

Information Letter

How do people perceive neighbourhoods and neighbourhood change in Halifax?

You are invited to participate in a survey on neighbourhood change in Atlantic Canadian cities. We are interested in knowing about economic, social, cultural and physical changes in neighbourhoods across your city. We are also interested in how people perceive the changes in their own neighbourhoods and how they define them.

Please be assured that we are not seeking any personal or identifiable information and all results for analysis and reporting will be grouped by neighbourhood. In fact, no results with less than 10 responses will be reported.

Your participation is completely voluntary and you may refuse to answer questions, should you choose. The survey is described below. Participating in this survey might not directly benefit you, but could indirectly benefit the city as it tries to understand how it is changing over time.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, you may contact Howard Ramos, the survey's Principal Investigator (howard.ramos@dal.ca), or the Director of Research Ethics at Dalhousie, Catherine Connors (ethics@dal.ca). Full contact information, with mailing address and phone numbers are provided at the end of this information letter.

Purpose of the Study

How people perceive change and whether they are open to it in Atlantic Canadian cities is of pressing academic and policy importance. The region has quietly experienced some of the most profound economic, social, cultural and physical changes in recent Canadian history.

However, the ability to systematically examine changes in the city, and public perceptions toward them, has been hampered by a lack of data on the region from Statistics Canada and problems associated with the geographic units and scales used to measure communities in Atlantic Canada.

As a result, there is a lack of accurate overall understanding of how Atlantic Canadians perceive and experience the region's rapidly changing context. Without insight on the changes occurring and how people navigate them, opportunities could be lost and the transitions reshaping the region could be fraught with unnecessary difficulty

Study Design

The survey consists of question about how you understand change in your city as well as how define your neighbourhood as well as changes in its economy (for example if there are new businesses), the people living in it (for instance, if there are immigrants or seniors), and its physical characteristics (like whether there are more apartment building than houses and if there has been any recent construction). Responses from the survey will be compared to existing publicly available information from Statistics Canada.

Results from the surveys will be statistically analysed using tabular and graphical comparison as well as showing how information can be mapped onto the city of Halifax as a whole. No individual responses will be reported. No information with less than 10 responses will be reported and no individual identifying information is asked.

Who can Participate in the Study

Anyone 18 years or older and living in Halifax.

What you will be asked to do

You will be asked to participate in a telephone survey interview which will last about 20 minutes. The survey consists of 73 questions, which ask about how you define your neighbourhood and how you perceive its economic, social, cultural, and physical conditions. The survey also asks about if and how those might have changed over the last 5 to 10 years.

Possible Risks

We don't anticipate any risk to you from participating in the survey, however, we do recognize that you may be concerned about the confidentiality of your responses. The survey is completely voluntary and you do not have to answer any questions you do not want to. You can also end the survey at any point.

Possible Benefits

The principle benefit of participating in this survey is indirect: you will contribute to academic knowledge and allow for evidence-based inquiry into the changes that are occurring in Atlantic Canadian cities. This could potentially contribute to better public policy at the city and provincial levels.

Compensation/Reimbursement

There is no compensation/reimbursement for participating in this study.

Confidentiality

Several steps will be taken to ensure your confidentiality, should you participate in this survey. First, we do not have any identifying information about you other than your telephone number. Second, no question directly ask you who you are and telephone numbers will not be paired with the answers you provide us. Third, although we will ask you about your postal code, we will not have your actual address and more than one address is listed under a given postal code. Fourth, all results will only be presented in grouped form. We will not report on any individual. Fifth, we will not disclose any grouped results than have less than 10 responses.

Questions or Concerns

Should you have any questions, comments or concerns about the research study or your involvement in it, you are welcome to contact Howard Ramos, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology (howard.ramos@dal.ca or 902-494-3130). You are encouraged to print out a copy of this information letter with his contact information for your records.

Final research findings will be published in a variety of academic venues and will also be posted on the Principal Investigator's web site www.howardramos.ca as well as the project web site <http://perceptionsofchange.ca/>.

If you have any difficulties with, or wish to voice concern about, any aspect of your participation in this survey, you may contact Catherine Connors, Director, Research Ethics, Dalhousie University ethics@dal.ca 902-494-1462).

Thank you,

Howard Ramos
Survey Principal Investigator