaborative investment did not economically or socially displace the residents of Livernois-6 Mile.



Goal: Environmental Sustainability

Signal:

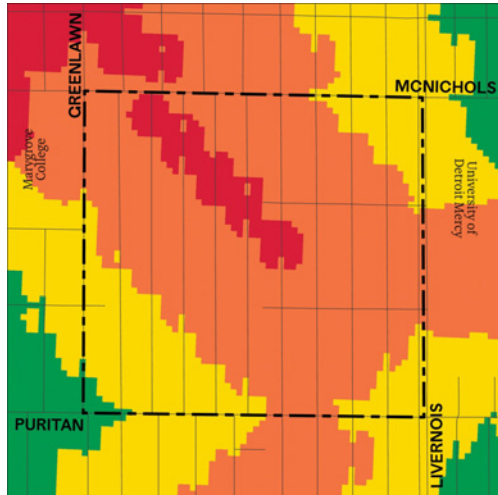
Access to Nature



Goal: Environmental Sustainability

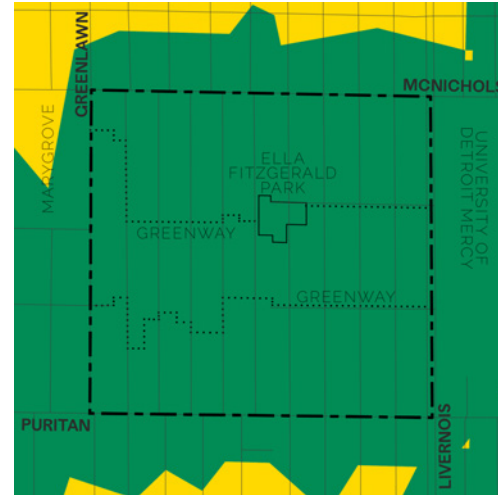
Residents within a half mile walk of a park
or public open space

↑ 76% pts



Within ■ 1/4 ■ 1/2 ■ 3/4 ■ 1 mile walk

▲ 1/4 Mile



Within ■ 1/4 ■ 1/2 ■ 3/4 ■ 1 mile walk

▲ 1/4 Mile

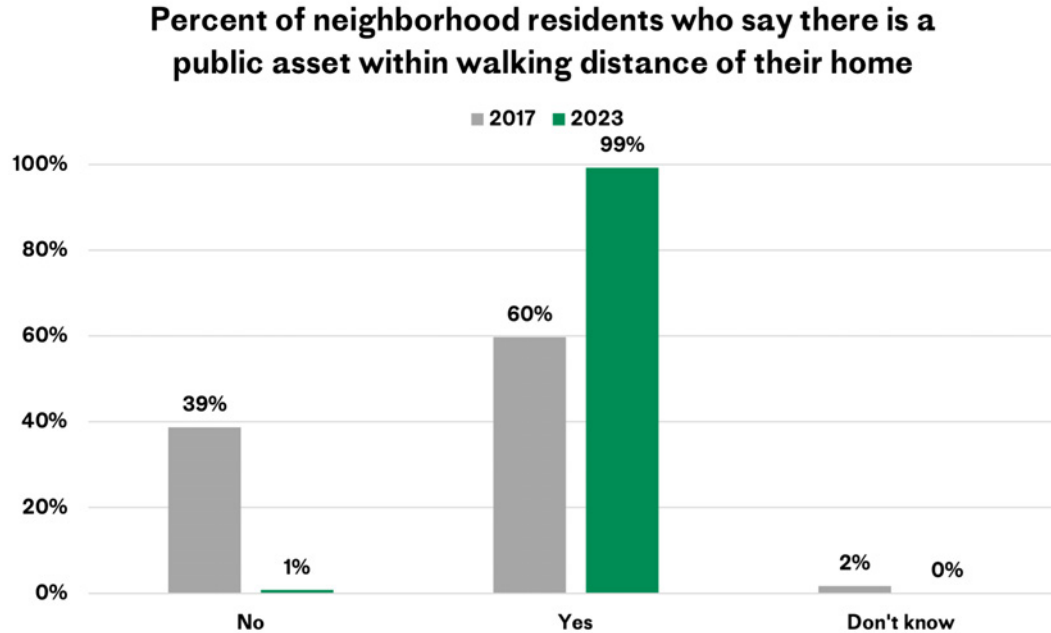
Fitzgerald residents experienced a major shift in access to nature during this period. The creation of Ella Fitzgerald Park and Greenway meant that 100% of residents are within a half mile walk of a park or public open space – more than quadrupling since baseline.

The Greenway is significant for accessibility as it provides an easy way to walk or bike across the neighborhood – mitigating the half-mile long blocks on Greenlawn, Woodingham, Turner, Lilac, San Juan, and Prairie.

Goal: Environmental Sustainability

Resident perception of access to nature

99%



Residents recognize this new accessibility. In 2023, 99% of neighborhood residents surveyed said they live within walking distance of a park, trail, playground or public garden, up 39 percentage points since 2017.



Citywide investment
in parks

↑ 413%

Detroit saw citywide investment in parks and recreation increase five-fold during this period from \$15/resident to \$77/resident. However, this still falls below the national median of \$108/resident averaged over the time period 2021-2023.

**Note: This includes capital investment as well as maintenance & programming.*

PARK INVESTMENT (THREE-YEAR AVERAGE) i

- City agency **\$44 (57%)** i
- Other public agencies **\$0.09 (0%)** i
- Private organizations **\$32.27 (42%)** i
- Monetized volunteer hours **\$0.37 (0%)** i



National benchmark: Relative park spending by organization type

Average among 100 most populous cities

City agency: **85.5%**

Other public agencies: **7%**

Private organizations: **5.5%**

Monetized volunteer hours: **2%**

Total per capita spending: \$108 per person



Also, it is important to note that only 57% of Detroit's investment in parks came from the City's parks and recreation department, while 42% came from private organizations. This varies significantly from the national benchmark of 85.5% of funding coming from the City and only 5.5% from private organizations. This means the City government's current investment in parks falls well below the national benchmark.



Goal: Environmental Sustainability

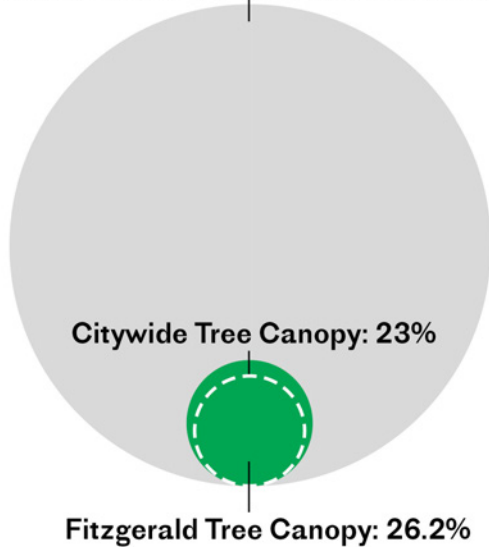
Signal:

Ecological Indicators

Goal: Environmental Sustainability

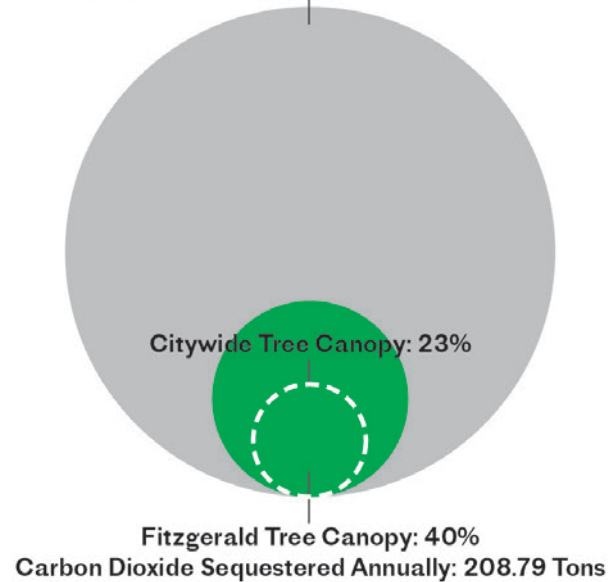
Number of trees in Fitzgerald

Total Fitzgerald Neighborhood Area: 170 Acres



↑ 57%

Total Fitzgerald Neighborhood Area: +/- 170 Acres



Within the Fitzgerald neighborhood the total number of trees has increased by 57% and the estimated tree canopy has increased from 26% to 40%. At full maturity these trees will sequester more than 208 tons of carbon dioxide annually. The Fitzgerald neighborhood is now better shaded than the citywide average.



Perception of street trees by Fitzgerald residents

81%

The perception of street trees among residents also improved during this time period. 81% of residents now say street trees are beneficial to the neighborhood, up 16 percentage points from 2017.



**Green stormwater management
features in square feet**

13,929

The Fitzgerald sites incorporated a number of sustainable materials and features including solar lights at Ella Fitzgerald Park, solar panels at MoFlo Gardens and 13,929 sq ft of stormwater features. In addition, 32,511 gallons of stormwater capacity were added to the sites from the newly planted trees (calculation based on trees at full maturity in 20 years).

And there is room to grow in the appreciation of features, such as the vacant lots turned into flowering meadows:

“I think there needs to be some education on what prairies do, because people think they’re weeds. Well, those weeds are actually perennials, and they have a function.” –University of Detroit Mercy focus group member



Goal: Environmental Sustainability

Signal:

Walkability | Bikeability





Neighborhood walking
infrastructure

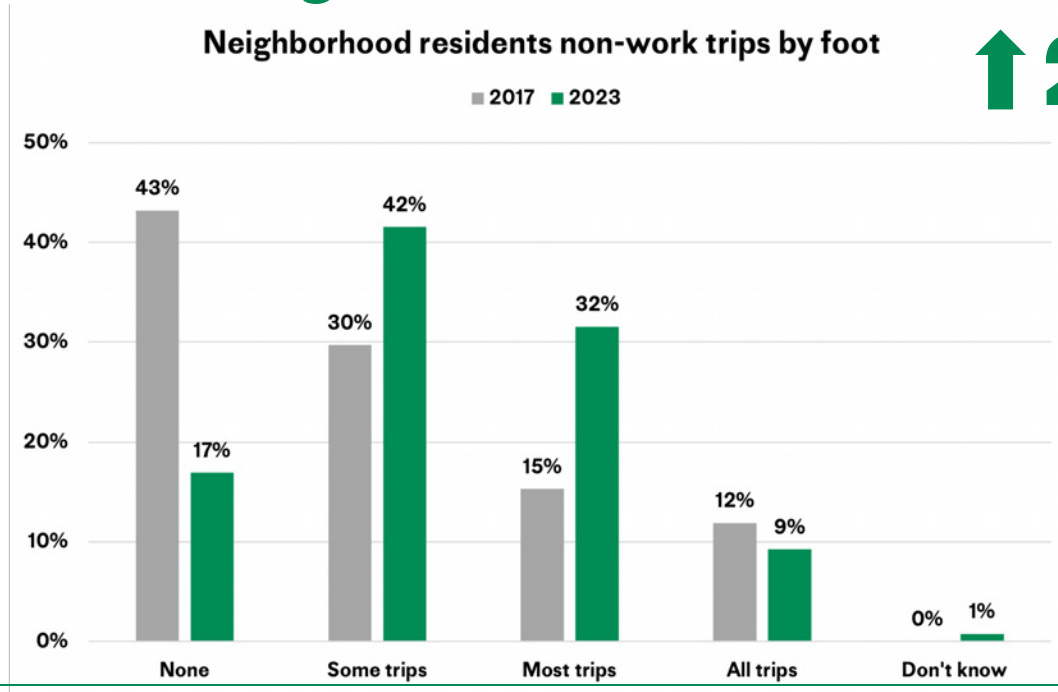
↑ 108%

Both neighborhood walking infrastructure and biking infrastructure improved during the study period with the percent of neighborhood intersections that include controlled pedestrian crossings doubling to more than 50% and the percent of neighborhood street lengths with bike lanes growing from zero to 14%. The streetscape work on McNichols contributed significantly to this increase in walking and biking infrastructure.

Goal: Environmental Sustainability

Neighborhood walking behavior

82%
↑ 25% pts

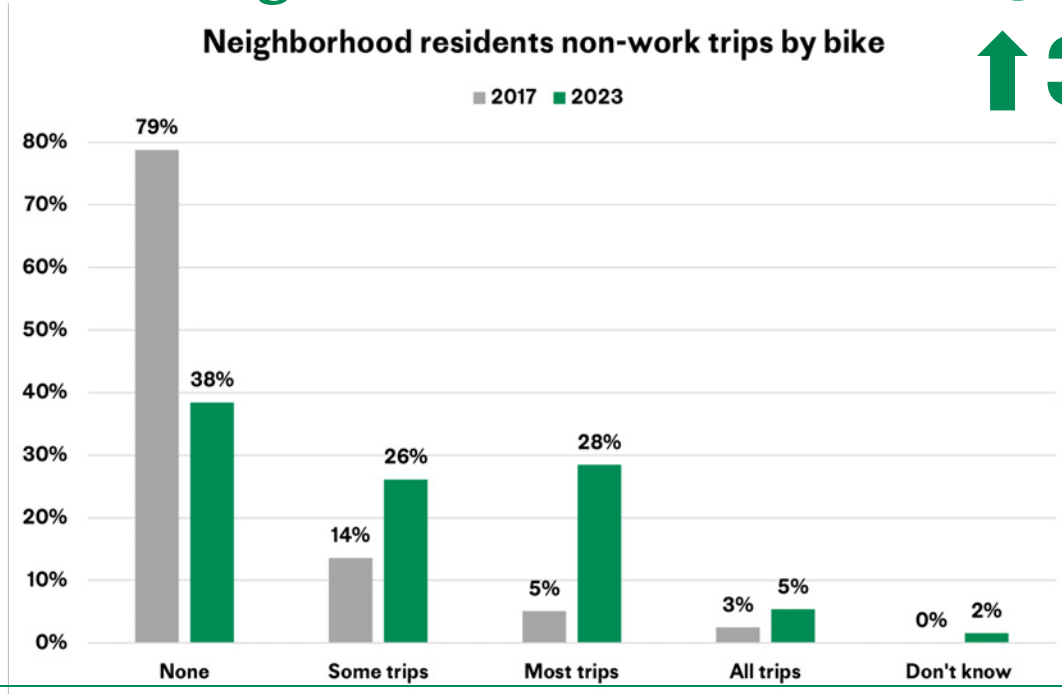


At the same time, walking and biking behavior has increased in the neighborhood with a much larger proportion of neighborhood residents reporting to walk or bike regularly. In fact, 82% of residents report that they complete at least some non-work trips by foot – up 25 percentage points since baseline.

Goal: Environmental Sustainability

Neighborhood biking behavior

60%
↑ 38% pts



While more than half of residents say they take at least some non-work trips by bike, up 38 percentage points since 2017.



Walking, biking and transit access to the
civic commons

56%

It is important to note that a large portion (44%) of visitors surveyed at Ella Fitzgerald Park and McNichols appear to be driving to these sites, which likely demonstrates that while walking and biking behavior have improved within the neighborhood there is a need for greater connectivity – better pedestrian, bike and transit connections – beyond the neighborhood to encourage those from outside of the neighborhood to walk, bike or take transit to the sites.



Goal: Value Creation

Signal:

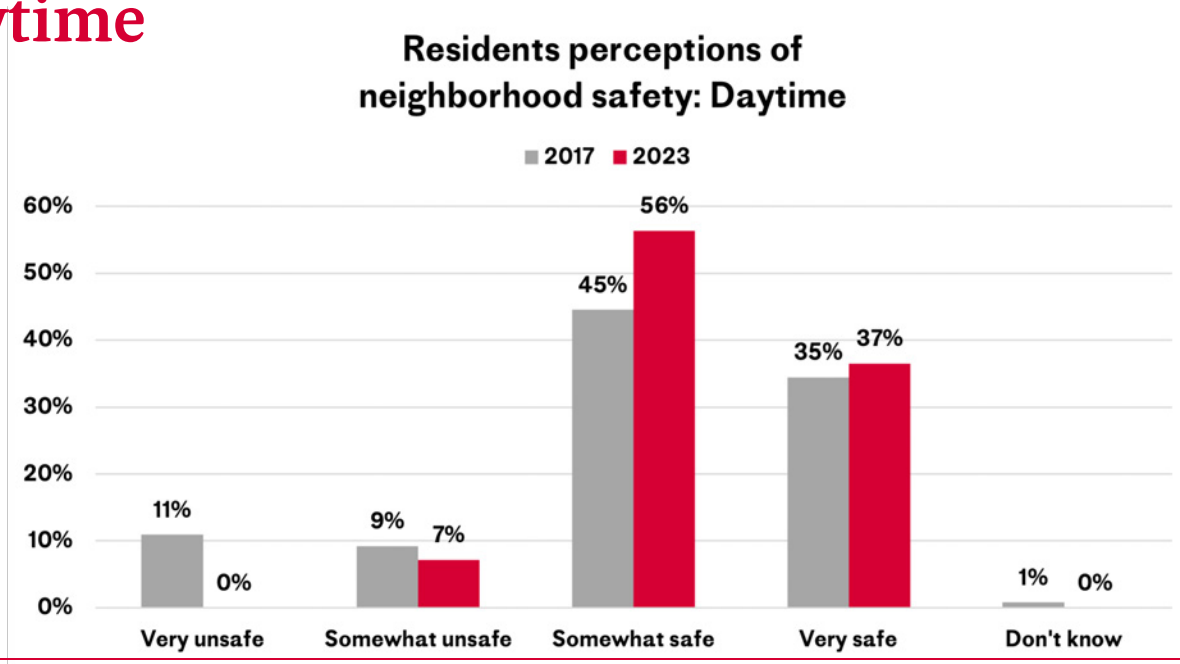
Safety



Goal: Value Creation

Perception of neighborhood safety in the daytime

93%

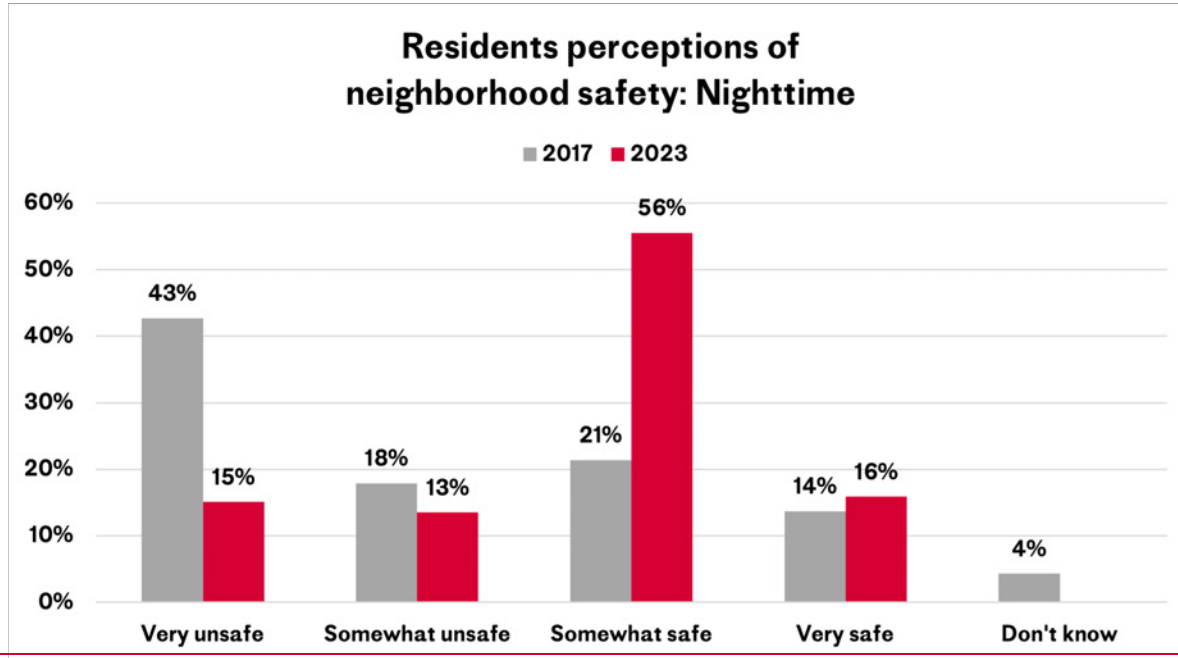


Perceptions of safety in the Fitzgerald neighborhood have seen tremendous growth since 2017. Now 93% of neighborhood residents say they feel safe in the neighborhood during the day (a 13 percentage point increase since baseline).

Goal: Value Creation

Perception of neighborhood safety at night

↑ 36% pts



While 71% say they feel safe in the neighborhood at night – more than doubling from just 35% feeling this way at baseline.

In fact, 43% of Fitzgerald residents stated they felt very unsafe at night in their neighborhood in 2017 and that figure fell to just 15% in 2023. As noted previously, the site visitorship data for Ella Fitzgerald Park showed that people use the park into the night. Not only do folks seem to feel safe doing so, but the fact that more people are out and about makes the neighborhood a safer place.



Given the importance of feeling safe in your own neighborhood, this is a tremendous success of the layered investment and engagement strategy in Fitzgerald.



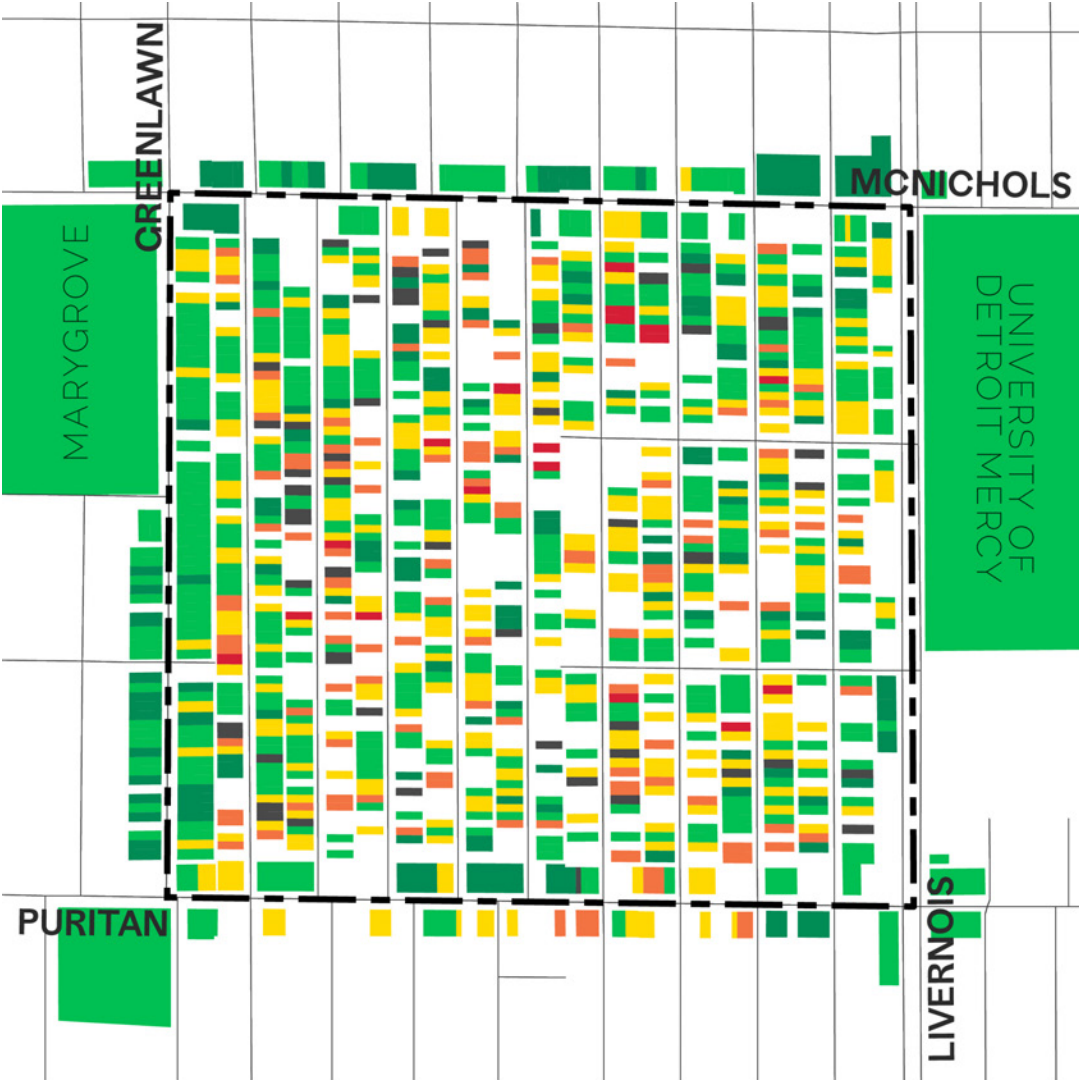
Goal: Value Creation

Detroit Pizza Bar

Signal:

Real Estate





Buildings that appear in good or excellent condition

56%

- A - Excellent
- B - Good
- C - Fair
- D - Poor
- F - Very Poor
- Construction

Throughout the study period, building conditions in Fitzgerald improved with the percent of buildings that appear in good or excellent condition increasing from 52% to 56%.



Typical home values in the Fitzgerald neighborhood

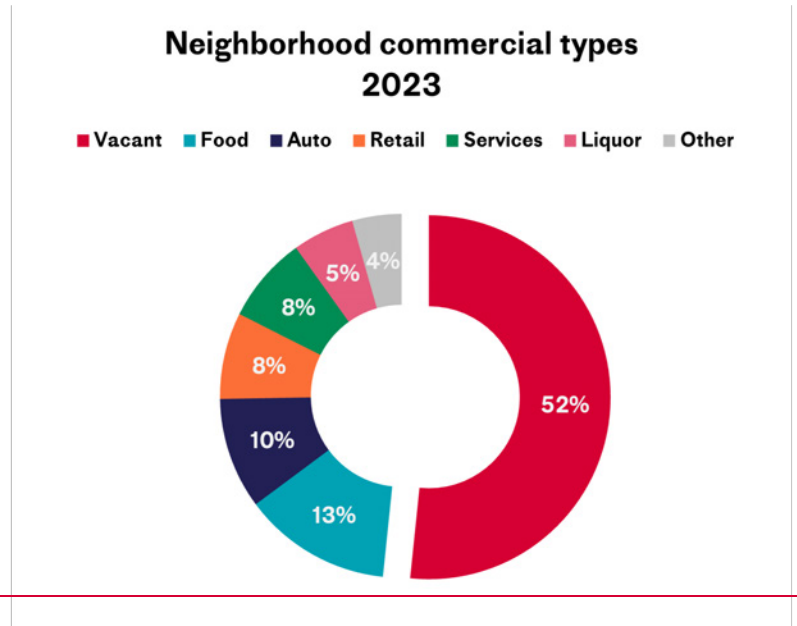
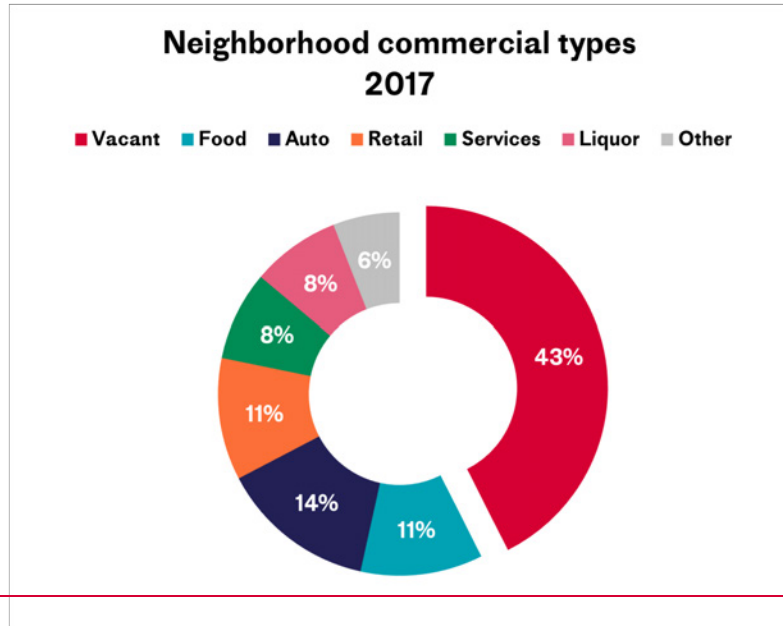
↑ 243%

At the same time, typical home values in the Fitzgerald neighborhood increased by approximately \$61,000 or 243% from June 2015 to June 2022 – outperforming the city as a whole. (During this same time period, typical home values across the city of Detroit increased by approximately \$50,000 or 192%.)

*Note: Data from Zillow, calculated as a weighted average of the middle third of homes in a given geography

Goal: Value Creation

Commercial buildings in the neighborhood **52%**
that appear vacant (2017 vs 2023)



Unfortunately, the commercial corridors (including McNichols, Livernois and Puritan) still have a high rate of buildings that appear vacant at approximately 52% in 2023. This stat is particularly difficult to budge as the study area includes stretches of commercial real estate on Puritan and Livernois that were not addressed through the streetscape work.



However, there is a cluster of positive real estate activity on McNichols, particularly around HomeBase that's improved significantly and several buildings in that area were on the cusp of renovation when the physical survey of the street was completed in November 2022. And that's a smart strategy in this scenario - build a cluster of strength and get a critical mass, not disperse improvements.



Percent of residential properties that appear vacant

18%

Also good news: The percent of residential properties in the neighborhood that appear vacant decreased from 23% to 18%.



**Underutilized land in the
neighborhood**

↓ 48%

And underutilized land in the neighborhood, such as vacant lots or surface parking lots, also decreased by nearly half from 27% to 14% of the parcel area between 2017 and 2023.



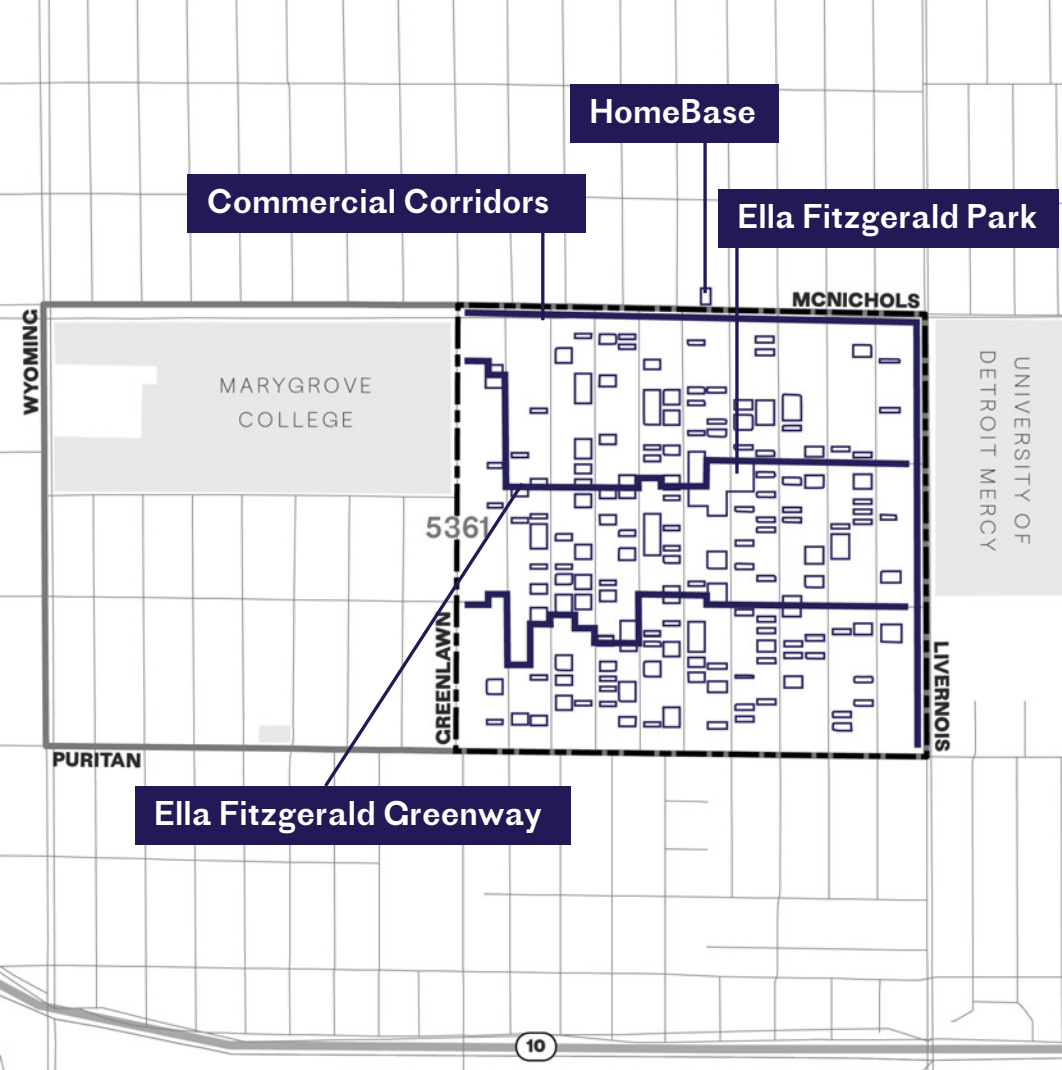
While there is still room for improvement, particularly for filling vacancies on the commercial corridor, the neighborhood as a whole is moving in the right direction in terms of reducing vacancy, improving conditions in the neighborhood and increasing the value of real estate for existing residents.

Neighborhood residents recognize that the neighborhood has changed for the better over the past handful of years and believe the future is bright for Fitzgerald.


Reimagining the Civic Commons Metrics Report - Final

Methodology

Geographic Study Area



 Civic Commons site

 Core study area

 Core Census tracts

 1/2 Mile

Civic Commons Sites

- Ella Fitzgerald Park
- McNichols Commercial Corridor,
- Ella Fitzgerald Greenway
- HomeBase

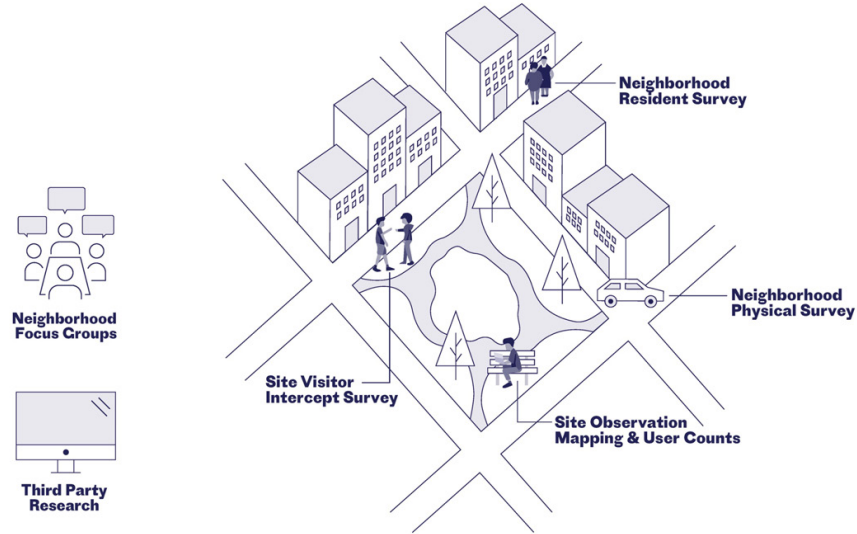
Core Study Area

- Approx. 1/4 mile radius around sites

Census Tract: 5361

Zip Code: 48221

Reimagining the Civic Commons Metrics Report - Final



Data Collection Tools

The following measurement tools were deployed for data collection in Detroit using the methodologies summarized below:

Neighborhood Physical Survey: Visual assessments of the physical conditions of civic assets and surrounding neighborhoods

Neighborhood Resident Survey: Surveys conducted with a sample of community members in a specific neighborhood

Site Visitor Intercept Survey: Surveys conducted at the project site with people who are engaging with the place

Site Observation Mapping & User Counts: Visual assessments of how people engage with civic assets

Third Party Research: Assessment of data collected by outside organizations, such as the U.S. Census

Neighborhood Focus Groups: Qualitative understanding of civic assets of focus and neighborhood conditions via facilitated small group discussions

Reimagining the Civic Commons Metrics Report - Final

Neighborhood Physical Survey

Neighborhood Physical Survey

The physical survey of the Fitzgerald neighborhood was fielded from November 17, 2022 to November, 18, 2022 and recorded conditions at 1,492 parcels. The boundary of the neighborhood used for the physical survey was bounded by McNichols Road to the north, Livernois Avenue to the east, Puritan Avenue to the south, and Greenlawn Avenue to the west. For streets that defined the boundaries of the study, parcel conditions were recorded on both sides of the street centerline. Surveyors collected data on a range of topics, including: land use, building and yard condition, street trees, tree canopy, transportation infrastructure, defensive design measures, and any activity related to sale, construction, or condemnation. The survey was completed by two staff members trained to recognize applicable physical conditions from a windshield survey.

Reimagining the Civic Commons Metrics Report - Final

Neighborhood Resident Survey

Neighborhood Resident Survey

The Fitzgerald Neighborhood Resident Survey was fielded at different times from September 19, 2022 to July 8, 2023 as a door-to-door survey targeting a probability sample of neighborhood households in the area extending from McNichols Road and Greenlawn Ave in the Southwest to Puritan Ave and Livernois Ave in the Northeast. Only one adult respondent from each participating household was surveyed. 131 total respondents completed the survey; though the total number of respondents for each question may vary slightly, as respondents were excluded from the data when they chose not to answer a question, unless otherwise noted. Surveys were conducted primarily during early afternoon and evening hours on weekdays. Surveyors were instructed to approach every other single family or small multi-family residence, and they made up to three attempts to complete a survey at all targeted residences. Surveys were limited to residents over 18 years of age. Individuals were offered the option to enter a raffle for a \$100 gift card as incentive to take the survey.

Site Visitor Intercept Survey

Site Visitor Intercept Survey

The Ella Fitzgerald Park Intercept Survey was fielded from October 12, 2022 to September 27, 2023 at Ella Fitzgerald Park at 16625 Prairie St, Detroit, MI 48221. The McNichols Intercept Survey was fielded from September 19, 2022 to August 20, 2023 on McNichols Road between Pennington Drive and Monica Street. 83 respondents completed the survey for Ella Fitzgerald Park, and 82 respondents completed the survey for McNichols Road; though the total number of respondents for each question may vary slightly, as respondents were excluded from the data when they chose not to answer a question, unless otherwise noted. Surveyors were instructed to approach visitors as they entered the site. Visitors to the sites were offered the option to enter a raffle for a \$100 gift card as an incentive to take the survey. Basic demographic information – including gender, race, and general age – were collected on everyone who surveyors attempted to survey, including those who declined, totaling 86 individuals for Ella Fitzgerald Park and 85 individuals for McNichols Road. Where noted, demographic data in this report includes data on individuals who declined the intercept survey.

Site Observation Mapping & User Counts

Site Observation Mapping & User Counts

Observation mapping was conducted on two weekdays and two weekend days in September 2022 in Ella Fitzgerald Park and on McNichols Road between Pennington Drive and Monica Street. From 9:00 AM until 9:00 PM, at the top of each hour, surveyors walked about Ella Fitzgerald Park and along McNichols Road and marked on observation map worksheets the characteristics and number of people within the sites at the moment the surveyor observed them. Observation mapping data in this report were tabulated using predefined categories that surveyors used to mark down individuals' characteristics. Data for a small number of hours were incomplete; for those times, data was duplicated from equivalent times during the corresponding weekday or weekend day when possible. The final weekday and weekend day observation mapping data presented in this report are average counts from the two weekdays and two weekend days on which data was collected.

Reimagining the Civic Commons Metrics Report - Final

Third Party Research

Third Party Research

A range of third party data sources were collected and analyzed for this report including:

- American Community Survey, 2011-15 | 2015-2019
- Placer.ai, 2023
- Reference USA business database, 2015
- The Trust for Public Land, 2016 | 2023
- Zillow, 2016 | 2023

Regular programming of the civic commons

In order to calculate the average hours of weekly programming per site, staff worked with local demonstration team members to catalogue applicable programming during one sample week from each month between July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023 for each individual site within the civic commons. The totals for each of the 12 weeks were then calculated to produce an average for the year.

Public perceptions of sites and of the neighborhood

For the Fitzgerald neighborhood and its Civic Commons sites, mentions in general circulation papers, identified by Brink Communications, were tracked and identified by whether the article expressed an overall positive or negative sentiment. To track appropriate mentions, a list of keywords was developed relating to each neighborhood and site. A custom Google search was then created for each news publication to catalog local news mentions. Article sentiments were tallied on a monthly basis. Tabulation was first automated through the artificial intelligence platform ChatGPT, with each result checked by a member of our team who is familiar with the sites and neighborhood. The number of positive mentions was divided by the total inventory to produce the average percentage of local news articles with positive narratives about the sites and neighborhoods.

Sentiments were analyzed on a yearly basis, starting on July 1, 2022 and concluding on June 30, 2023. The news publications tracked in Detroit included the Detroit Free Press and The Detroit News.

Reimagining the Civic Commons Metrics Report - Final

Third Party Research (cont.)

Third Party Research (cont.)

Income diversity of neighborhood residents

This income diversity index is computed as follows: Census data from the 2015-2019 American Community Survey on household income is used to divide the population into five income groups. We compute the share of the population in each census tract that is in each of these groups. The index is computed as 1 minus the sum of the squared shares of the five groups and corresponds to the probability that any two randomly selected persons in the neighborhood would be from different groups.

Racial and ethnic diversity of neighborhood residents

This racial and ethnic diversity index is computed as follows: Census data from the 2015-2019 American Community Survey is used that reports the number of persons in each of five racial ethnic groups (white, Black, Latino, Asian, and all other). We compute the share of the population in each census tract that is in each of these groups. The index is computed as 1 minus the sum of the squared shares of the five groups and corresponds to the probability that any two randomly selected persons in the neighborhood would be from different groups.

Tree Canopy

The USDA Forest Service's i-Tree Canopy tool was used to estimate tree cover for the Fitzgerald neighborhood at baseline. The i-Tree tool uses a random sampling process of publicly available imagery from Google Maps to classify land use types and calculate environmental and economic benefits from the percentage of tree canopy found in a given area.

To understand the impact of new trees, stormwater, and sustainability features added, a set of three ecological indicator tracking tools were developed so teams could inventory these features and their impact. The tree tracking tool was developed to include variables that would allow this data to be integrated with the USDA Forest Services' i-Tree Design tool to calculate the cumulative impact that additional trees would have overtime (a 20-year period) on tree canopy and environmental impacts. Data collection was performed by demonstration team members trained to use each tool.

Neighborhood Focus Groups

Neighborhood Focus Groups

Four focus groups comprised of residents, nearby neighbors, students, and small business owners were held on 4/18/2023 and 4/19/2023 in the Fitzgerald neighborhood. Only one small business owner participated in the business focus group, so that focus group was treated as a short interview. The goal of the focus groups was to gain a qualitative understanding of changes (real and perceived) that have occurred in the civic commons since baseline.

Local demonstration teams were asked to recruit 10-12 participants over the age of 18 for each focus group. Census data for the Fitzgerald neighborhood was used to provide demographic recruitment targets with regards to age, race, and gender to ensure that participants were reasonably representative of the neighborhood population. For University students, local demonstration teams were asked to recruit a mix of age, gender, and racial backgrounds that generally reflected the study body from a variety of departments.

Focus groups were facilitated by 2 Interface Studio staff members for approximately an hour and a half without other members of the Civic Commons team or other local partners present. Participants were provided with a brief introduction to the Civic Commons project and the purpose of the focus group before discussion started. At the outset of some focus groups, local partners provided a brief introduction before departing.

Quotations from the focus groups presented in this report are edited for clarity.
