

Moncton: Embracing growth, but wary of increasing costs

A new survey of Monctonians shows that the majority see the city is growing in a number of ways and they see those changes as for the better. 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 450 Moncton 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.

Growth is on the minds of Monctonians. The biggest changes people observed were population growth, economic growth, and the expansion of the built environment: new buildings, infrastructure changes, and housing growth. Sixty-four percent believed that changes to buildings and homes in their neighbourhoods are for the better. Howard Ramos, sociologist at Dalhousie University and lead researcher on the project, points out, “Monctonians are embracing the economic, population, and development changes occurring in the city.” At the same time, however, Moncton residents are concerned about affordability. Only 20% believed that their neighbourhood had become more affordable in the last five to 10 years. “Growth and development are good, but Monctonians also worry that it comes with a literal cost – affordability,” notes Ramos.

Moncton residents also noted significant increases in cultural diversity: 86% of participants believed the city had become more socially and culturally diverse in the last five to 10 years. Economically, the majority of participants observed overall improvements, including higher incomes and job growth: 80% noted increased employment in the city in the last five to 10 years. Perceptions of change in the city’s natural environment were mixed overall, but 40% of participants observed improvements to the city’s water quality compared to five to 10 years ago.

The Perceptions of Change project is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. Surveys were also conducted in Charlottetown, 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 (in English or French) at howard.ramos@dal.ca (902 402 9893) or see the full report at the project’s website: <http://perceptionsofchange.ca/neighbourhoodchange.html>

