

### **Charlottetown: People see immigration and businesses bringing change to PEI**

A new survey of Charlottetown residents shows that they believe that change has come to the Island – and they like it. Researchers at Dalhousie University launched the Perceptions of Change project to understand how residents perceive the economic, social, cultural, physical, and environmental changes.

The researchers conducted a telephone survey of 460 Charlottetown residents to determine what changes they observed in the city and in their neighbourhood over the last five to 10 years. Researchers also aimed to better understand how people feel about the changes they see. The survey has a 95% confidence level, or 19 time out of 20, with a +/- 2.5% margin of error.

The biggest change observed by Charlottetown residents was an increase in social and cultural diversity, a result of increased immigration to the Island. As Howard Ramos, sociologist at Dalhousie University and lead researcher on the project, points out, “More and more newcomers are coming to Prince Edward Island through the Provincial Nominee Program, and residents are noticing new folks around town, and generally they are open to the changes they see.” Other top changes mentioned by participants included changes to businesses and the economy, infrastructure, housing, and population growth.

Charlottetown residents were generally satisfied with the increased diversity: at the neighbourhood level, 57% of participants believed social and cultural changes had been for the better. Participants were also happy with the improvements in the city’s economy in the last five to 10 years, as well as with their access to neighbourhood amenities and transit. More than two-thirds of participants noted more employment and higher incomes in the city in the last five to 10 years, and 66% noted the increased accessibility of public transit.

With all these changes, Charlottetown has not lost its natural beauty: 47% of participants said that, overall, the natural environment of their neighbourhoods had not changed, and another 43% saw environmental changes for the better.

Charlottetown residents are, however, concerned about affordability in the city. Only 18% were in agreement that their neighbourhood had become more affordable in the last five to 10 years. “People like the changes they are seeing, but are less certain about the costs that will come with them,” notes Dr. Ramos.

The Perceptions of Change project is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. Surveys were also conducted in Moncton, St. John’s, and Halifax. For more information about the project, or to find out survey results from other Atlantic Canadian cities, contact Dr. Howard Ramos at [howard.amos@dal.ca](mailto:howard.amos@dal.ca) (902 402 9893) or see the full report at the project’s website: <http://perceptionsofchange.ca/neighbourhoodchange.html>

