

Thesis:
Change in Fairview



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Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been possible without the availability of numerous resources and the assistance of many people. While the resources gave me the necessary information, these people gave me personal and motivational guidance. They range from professionals in their respective fields to local resident of the area, and all assisted in one way or another. While some gave me generous amounts of information, others offered equally valuable direction of where to look, when to keep going, and why I needed to do it. Although many people kindly assisted me with this work, including several unidentified, a few in particular stand out.

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Executive Summary

This thesis is a preliminary study of socio-economic change in Fairview, an inner-ring suburb of Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) in Nova Scotia, Canada. It focuses on changes in Fairview's more recent history within the past twenty-two years since the Federal Census year of 1986, due to both the more readily available data and its Secondary Planning Strategy from 1985. However, the community's entire history, from its beginnings as a farm settlement to its rapid growth as a post-war suburb to today, have also been researched, considered and analyzed. Through both a research and hypothesis-testing approach, this work attempts to answer one main question. Is Fairview experiencing decline, stability, or revitalization when compared to HRM as a whole?

Initially intended to study decline in Fairview, this thesis turned out to be more of a test of assumptions and stereotypes that both I and others hold of the area. Fairview was originally a neighbourhood I viewed as low-income and in decline that needed to be studied further. Through a literature review, a qualitative, physical form assessment, a demographic analysis, and a property value assessment, I set out to determine what is truly happening in Fairview, and whether or not these assumptions hold any weight. As an urban planner, I believe the lessons I learned are important for both me and others, planners or otherwise. Although we all harbour biases, assumptions, and stereotypes, we must be careful to not let them supersede reality, whether it suits our goals or not.

I discovered that Fairview is not the neighbourhood in decline I assumed it to be. There are many buildings throughout the community that are well-kept, modern, and large, with some recent renovations taking place on many properties. This qualitative assessment of the community was backed up by many of the property assessments, showing the vast majority of values in Fairview to be increasing within the past eight years. The demographic analysis, however, showed mixed results. While Fairview's average income and property values have been increasing, its population has been decreasing since 1971, and age and incidence of low income has been increasing in the past two decades. The qualitative assessment still noted many properties appearing to be in decline, as well, which were scattered throughout the neighbourhood rather than concentrated in several particular areas. Therefore, although my assumptions were incorrect, further study of Fairview may be needed before any definite conclusions can be made.

Apart from being a preliminary study of socio-economic change in Fairview, this thesis can also act as a guide for research performed in other working-class, inner-ring suburbs throughout North America. Although largely ignored in the past, inner-ring suburbs have recently begun to gain

more attention from planners and governments, especially in the United States. The thesis results also bring up several questions, both locally and broadly. For example, do Nova Scotia's property assessment values indicate what is really happening to properties in a particular area, in terms of their physical, economic, and social condition, or are they predominantly related to broader economic and market conditions? Why have issues of decline in the suburbs been largely ignored, especially in Canada, and why is such a limited amount of information available on Fairview from HRM? While these questions are addressed throughout this thesis, many remain without a definite answer.

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1.0: Introduction

1.1: Question

Is Fairview, Nova Scotia showing signs of decline, stability, or revitalization when compared to the Halifax Regional Municipality?

1.2: Thesis and Community Overview

This report is a preliminary study of socio-economic change in Fairview, an inner-ring suburb of Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) in Nova Scotia, Canada. It attempts to determine whether Fairview is experiencing decline, stability, or revitalization when compared to HRM as a whole. The research was conducted in the winter of 2008, from early January to the end of March, and included site visits, literature reviews, demographic analyses, and property value assessments.

Fairview is an inner-ring, working-class suburb in the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM), built primarily in the post-WWII era construction boom that occurred across North America from the late 1940s to the mid 1960s. It is located to the northwest of the Halifax peninsula, south of Bedford and Clayton Park, east of Timberlea and the Bayer's Lake Business Park, and north of Spryfield and Armdale. This context is shown in **Fig. 1.1: Context Map**.

Municipally, Fairview is represented through District 15: Fairview – Clayton Park (**Appendix 1.1**), which includes, as the name suggests, the middle-class suburb of Clayton Park that developed after Fairview. District 15 is also within the Municipality's "Mainland North" planning area, and part of Chebucto Community Council (HRM). Provincially, it is represented in the Halifax – Fairview District, an area that includes the communities of Fairmount, Armdale, and Cowie Hill to the south (**Appendix 1.2**). Federally, it is represented in the electoral district of Halifax West, which includes the area from Bedford in the north through to the mid-southern edge of the Chebucto Peninsula (**Appendix 1.3**).

The boundaries for Fairview vary depending on what one defines as the community. For the purposes and goals of this thesis, a clearly defined boundary needed to be determined. These boundaries were based on a various range of information including historical, cultural, political, physical, economic, and social characteristics. They are shown graphically in **Fig. 1.2: Boundary Map**, and explained in greater detail with justifications in "Methods."

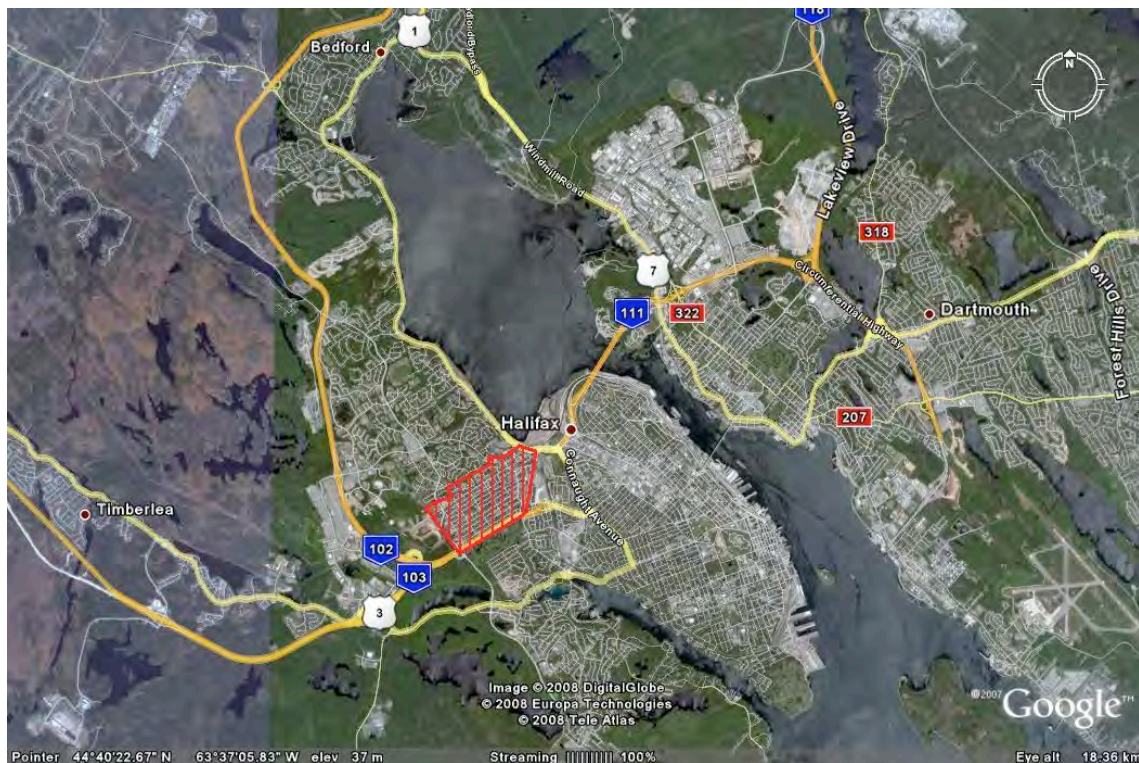


Fig. 1.1: Context Map. Fairview is outlined and shaded in red. (Google Earth 2007).



Fig. 1.2: Boundary Map. Fairview is within the red outline. (Google Earth 2007).

Because of a broad range of boundaries, Fairview's population is more difficult to come by. It ranged from 5,387 (Statistics Canada) to 14,478 (Nova Scotia Community Counts) in 2006, but based on the boundaries set in **Fig. 1.2**, it is likely to be around 10,000. Population boundaries, demographics, findings, and issues are discussed further in "Methods" and "Results."

1.3: Background to the Study



Fig. 1.3: Looking south down Main Ave (MacGregor 2008).

I chose the topic of inner-ring suburban change in Fairview because I am interested in issues surrounding neighbourhood change, particularly those appearing to be in decline, and did not want to research an over-studied, gentrifying inner-city area. It seemed as though older, working-class suburbs, despite their similar socio-economic characteristics to working-class inner-city areas, were being overlooked. They are often set in the broader context of "suburbs," viewed by many people as modern, bland, cookie-cutter homes with predominantly white, middle-upper income families. Often, this is not the case. Fairview was one place that seemed to represent the antithesis to this scenario, and therefore provided a nearly perfect community for this type of study.

Initially, I had explored the idea of studying Spryfield, another working-class suburb facing many similar issues, but soon realized Fairview would be more appropriate. It is closer to the urban core than Spryfield; is contained within a more defined boundary; seems to be a more modest area than Spryfield in terms of discussion and reputation; and contains fewer variables that would

affect my analysis and interpretation, such as issues with crime and poverty, although this still plays some part in Fairview. The North End of Dartmouth also crossed my mind as potentially being a study area of interest, but appeared to have many of the same issues as Spryfield, such as an undefined boundary, poorer reputation, and greater issues with crime and poverty which likely would have further complicated my study.

The original goal of this thesis was to determine the type of decline occurring in Fairview, assuming this to be inevitable. This assumption was based on the researched literature and my own knowledge of both Fairview and the broader Halifax area, but I soon realized this may not be accurate and would not make for a thorough, objective study of the area. It was necessary for me to question my own pre-conceived notions of the area, and set out to determine what is truly happening in Fairview whether it meets my own biases or not.

As a lifelong resident of the greater Halifax area, I grew up in both a rural and urban community in HRM, but never a suburb. As both a local resident and urban planner, I hold a natural interest in many social and economic issues faced by our communities. Fairview has always been a community that intrigues me, and one that I wanted to learn more about. As it is more inconspicuous, unpretentious, and unknown compared to many other parts of Halifax, I could not help but to become curious.

Although I am not from Fairview, the strongest personal connection I have to the area is with an aunt. She lived in a dingy, lower-income apartment building at 89 Evans Avenue (**Fig. 1.4**) for over 20 years, until sometime in the mid 1990s when she left because she hated it and no longer felt safe. My memories of this area stretch back to my early childhood, and like my aunt's, they were not entirely positive. Most of what I remember is poverty, poor living conditions, and chain-smoking, while my aunt told me more horror stories of the area regarding drug addicts,



Fig. 1.4: 89 Evans Ave, where my aunt lived (MacGregor 2008).

prostitutes, gangs, and crime. A brutal murder occurred in a neighbouring apartment building in the mid 1990s. Her apartment had bars over the windows, she kept her door locked at all times, could not trust some of her neighbours, claims she was often robbed of her food, and was often afraid to leave her apartment during the day, let alone at night. Clearly, this helped to shape a negative view of the area, and one which I hope to have either confirmed or disproved. Before I can do this, a brief history and general overview

1.4: Fairview: A Brief History and General Overview

Until the early 1950s, the area known today as Fairview was predominantly farmland extending toward Geizer's Hill, as seen in the 1931 Federal government aerial photograph (**Fig. 1.5**). Originally inhabited by Germans, the area was known initially as "Dutch Village Settlement" because of a mistranslation of the German word "Deutsch," and mainly located along what is today the bottom of the hill along Dutch Village Road. Several farm houses and light industrial uses existed along Dutch Village Road into the 1950s (Poteri 2008). Fairview was so named because of its "fair view" of the Bedford Basin and beyond (Edwards 2003).

The rural character of Fairview began to change dramatically beginning in the early 1950s, when the grid pattern we see today slowly began to take shape up the hill (**Fig. 1.6**). It was part of Halifax County at the time, and located in District 12, which was the county's largest with 14,000 people. District 12 represented 25% of the county's population, but only 20% of its assessment values, and also included the growing communities of Armdale, Jollimore, Spryfield, and Lakeside (County Council Report 1951). Into the 1960s, the Fairview grid continued to expand as the community took its current shape (**Fig. 1.7**). This grid was finally completed in the latter half of the decade (Edwards 2003).



Fig. 1.5: Aerial view of Fairview in 1931 (Federal Government of Canada).



Fig. 1.6: Aerial view of Fairview in 1954 (Federal Government of Canada).

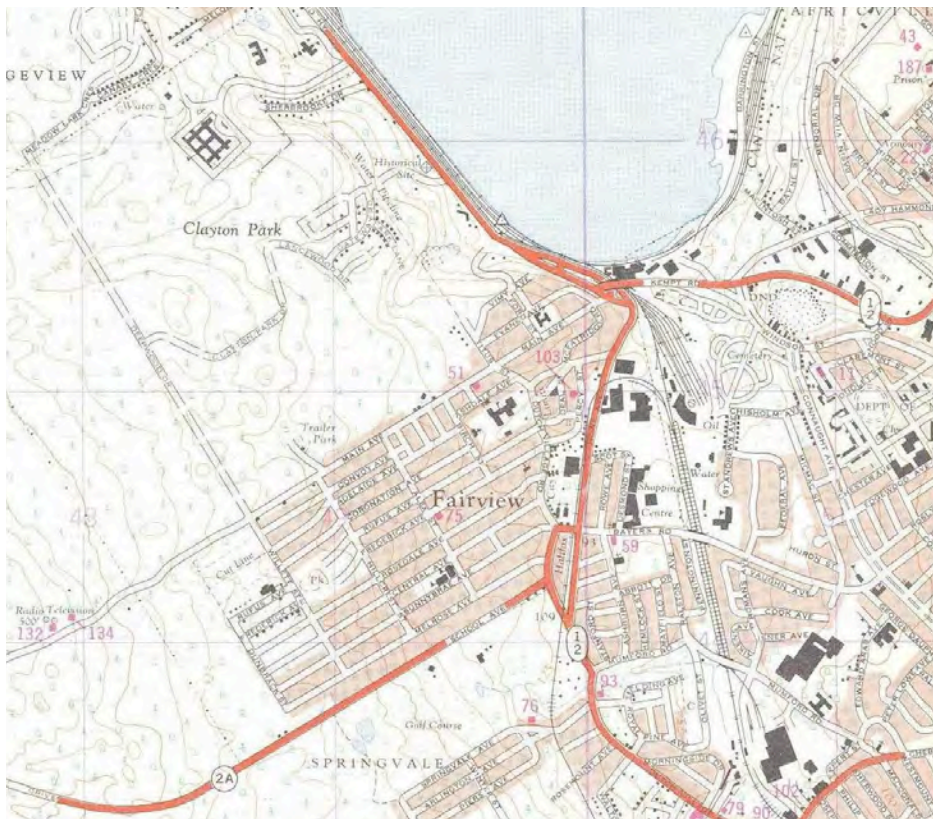


Fig. 1.7: Map of Fairview in 1960 (Halifax Military Town Plan).

Fairview grew significantly in the 1950s and 1960s (Statistics Canada Census 1971), although it is difficult to track more precise changes because the area was not within a Census Tract until 1971. It is known, however, that the majority of homes were built from 1946 to 1970 (Statistics Canada Census 2001), and many of these homes were built by independent builders (Poteri 2008). One carpenter, for example, would commonly construct seven homes, live in one, and sell the other six to finance further investments. Piercey Investors Ltd. was also heavily involved in the development of many properties in Fairview (Nova Scotia Property Assessments 1951). Over the next decades and into today, infill housing was slowly built on the remaining empty lots (Poteri 2008).

As these homes quickly developed, so did many amenities. City services, such as sewer and water, were put in along Dutch Village Road in the early 1950s. These additions required significant cooperation between Halifax City and Halifax County, as the boundary between the two jurisdictions was along Dutch Village Road at the time (County Council Reports 1951). Services for the community also quickly came into place. The original Halifax West High School (**Fig. 1.8**) was opened on Dutch Village Road in 1958, at first serving a large part of the county, and then suburban Halifax, until 2000 (Edwards 2003). Today, it is an empty lot (**Fig. 1.9**). Numerous churches, (**Fig. 1.10**), businesses (**Fig. 1.11**), and other schools (**Fig. 1.12**) were also built in this time period.

Much of the community life was and remains focussed on Dutch Village Road, though several small businesses and community centres existed on other streets such as Rosedale, Main, and Alma (Edwards 2003). Until the early 1960s, the Dutch Village Road area was mainly industrial, with many factories, machinery shops and railroad works, while the rest was residential, containing small homes (Poteri 2008). Many of these uses have since been demolished for the commercial uses that now dominate the street. Today, a mix of commercial buildings built over the past fifty years exist along Dutch Village Road, in varying states of use and repair (**Fig. 1.13**).



Fig. 1.8: Halifax West High School in the 1990s (halifaxhistory.ca).



Fig. 1.9: Halifax West High School site today (MacGregor 2008).



Fig. 1.10: Alive Christian Church, 28 Willet Street (MacGregor 2008).



Fig. 1.11: A+ Accounting & Tax Services and TNM Beauty Supplies & Salon on Dutch Village Road (MacGregor 2008).



Fig. 1.12: Fairview Junior High School at 155 Rosedale Avenue (MacGregor 2008).



Fig. 1.13: Kilimanjaro Books & Cafe beside vacant commercial building on Dutch Village Road (MacGregor 2008).

While many parts of Fairview have changed little since they were first developed, others, especially in the eastern parts of the suburb, have changed significantly. Along Vimy Avenue, on Fairview's north-eastern fringe, an old farm house and many other old houses existed until the early 1980s, when they were torn down for newer buildings. One older house on the corner of Ford Street, however, remains (**Fig. 1.14**). On one side of the street along the lower part of Evans Avenue and Ford Street, none of the houses have changed significantly, while on the other side, most of the homes have been built within the past 20 years. At Main Avenue and Ford, an old elementary school existed until the early 1990s. The part of Evans Ave west of Titus Street also had many old houses until 15 to 20 years ago, but is now mostly apartment buildings. Sunnybrae Subdivision in the community's south-east is the newest part of the main grid, built approximately 35 years ago, while Keystone Court in the south-west is the newest street contained within the Fairview boundaries (Poteri 2008).



Fig. 1.14: Pre-WW II house on corner of Vimy Ave and Ford St. (MacGregor 2008).

Discussion of amalgamation with the City of Halifax had been occurring since the early 1950s, creating some controversy (County Council Report 1953). In January 1969, Fairview was officially annexed into the City from Halifax County with dozens of other communities, including Armdale, Clayton Park, and Spryfield (Municipal Development Plan 1973). It was also around this time that Fairview's growth began to slow and eventually decline (Statistics Canada Census 1976), although this was likely due more to rapid growth in neighbouring communities rather than actual socio-economic decline. Most of this growth that occurred from the late 1960s and especially the 1970s was to Fairview's north into communities like Clayton Park (Poteri 2008), a decidedly more middle-class, curvilinear development. Expansion continues today in areas such as Clayton Park West.

Parts of Fairview began to gain a reputation for crime, poverty, and drugs beginning in the 1980s, especially in the north-eastern area along streets such as Evans and Dawn. Fairview's population continued to decline in this period, while new construction dropped off significantly. The incidence of low income, however, was much higher in 2001 – nearly 18%, than in 1986, when it was just over 13% (Statistics Canada Censuses).

The Fairview Secondary Planning Strategy (SPS) was approved by the Minister of Municipal Affairs on July 5, 1985. This document focussed on improvements to the neighbourhood's main streets, especially Dutch Village Road, and guided future change and growth in Fairview. In April 1996, political boundaries changed once again as the City of Halifax, City of Dartmouth, Town of Bedford, and Halifax County were amalgamated by the Provincial Government to form the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) (HRM 2008). Since that time, HRM has embarked on plans to renew the SPS, execute smart growth strategies, and eventually include Fairview and other suburbs in its HRMbyDesign process (HRM 2008). Two years ago, Fairview's first major residential development in over thirty years, Mount Royale, started to be built at the top of the hill along Main Avenue (**Fig. 1.15**). With most single-family homes selling for just over \$300,000 (Atlantis Realty 2008), this subdivision is expected to increase property values in the entire area (MacFarlane 2008).



Fig. 1.15: Construction in Mount Royale, top of Geizer's Hill along Main Avenue (MacGregor 2008).

Fairview began as and has always been predominantly working-class, with this characteristic remaining dominant yet less pronounced today. There are currently many more professional people who live in the main part of Fairview, including doctors, lawyers and dentists (Poteri 2008), and this increase is expected to continue as property values on the Halifax Peninsula continue to rise (MacFarlane 2008). However, trades people, homemakers, and service workers still dominate. The other extreme, with a nearly 18% incidence of low income and people living in poverty, is also significant in the area (Statistics Canada 2001).

2.0: Literature Review

2.1: An Overview of Inner-Ring Suburbs

Hundreds of similar post-WWII, inner-ring, working-class suburban areas like Fairview exist throughout North America. These areas have varying definitions and even more names, including first-tier suburbs, first-ring suburbs, older suburbs, and sitcom suburbs (Green Leigh and Lee 2005), but their concept remains the same. They are areas that developed from the period after World War II until the beginning of the development of outer-ring suburbs in the 1970s, focussed around the automobile (Green Leigh and Lee 2005). The more working-class neighbourhoods, such as Fairview, are usually characterized by smaller, pre-fabricated homes. This timeframe also differentiates them from the streetcar suburbs which developed from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century, such as those at the northern end of Peninsular Halifax, now considered part of the central city.

Many inner-ring suburbs have now experienced documented decline for several decades (Green Leigh and Lee 2005; Hudnut 2003; Vicino 2008). As the suburbs of growing cities, such as Halifax, continue to sprawl outward and inner-city areas continue to be gentrified and revitalized, many inner-ring suburban communities are forgotten and continue to decay. This pattern has been exemplified across North America in cities such as Toronto (Wente 2004), Cleveland (Miller 2005), Philadelphia (Green Leigh and Lee 2005), Baltimore (Vicino 2008), and Minneapolis-Saint Paul (Pierce 2003). These areas are especially under threat because they are oftentimes located too far outside of the urban core to give an attractive location for commuters, but not far enough outside the city to attract those seeking a more peaceful, traditionally suburban lifestyle. While their housing stock is not yet old enough to attract those with preferences for historically significant homes, it is no longer modern enough to attract those seeking more contemporary, up-to-date amenities available in the outer suburbs.

Beyond North America and into places such as Europe and Australia, suburbs can often be some of the poorest parts of the main cities. The suburbs of France's main cities became the centre points for race riots in 2005 (BBC), while many Italian suburbs have problems with the mafia-related crime (BBC 2005). Sydney, Australia's poorer suburbs were also the scene of several recent race-related riots (BBC 2005), and those of Melbourne have similar problems with poverty and crime. While Fairview is clearly not in the grips of these types of problems, this proves on a global scale that suburban life is not always quaint, wealthy and boring.

Opportunities do exist, however, for inner-ring suburbs to find new life, with location and price playing key factors (MacFarlane 2008). As cities grow and commute times increase, more working people will be looking to locations closer to the urban core. With revitalization, and subsequently property values, continuing to rise in the urban core, many middle-income professionals and first-time homebuyers are “priced out” of this housing market, and forced to seek better deals outside of the traditional core areas. This scenario can become an inner-ring suburb’s main attraction, leading to its own revitalization and even some form of gentrification. Because most of these smaller post-WWII working-class homes are not yet viewed as attractive, historically-significant houses, many buyers with the money to do so prefer to either completely renovate or tear down and start fresh. Many cities throughout North America, such as those mentioned previously, have seen this occur. It is also being seen in Fairview as well as other formerly suburban areas of Halifax, such as the West End (MacFarlane 2008). A review of several North American examples and their relation to the study is now discussed.

2.2: Relating the Literature to the Study

Although far less information is available for decline in inner-ring suburbs than it is for core and inner city areas, a lot of smaller-scale research has been done by several authors. Much of the researched literature I found gave further justification to studying decline in Fairview, but also many warnings. In a way, I wanted the assumptions that told me the community was a rough, poverty-stricken area to hold. While remaining as open-minded and objective as possible, I hoped to find all the literature I could to back this up. These were not malicious wishes: I not only wanted to document decline, but also wanted to provide recommendations to make the community a better place to live: a place where even my aunt may want to live again.

The warnings in the literature told me to not paint every community with the same brush. While many inner-ring suburbs are in decline, many are doing just fine. Some meet the stereotype I had of Fairview being poor, destitute, and in need of serious help, while others are thriving and prosperous. The literature offered examples from both ends of the socio-economic spectrum and a wide range in between. Where Fairview falls will become clearer when my findings are discussed in “Results” and “Analysis.”

Three authors in particular stood out as leaders in the study of suburban change: Nancey Green Leigh, a professor of City and Regional Planning at the Georgia Institute of Technology; Sugie Lee, PhD candidate in the same program and school as Green Leigh; and William H. Hudnut III, former mayor of Indianapolis and senior resident fellow at the Urban Land Institute. A constant

theme among these authors is the under-appreciated importance of inner-ring suburbs, which they say act as vital “in-between” places transitioning the compact urban areas into the sprawling outer-ring suburbs.

Most research on suburban decline is American-based. In fact, no extensive journal articles or books were found specifically discussing the effects of suburban decline in Canada, let alone Fairview. Although these articles from the United States were still useful, the lack of local and national information related specifically to my topic of study meant I needed to be careful when reading them and drawing conclusions, as the political, economic, and social climate is different. Several key cities were noted, however, which helped to give a useful but broad background both supporting and contradicting my assumptions on Fairview.

In Philadelphia, change was documented in its inner-ring suburbs since 1970. Several key indicators, including changes in population, relative per capita incomes, poverty rates, housing characteristics, and demographics, show decline occurring in several of these areas at an increasing rate (Green Leigh and Lee 2005). When comparing the downtown, inner city, inner-ring, and outer-ring suburbs of Philadelphia (**Fig. 2.1**), it is shown that while the downtown is revitalizing, with recent population growth, and the outer-ring suburbs continue to grow, most of the inner city continues to decay, although some small-scale improvements are seen. Several inner-ring suburbs, meanwhile, are showing some initial signs of decline that were seen in the inner city areas several decades before. Green Leigh and Lee appear to be warning planners that if issues within the inner-ring suburbs continue to be ignored in favour of the downtown and inner city, cities like Philadelphia may soon have more areas of decline replacing the newly revitalized parts. They also argue that inner-ring suburbs must be distinguished from the newer, outer-ring suburbs in order to be properly analyzed and improved (**Fig. 2.2**).

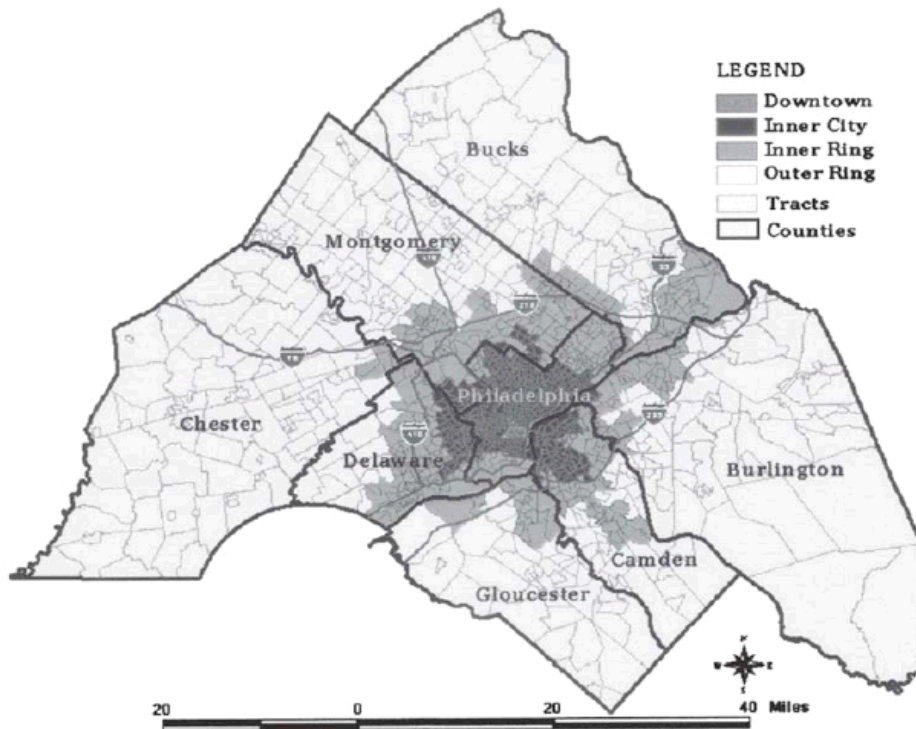


Fig. 2.1: Philadelphia's Downtown, Inner City, Inner Ring, and Outer Ring suburbs (Green Leigh and Lee 2005).

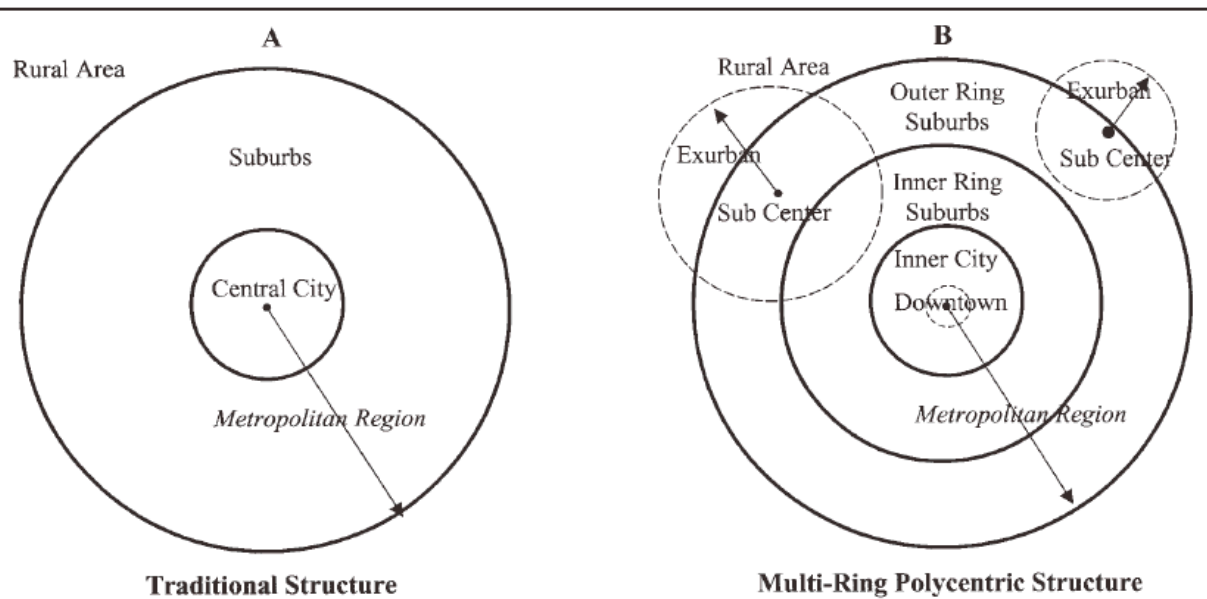


Fig. 2.2: The Traditional method of spatially defining urban areas (A) versus the new approach (B), proposed by Green Leigh and Lee (Green Leigh and Lee 2005).

Minneapolis and Baltimore, on the other hand, appear to be at the forefront of serious efforts to revitalize their aging inner-ring suburbs. In Minneapolis, several of these suburbs, such as Roseville to the north-east, are taking serious steps to “reinvent” themselves through street redesign, attracting hi-tech industries, and alternative modes of transit. This has helped to turn several formerly declining areas around into vibrant communities once again, showing that motivation for positive change in these types of areas can occur (Hudnut 2003; Pierce 2003).

Baltimore is unique among most American cities in that its inner-ring suburbs are under one jurisdiction, Baltimore County. Since these communities are less fragmented, this has allowed revenue sharing from the metropolitan areas’ wealthier suburbs to the poorer ones to help revitalize them. However, new developments originally meant for lower to middle income earners quickly became out of reach for all but the Baltimore area’s wealthier citizens. Land values, especially those with waterfront views, increased dramatically. While the County insisted these plans were initially made with the best intentions, they are criticized by several planners for further displacing poorer residents and focussing on improvements to physical infrastructure rather than human capital (Vicino, 2008). Should it be deemed that Fairview is in need of or on the brink of revitalizing, Vicino’s study from Baltimore offers warnings and discusses important socio-economic circumstances that must be considered.

With almost the entire suburban area under the jurisdiction of HRM since 1996, the situation in Halifax is similar to that in Baltimore. Here, small-scale steps have been taken in parts of Dartmouth, Spryfield, and Fairview (HRM). Many Secondary Planning Strategies were adopted by the City of Halifax in the 1980s, created to help improve communities, regulate development, and guide future growth. Although few have been updated since, Municipal Staff is working on it (HRM Planning Department 2008). The Fairview Secondary Planning Strategy (SPS) was approved July 5, 1985, and mainly focussed on improvements to the neighbourhood’s commercial main street, Dutch Village Road. Recommendations are made for Dutch Village Road to be enhanced to a “minor commercial centre by the provision of sidewalks, raised planters, parking facilities and other pedestrian amenities...,” while at the same time aiming to provide “as much parking space as possible.” Keeping this in mind while exploring Fairview, it was interesting to see how many of these recommendations had and had not been carried out, and their resulting affects on the community nearly 23 years after they had been written.

From the literature review, it became clear that Fairview was worth an in-depth study. In order to appropriately study and effectively determine the characteristic of change in the suburb, a set of clearly defined goals, objectives, and methods needed to be determined.

3.0: The Case Study

3.1: Question Analysis and Hypotheses Statements

Is Fairview, Nova Scotia showing signs of decline, stability, or revitalization when compared to the Halifax Regional Municipality?

This question turned out to be more difficult to answer than it initially seemed. As explained earlier, it was based on many subjective opinions and assumptions, including those of the author, and led to several more important questions. What is decline? What is stability? What is revitalization? How should these be defined? What time frame needs to be examined, and why? Because of these questions, it became clear that two assumptions also had to be tested in order to help better answer this question and evaluate my own pre-conceived notions. Definitions for many these terms are provided in “Glossary.”

The following assumptions were tested:

- 1. Fairview today is a predominantly working-class community.**
- 2. Compared to the rest of the Halifax Regional Municipality, Fairview is experiencing decline.**

The method required to answer these assumptions are shown later in “Hypotheses Tests.”

3.2: Goals and Objectives

With the question formulated and assumptions recognized, two specific goals were derived:

1. Study the characteristics of neighbourhood change in Fairview, in order to determine whether the community is facing decline, stability, or revitalization.
2. Test both my own and others assumptions about Fairview in order to determine whether or not they are justified.

With these goals determined, several objectives needed to be made clear:

1. To assess the physical characteristics of the neighbourhood through qualitative, personal observations.
2. To analyze demographic changes in the neighbourhood over the suburb's main period of post-war growth, from 1946 to 2006.
3. To understand trends in property assessment values, average income, and their associated changes within the neighbourhood compared to the city as a whole.
4. To interpret the meaning of these trends, and present them through graphs, charts, maps, and pictures.

Using these objectives, I was able to create detailed methods to follow in order to guide my research and analysis. These methods were changed numerous times based on its relevance to the objectives, the availability of data and resources, and time constraints due to project deadlines, but the foundation for determining the overall characteristic of change in Fairview remained the same. These challenges are now discussed further.

3.3: Challenges

Throughout my research, I discovered surprisingly and disappointingly that specific information on Fairview is severely lacking. There is little organized historical data available at HRM's planning department, and what is available appeared to be scattered, disorganized, and not easily available. It is maintained at various locations, departments, and levels of government throughout the region. The recent HRMbyDesign has not yet expanded its focus beyond peninsular Halifax, with even the most inner-ring suburbs such as Fairview distantly being considered. The most useful resources I found for general information on the area and to guide me in my research were people such as Jack Poteri, the Centennial Arena Rink Manager, and Bruce MacFarlane, real estate agent with Harbourside Realty.

Boundaries and government jurisdiction also created some confusion and difficulties for my research. As mentioned in the "History and Overview" section, Fairview was part of Halifax County until January 1969, when it merged into the City of Halifax. In April 1996, the political climate changed again when Halifax Regional Municipality was created. District and ward boundaries have changed constantly as Fairview, and the areas surrounding it, have grown. When

it was part of the City of Halifax, the community was split down the middle along Frederick Ave into Wards 9 and 10.

The HRM Archives contained a lot of information, but this was difficult to uncover at times as it is a relatively new location and still in the process of being organized. Uncovering the necessary information was tedious, and in the end, a very minimal amount of what I obtained was used in this thesis. Its location in the Burnside Industrial Park also made travelling to and from the Archives more difficult and time-consuming. Staff, however, were friendly and helpful.

Finding information on historical property values, let alone average historical property values for both Fairview and the Halifax area, was next to impossible. Almost all historical property data was available only on microfilm or microfiche and, until the late 1970s, organized by the owner's last name rather than property location. This was difficult and tedious to find. Information for Fairview was often mixed with information for other adjacent areas such as Armdale and Rockingham, or was divided among different jurisdictions, as previously mentioned. Assessments were organized differently throughout the years and under different departments. Some information was missing, so I was limited by the data I had available.

With these difficulties mentioned, I worked with the data I had readily available in the time I had left to do it. My method was altered and moulded many times based on these constraints.

3.4: Methods

3.4.1: Boundary

In order to accurately study Fairview, a clearly defined boundary needed to be determined (**Fig. 3.1**). As discussed in "Community Overview," the boundary of Fairview, like any community, varies greatly depending on how one defines their community, and is based on many historical, cultural, political, physical, economic, and social characteristics. Fairview's boundary was determined based on all of these factors, and they are described as follows.



Fig. 3.1: Boundary map of Fairview, generally showing boundaries along Glenforest, Joseph Howe, Bicen Avenue, and Northwest Arm Drive (Google Earth 2007).

The southern boundary of Fairview is the Bicen Avenue, a major four-lane thoroughfare that provides an obvious edge to the community (**Fig. 3.2**). Two more physical edges for the area are the train tracks along Joseph Howe Drive to the east (**Fig. 3.3**) and Northwest Arm Drive to the west. Further north along Northwest Arm Drive, the apartment buildings and town homes on either side of Main Avenue are included, as they fit physically, chronologically, and socio-economically in the greater context of Fairview. The Mount Royale subdivision currently being developed, however, was not, although it was observed in the research and considered when assessing the results.



Fig. 3.2: Southern boundary, School Ave. and Bicentennial Highway (MacGregor 2008).



Fig. 3.3: Eastern boundary, train tracks along Joseph Howe Drive (MacGregor 2008).

Urban form delineated Fairview's northern boundary. It starts behind the homes along Apollo Court, as they are more characteristic of homes in Clayton Park, and continues for a short distance north along Willett Street until Glenforest Drive (**Fig. 3.4**). Behind Glenforest Drive is a wooded park area, providing yet another clear boundary between Fairview and Clayton Park. As with Apollo Court, the buildings on Glenforest Drive fit better with those in Clayton Park. From here, the boundary continues along Vimy Avenue and includes the Centennial Arena, an integral part of the community, until it reaches a steep slope along the Bedford Highway (**Fig. 3.5**). Fairview is fully encompassed within these boundaries when the Bedford Highway ends at Joseph Howe Drive.

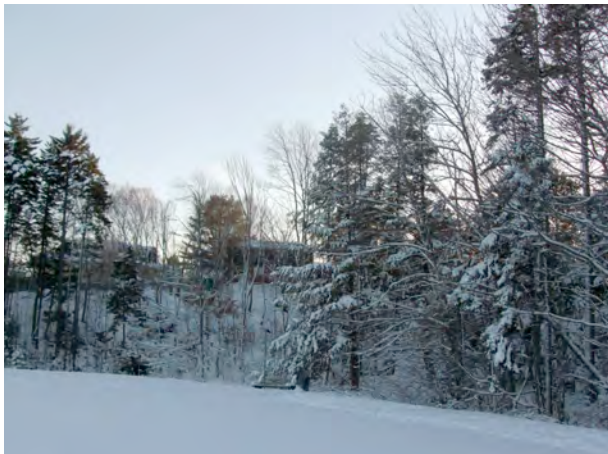


Fig. 3.4: North-western boundary, looking into Clayton Park from Willett St. (MacGregor 2008).



Fig. 3.5: North-eastern boundary, looking out to Bedford Basin from the Centennial Arena parking lot (MacGregor 2008).

3.4.2: Qualitative, Physical Form Assessment

The qualitative, physical form assessment allowed me to get a general sense and feel for Fairview. Not only was I able to observe physical characteristics of the neighbourhood, but also social aspects by observing residents and their habits. This assessment specifically included exploring and investigating every block of every street in Fairview at various times of the day and week in order to note homes that, based on my assumptions and observations, appeared to be in states of decline or revitalization (defined in “Glossary”), and described in greater detail in **Appendix 3.1**. Notes and pictures were taken along the way, and a journal was kept for each visit to note my main observations.

3.4.3: Demographic Analysis

Approximately 80% of Fairview is within Statistics Canada’s Census Tract 2050024.00 (CT 24) (**Appendix 3.2**) with the boundaries shown in **Fig. 3.1**, and it was this Census Tract I used for my demographic analysis. The other part of the study area, mainly north of Main Avenue, is contained within some of the southern parts of Census Tract 2050025.00 (CT 25). At approximately 20% of the total study area, the parts contained within CT 25 are relatively small, and after a brief review of its information, it was found that these results would likely have minimal impact on the data results for CT 24 as they are socio-economically similar.

Using the most recently available present and readily available historical data, I researched various statistics on the part of Fairview contained within CT 24 to help characterize the neighbourhood. These values were then graphed and compared to the Halifax area as a whole.

Sources: Statistics Canada, Nova Scotia Government “Community Counts,” Halifax Regional Municipality

The demographic analysis included the following:

Population: Associated changes within Census Tract 2050024.00, based on five-year intervals from 1966 to 2006. Age of population (1961, 1991, and 2006).

Dwelling: Age, condition, and value (1986 and 2001).

Labour characteristics: Job type (professional or working-class), education levels, and employment rates (1986 and 2001).

Income: Average income levels, incidence of low income (1986 and 2001).

While I originally planned to look at all demographic changes dating back to the 1950s, when Fairview first started to grow significantly, more specific data from earlier than 1986 was not always readily available and more difficult to obtain than it was worth, considering limits to time, costs, and the scope of this study. I found that the most significant and relevant changes occurred within the period from 1986 to 2001, and this was therefore adequate for noting the trends I was attempting to discover with regards to socio-economic change.

3.4.4: Property Value Assessment

From the qualitative, physical form assessment, I further analyzed my notes and photographs taken to determine properties appearing to experience the most decline, revitalization, or those that may be of further interest to study. I then researched these properties by looking at the most recently available yearly data, available from Nova Scotia Property Assessment Services dating back to 2001, and historical data at five year increments tied to Federal Census years back to 1986 (justification for this year is provided in “Results”).

Of over 100 properties researched (**Appendix 3.3**), five individual properties representing primary examples of decline and five showing signs of revitalization were profiled in greater detail. All researched property values were mapped in order to see where clusters of relative decline and revitalization may be occurring in the community. The average assessment for Fairview was compared to Halifax as a whole when possible and graphed, allowing for trends to be seen and a comparative analysis to be done.

The property value assessment also allowed me to see where decline or revitalization may really be occurring compared to where I thought it was, helping to prove or disprove my assumptions on specific properties and the broader area. Further details on the processes of the property value assessment are shown in **Appendix 3.4**.

Sources: Nova Scotia Property Assessments, Nova Scotia Archives, HRM Archives, Harbourside Realty, Researched literature

3.4.5: Supplementary Methods

Aside from these three main methods, I used other means available to help assist my research, develop my analysis, and draw conclusions. These methods included the following:

Interviews and conversations with present and past residents (*Aunt*), community leaders (*Jack Poteri – Centennial Arena Manager*), and realtors (*Bruce MacFarlane –*

Harbourside Realty) in the area. Local councillor Russell Walker was contacted, but did not respond.

Researching literature such as books, secondary planning strategies, and local media articles (*Halifax Herald*, *CBC News*) on Fairview.

Looking at current and historical maps of the area, including those showing Fairview's past and present land uses, development, aerial photographs, and environmental features.

3.5: Hypotheses Tests

1. Fairview today is a predominantly working-class community.

Test: This assumption was tested based on the qualitative, physical-form assessment, and comparing the average income level, a variety of occupation types, and education levels of its residents to the rest of the Halifax Regional Municipality. Other definitions of “working-class” or “blue-collar” were also researched and compared to characteristics noticed in Fairview.

Sources: Statistics Canada, Halifax Regional Municipality, Local residents, Researched literature

2. Compared to the rest of the Halifax Regional Municipality, Fairview is experiencing decline.

Test: This assumption was tested based on the qualitative, physical-form assessment, and the demographic analysis.

The results follow.

4.0: Study Results

4.1: Qualitative, Physical Form Assessment

Overall, I made ten site visits to Fairview during January, February, and March. I made an effort to visit at different times of the day and night, on weekdays and weekends, and in various weather conditions. I also visited one public holiday, Easter Sunday (March 23). Some days were snowing and windy, others sunny and calm. Visiting at different times of the day and week allowed me to note different things that I would not have otherwise been able to see, had I only observed at one set time each visit. On one visit in the late afternoon, for example, I was able to note many people walking their dogs, while a night visit allowed me to gauge what activities were happening then and how safe I felt, especially in what are considered several of the more unsafe parts along Dutch Village Road and Evans Avenue. This experience also helped significantly to test my assumptions noted in “Hypotheses Statements.” Some examples of my rough journal entries and site notes are shown in **Appendix 4.1**.

On the whole, Fairview does not appear to be the neighbourhood in decline that I originally assumed it to be. I noticed many newly built, refurbished, or freshly painted properties, and there appears to be slightly more properties being revitalized than those in decline. There are several nice, upper-middle class areas that I was surprised to find in Fairview, mainly located along the lower ends of Melrose, Sunnybrae, and Central (**Fig. 4.1**) Avenues in east-central Fairview. In some of these locations, luxury cars are seen parked in the driveway – something I did not at all expect to see, and most likely the mark of a successful, well-off household. Many of the declining properties, on the other hand, are located in the north-east and around the lower areas of the suburb, along streets such as Evans, Main, Dutch Village, Percy, and the lower ends of Rufus and Frederick in particular (**Fig. 4.2**). A generalized map of this observed, qualitative, physical form decline and revitalization is shown in **Fig. 4.3**.



Fig. 4.1: Attractive residential lots at Hillcrest and Rosedale (MacGregor 2008).



Fig. 4.2: Crumbling asphalt, tattered sign, and old car at Frederick and Dutch Village (MacGregor 2008).



Fig. 4.3: Generalized Map of Areas of Observed Physical Change. Declining areas are denoted in **red**, revitalizing areas in **green** (Google Earth Image 2008, MacGregor 2008).

Although clusters of decline and revitalization do exist based on this assessment, there are no areas of Fairview as large as or larger than one block showing absolute decline or revitalization. Even on the map shown in **Fig. 4.3**, there are still many declining properties in the revitalizing areas, and vice versa. This led to a change in method early in my research, as I originally intended to find some of these large clusters to further analyze. There are many examples where a property appearing to be in decline neighbours a property appearing to revitalize. Several examples are detailed further in the “Property Value Assessment.”

The people I encountered in Fairview were generally very friendly. Several, in fact, waved and gave a friendly honk at me from their car as I was walking through the neighbourhood, enhancing a positive image of the area. While taking pictures of peoples’ homes, however, several did stop to stare. Despite the overall friendliness, it was obvious that many knew I was an outsider. The notepads, camera, and backpack likely offered some evidence of this, but it appeared to be a close-knit community where neighbours watch out for one another.

Appendix 4.2 shows 33 pictures to compare and contrast several examples of declining, revitalizing, or stable properties located throughout the Fairview area.

4.2: Demographic Analysis

The demographic data shows mixed results regarding socio-economic change in Fairview when compared to HRM. While many results seem to point to relative decline, others suggest revitalization. Changes in how data was collected and interpreted over time led to further complications, and some data, especially for earlier periods in the 1950s and 1960s, was unavailable. Unless otherwise stated, all data is from Statistics Canada Censuses, and Fairview is represented by CT 24.

4.2.1: Population Changes

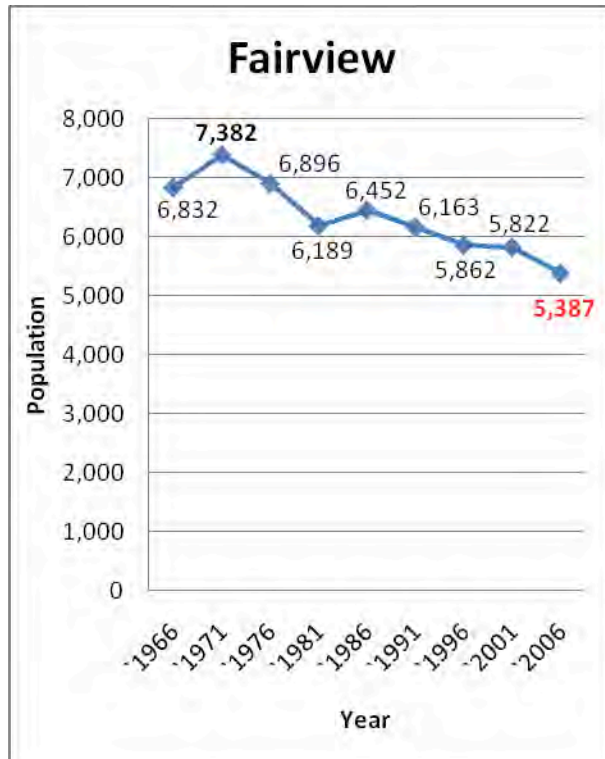


Fig. 4.4: A 27.0% population decline in Fairview since a peak of 7,382 in 1971.

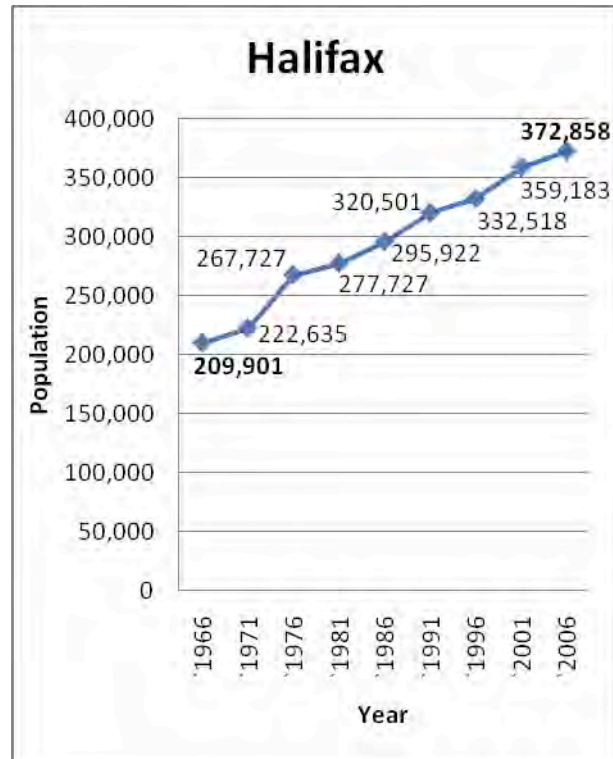


Fig. 4.5: A 67.5% population increase in Halifax since 1971.

While the population of Fairview is moderately declining in comparison to a rising population in Halifax, this may not necessarily equate to an overall socio-economic decline. As the boundaries of Fairview are firm, once it was saturated with development, there was limited room to grow further. Many wealthy census tracts within the Halifax core are also showing population decline. An example would be Census Tract 5 in the South End, which is the wealthiest census tract in Canada east of Montreal (Statistics Canada 2001). Literature suggests these declines may also be due to an aging population and families having fewer children as opposed to people leaving an undesirable area. Nonetheless, a declining population still raises concerns about disinvestment in the community and questions about why it is occurring.

4.2.2: Age

1961 (CT 24):

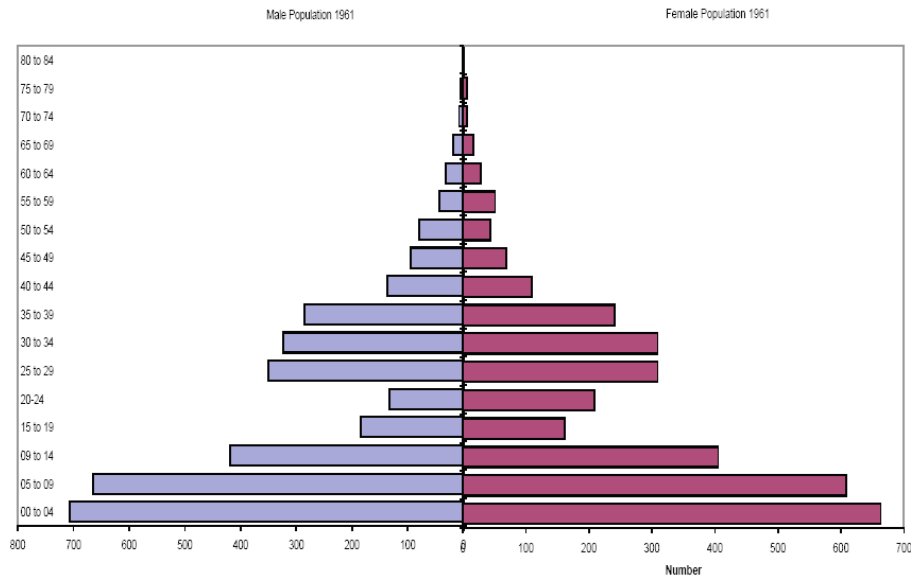


Fig. 4.6: A noticeably young population: many children, adults, and few people older than 60 years: an expansive population (Chart created by Knecht Farn-Guillette in 2008, Statistics Canada data)

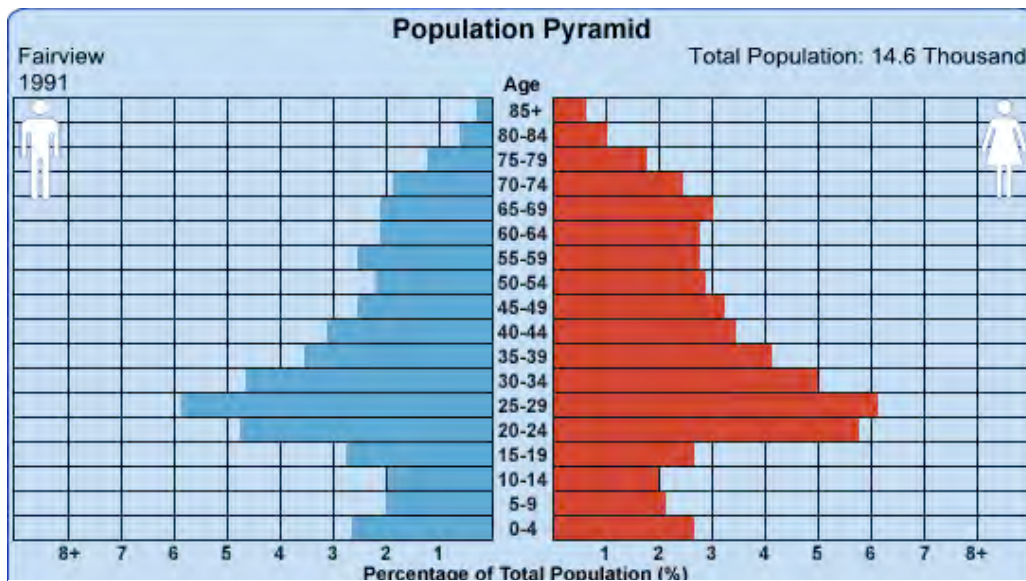


Fig. 4.7: Thirty years later, far fewer children, and a much larger population aged 20 to 40 and above 60 years old: a constrictive population period.

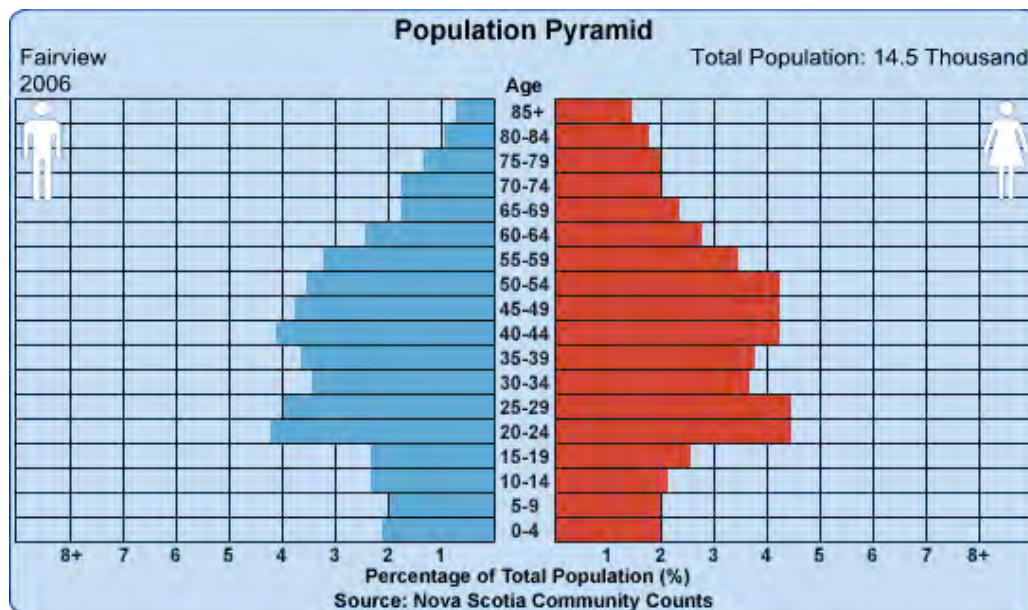


Fig. 4.8: Compared to 2001, slightly fewer children, fewer females in their 20s, and slightly more people older than 60. The average age is 42, while for Halifax as a whole, it is 39 (Community Counts 2006). This represents a stabilizing

As seen in **Fig. 4.6** to **Fig. 4.8**, Fairview has been experiencing an aging population since 1961, when there were many children and young families living in the community. While there have been changes within the proportion of people aged 20 to 60 in the past 15 years, as seen in **Fig. 4.7** and **Fig. 4.8**, the number of children (below 20 years) and elderly (above 60 years) has not shown any significant change. This represents some stability in population age characteristics. However, the decrease in people in their 20s since 1991 raises some concerns.

It should be noted that while **Fig. 4.6** represents data from CT 24, statistics for **Fig. 4.7** and **Fig. 4.8** were obtained from Nova Scotia Community Counts, which defines Fairview differently and includes several other similar neighbourhoods, such as Fairmount. While the defined areas and populations were different, demographic trends are similar, meaning these differences were proportionally insignificant.

4.2.3: Dwellings

The renter/owner split suggests a more transient population in Fairview than Halifax as a whole, with 53% of people renting in Fairview compared to 38% renting in Halifax in 2001. In one way, these results surprised me, as the majority of the area appears to be homes. From the qualitative, physical form assessment, however, a large number of small, three to twelve unit apartment buildings were noticed in the area. Many people rent out a room in their house as a means of extra income, as well (MacFarlane 2008). As there has not been any significant change in owners/renters in Fairview from 1986 to 2001, these results do not represent any decline or revitalization. The number of owners in Halifax, however, increased in the same time period (Appendix 4.3).

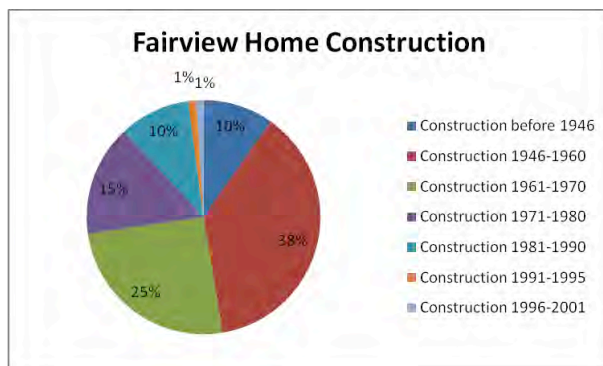


Fig. 4.9: Most homes built between 1946 and 1970. Little construction in the 1990s.

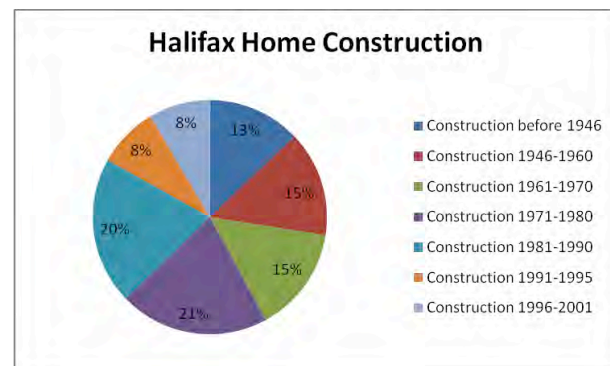


Fig. 4.10: Home construction in Halifax more evenly spread out than Fairview.

Fig. 4.9 and **Fig. 4.10** confirm what was already known: Fairview is, in fact, a post-WW II suburb, while Halifax has its housing stock built over a longer period of time. These results also relate to what was seen earlier with population decline, as few new homes have been built since 1980. In the physical site assessment, however, I saw many new looking homes that have likely been built within the past seven years since the 2001 Census.

Fairview does not differ much from Halifax as a whole in terms of housing condition, although slightly more properties require minor or major repairs (**Appendix 4.4**). As seen in **Fig. 4.9** and **Fig. 4.10**, the majority of homes in Fairview were built before 1980, while in Halifax, almost half were constructed after 1980. Therefore, the reason for more properties needing repairs in Fairview may be due more to their age rather than a lack of upkeep. On the other hand, Halifax also contains slightly more pre-1946 buildings that are more likely to require repair.

4.2.4: Employment Characteristics

When compared to Halifax, in 2001 Fairview had a higher unemployment rate: 9.2%, and a lower participation rate: 62.1%, than Halifax, which had a 7.2% unemployment and a 67.8% participation rate (**Appendix 4.5**). Looking at unemployment figures from 1986, however, the numbers are reversed, with Fairview having a 7.1% unemployment rate compared to Halifax's 9.2% (**Fig. 4.11**). These figures imply a worsening economic situation in Fairview.

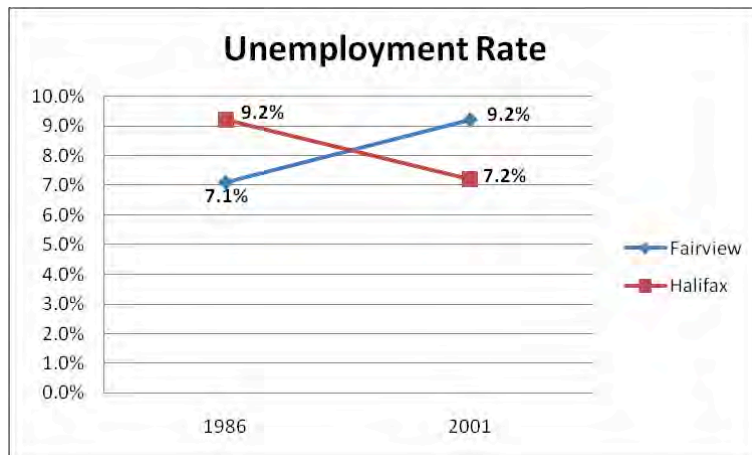


Fig. 4.11: Increasing unemployment rate in Fairview, but a decreasing unemployment rate in Halifax since 1986.

Fairview has a greater proportion of people in traditionally working-class jobs than Halifax, but a slight majority of people (52.0%) are still involved in professional work. Looking at changes since 1986 compared to Halifax, it is seen that the number of people in typically working-class jobs decreased proportionally in both areas (**Fig. 4.12**). It should be noted that Statistics Canada's work categories in 1986 were different than in 2001, and only jobs known to have either predominantly professional or predominantly working-class characteristics were included in these figures. For a breakdown of these job differences, see **Appendix 4.6**.

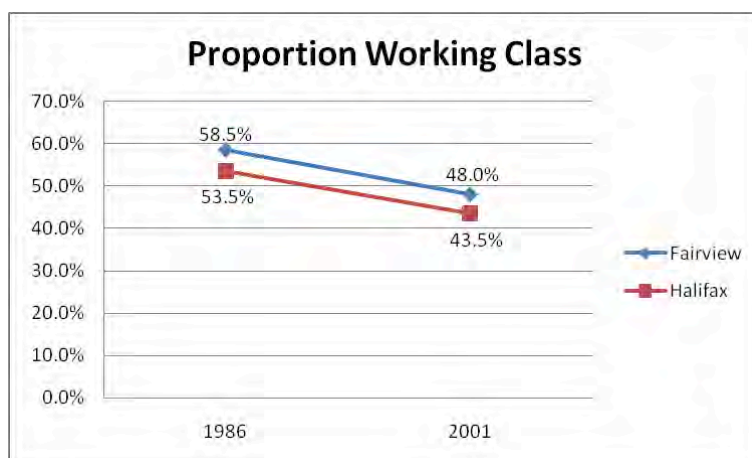


Fig. 4.12: The proportion of people in working class industries in Halifax and Fairview decreased proportionally.

4.2.5: Education

Fairview has lower rates of education compared to Halifax. There is a greater percentage of people with less than a grade 9 education in Fairview (**Appendix 4.7**), while Halifax has a greater proportion of university-educated people (**Fig. 4.13**). Although education rates have gotten better in both study areas since 1986, they have proportionally gotten better in Halifax, suggesting relative decline in Fairview. The proportion of people with a trades certificate or diploma and college education are similar in Halifax and Fairview.

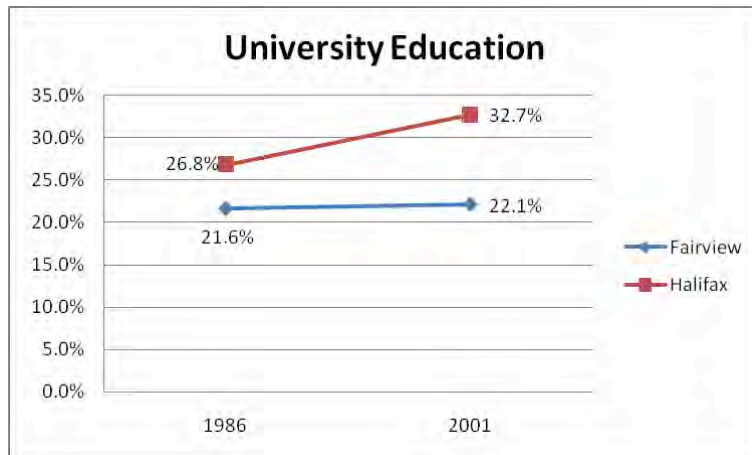


Fig. 4.13: An increasing proportion of university-educated people in Halifax compared to Fairview.

4.2.6: Income Characteristics

Fairview has a lower overall average individual and family income when compared to Halifax (**Appendix 4.8**). Both figures are almost 25% lower. The average family income has gotten much higher in Halifax compared to Fairview since 1986, when they were almost equal (**Fig. 4.14**). Like the education rates, these figures suggest relative decline in Fairview.

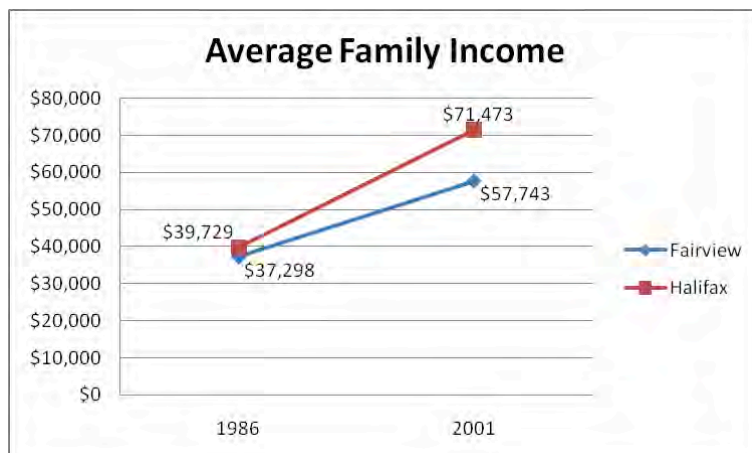


Fig. 4.14: Average family income has increased at a greater rate in Halifax compared to Fairview.

At almost 18%, the incidence of low income is almost 6 percentage points higher in Fairview than Halifax. 1986 figures show that back then, Halifax had a higher incidence of low income than Fairview (**Fig. 4.15**). Once again, these figures suggest relative decline in Fairview.

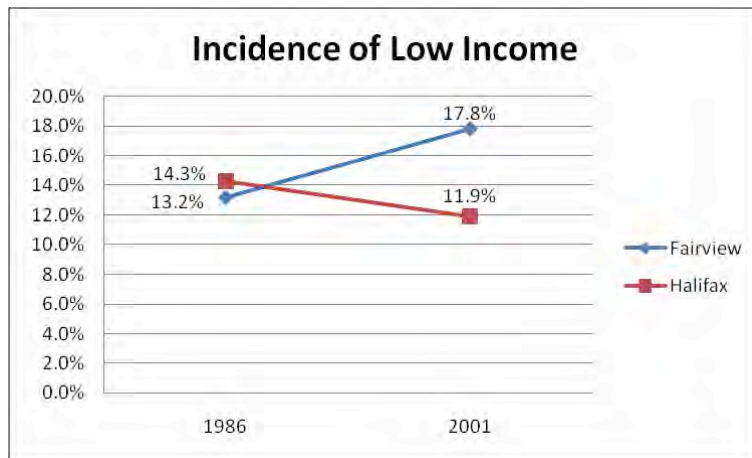


Fig. 4.15: Increasing incidence of low income in Fairview, but decreasing in Halifax.

4.2.7: Dwelling Values

In 2001, homes in Halifax were worth over \$13,000 (approximately 11%) more than homes in Fairview. In 1986, homes in Fairview were worth almost \$2,000 more than homes in Halifax. Clearly, house values in Halifax have increased at a greater rate than those in Fairview (**Fig. 4.16**), once again suggesting relative decline in the suburb since 1986.

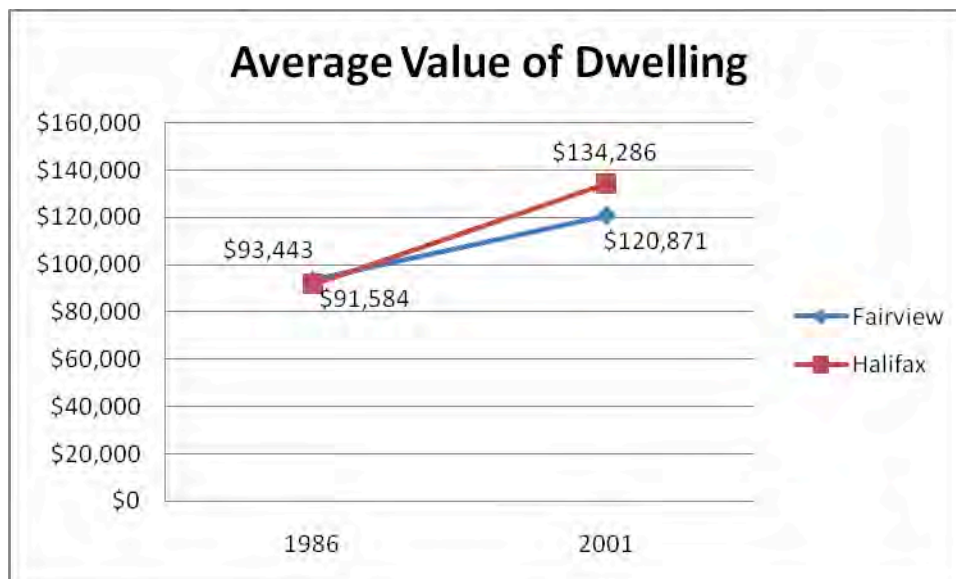


Fig. 4.16: A relative increase in average dwelling values in Halifax compared to Fairview.

4.2.8: Overview and Conclusion

The majority of these figures seem to show that while conditions in Fairview have generally improved since 1986, with several exceptions, the suburb has experienced relative decline in comparison to Halifax. It is important to note, however, that most of the latest available figures, from 2001, are now seven years old. The physical form assessment noted many properties that appear to have improved within this time. It may be that Fairview has, perhaps, experienced revitalization within those seven years, or even that the situation has been improving since a period between 1986 and 2001 (the scope of the work, need for simplicity, and time constraints meant figures from the 1996 and 1991 census were not fully obtained). While the Statistics Canada Census only shows figures at five year increments (only the full figures up to the 2001 Census were available), the Property Value Assessment may be a better indicator of more recent changes, providing data for each year until 2008.

4.3: Property Value Assessment

108 provincial property assessment values were researched for 1986, 1991, 1996, and each year from 2001 to 2008 (see **Appendix 3.3** for further details). Initially, I began researching properties dating back to the 1950s, but this proved to be more time-consuming than it was worth because properties were organized by their owner's name, rather than location, until the late 1970s. As most of the demographic analysis used 1986 figures and a generation is generally considered to be around 20 years, analyzing changes that took place since then made sense. Many of the most significant changes are usually seen within that period of time. Finally, 1986 was the year after Fairview's SPS was adopted, giving further justification to analyze changes that took place from then on.

With the exception of less than a half dozen properties, all profiled properties showed assessment increases since 2001. Overall, properties increased the most from 1986 to 1991 and 2001 to 2008 in Fairview, while there were more moderate increases and some decreases from 1991 to 1996 (Department of Municipal Affairs). Compared to Halifax as a whole, assessed property values are lower in Fairview and likely have been since the late 1980s, according to **Fig. 4.16**. The average price for real estate, however, may paint a truer picture of this occurrence, as it shows how much houses actually sell for on the market (**Fig. 4.17**). While properties in Fairview have been increasing since 1992, and especially between 2006 and 2007 where they increased by more than for the whole period between 1992 and 2001, it appears that they are not

increasing as much as the values for Halifax. At the moment, house prices in Halifax are increasing at some of the greatest rates in the country (CBC, March 2008).

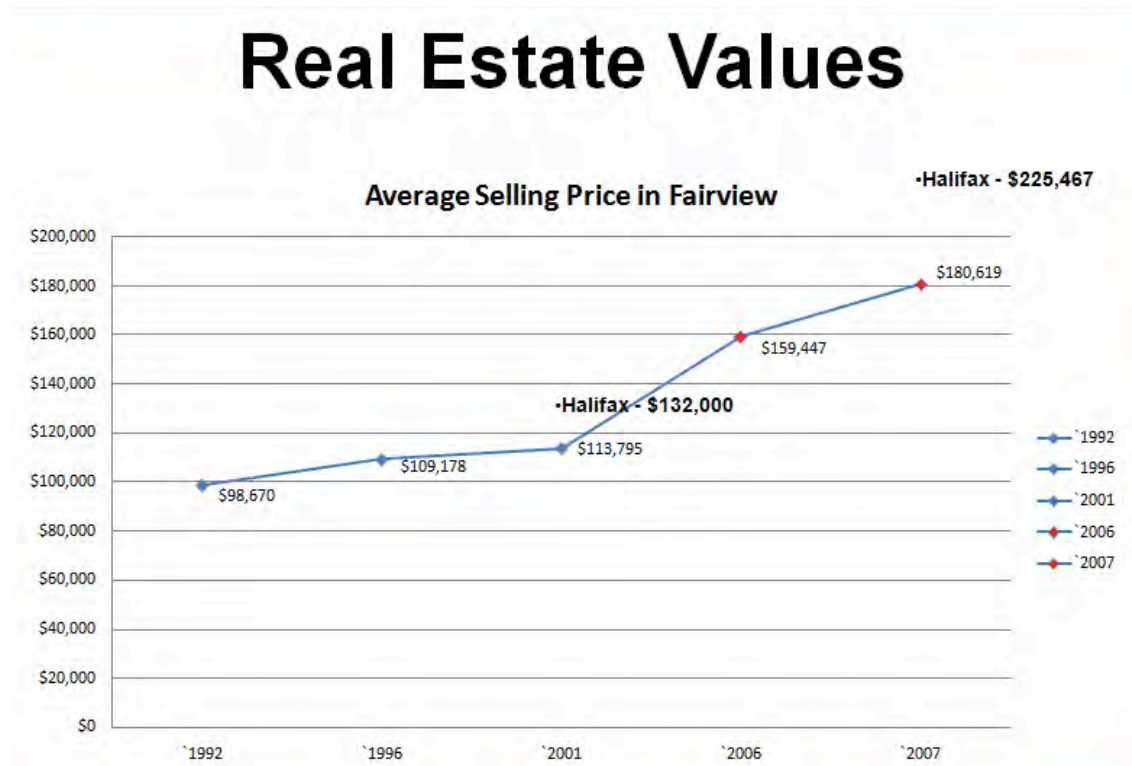


Fig. 4.17: Real estate prices are increasing in Fairview, but from the data available, it appears that Halifax prices are increasing at a greater rate (MLS 2008).

There are two sources and methods for financially valuing a property in Nova Scotia:

1. The Provincial government in their annual Property Value Assessments, using a market value approach.
2. Real estate agents, based on how much the home sells for.

Both methods are used, but neither is perfect. While the Province's assessments often undervalue properties, real estate can often overvalue them. This is especially true with a growing economy like Halifax has, leading to high demands for housing and therefore inflated property values. Other factors beyond the scope of this thesis can also play important roles in how properties are assessed, including market speculation, property investors, and a high demand for housing in some areas creating spin-off affects in others (MacFarlane 2008).

With this in mind, questions arise. How good are these assessments in determining the true characteristics of change in Fairview? Do these increasing property values mean that Fairview is revitalizing, or more importantly, that life is getting better for its residents? An increase in assessment may also have negative consequences for poorer property owners, leading to higher property taxes. Lower-income homeowners may no longer be able to afford to live in the area while those who are financially better off continue to move in, leading to a form of gentrification. The Provincial Government's Cap Assessment Program (CAP) is in place to help households that have experienced large increases in the market value of their homes by limiting annual taxable assessment increases (Service Nova Scotia 2008).

Most of the newer looking properties seen in the "Qualitative, Physical Form Assessment" also experienced large increases in their assessment value, some over 700%. Although it is impossible to tell from the current site visits, the historic assessment values in relation to other nearby properties offered a good indicator of whether the lot was raw land or an older home that was demolished for the new one. Both examples were seen.

Fig. 4.18 shows the locations of the 108 individual properties that were researched based on the physical form assessment and their relative change in assessment value from 2001 to 2008. The most rapidly increasing values, with an increase greater than 100%, are seen throughout Fairview, and mostly represent newly built properties. Values increasing at a slower rate or in decline are also seen throughout Fairview, but appear to be more concentrated in the northern part of the suburb. This is also one of the areas noted as appearing to be in decline on the Generalized Areas of Observed Physical Change map (**Fig 4.3**). There are few properties on the map from areas observed to generally be in a period of stability, such as Fairview's western edge where many of the last large blocks of homes were built in the late 1960s.

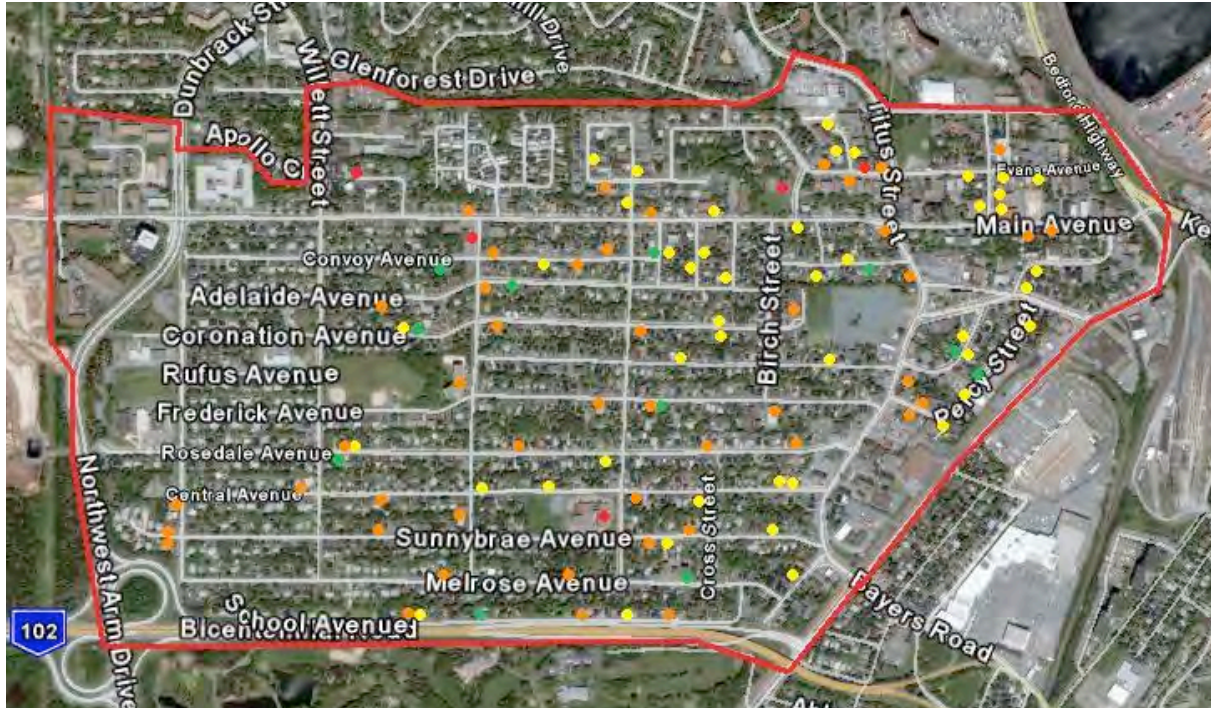


Fig. 4.18: Individual Property Assessment Map. **Red** represents properties experiencing assessment decline, **orange** an increase up to 50%, **yellow** a 50.1% to 100% increase, and **green** an increase over 100% from 2001 to 2008 (Google Earth Image 2007).

The following five properties profile the prime examples of those that I noted from my qualitative, physical form assessment as properties appearing to be experiencing the most decline. They were selected from 58 properties appearing to be in decline, based on that assessment. This exercise was important in determining how correct some of my assumptions were with these specific properties and decline in Fairview in general. **Appendix 3.4** gives further details on how these properties were selected. All photos were taken by the author.

36 Kingsmere Court: **-12.5%** (2001 – 2008).

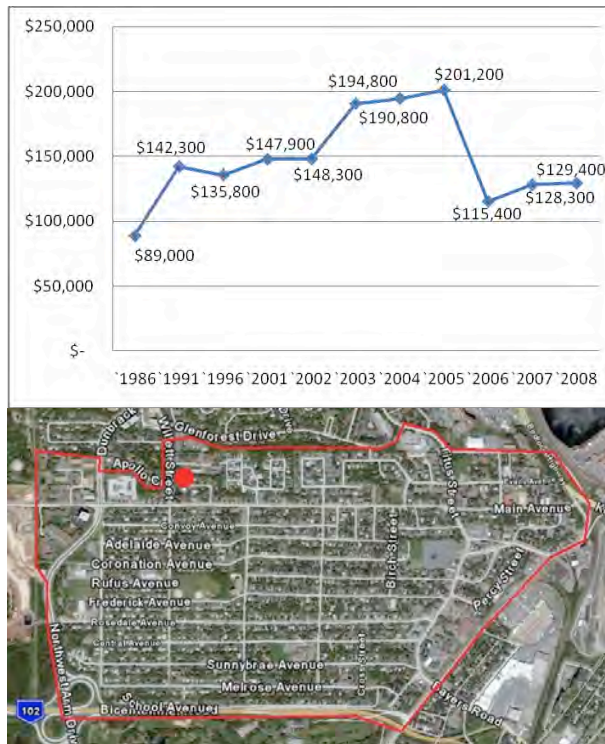


Fig 4.19: This property is rare, as it is one of the few I did not expect to see experiencing such a decline in assessment value. Despite its somewhat outdated style, it showed few signs of decline. The fact it took a large drop from 2005 to 2006 suggests it was overvalued.

84 Evans Ave.: **-12.2%** (2001 – 2008).

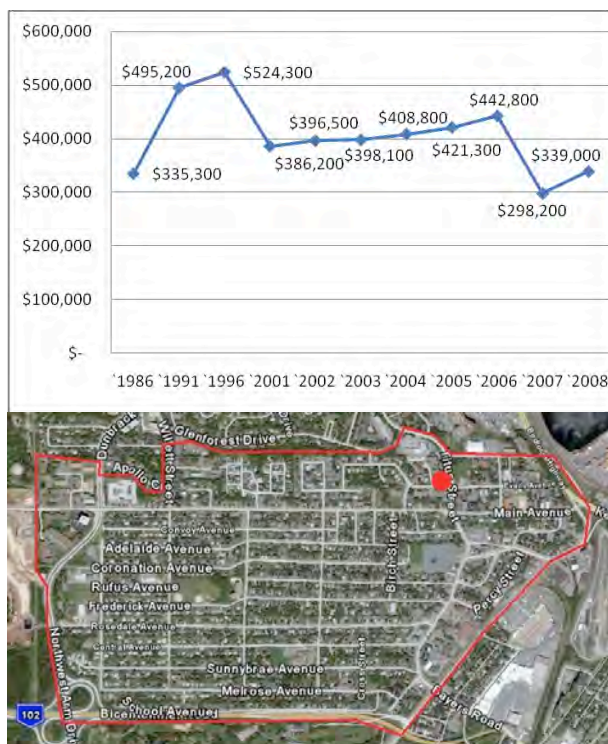


Fig. 4.20: This property is one of only several I observed to be in decline that was assessment-wise, as well. It is in what is considered to be one of the rougher, lower-income parts of Fairview, close to where my aunt lived, and shows a lack of aesthetic features, maintenance, and upgrades.

62 Frederick Ave.: +42.5% (2001 – 2008).

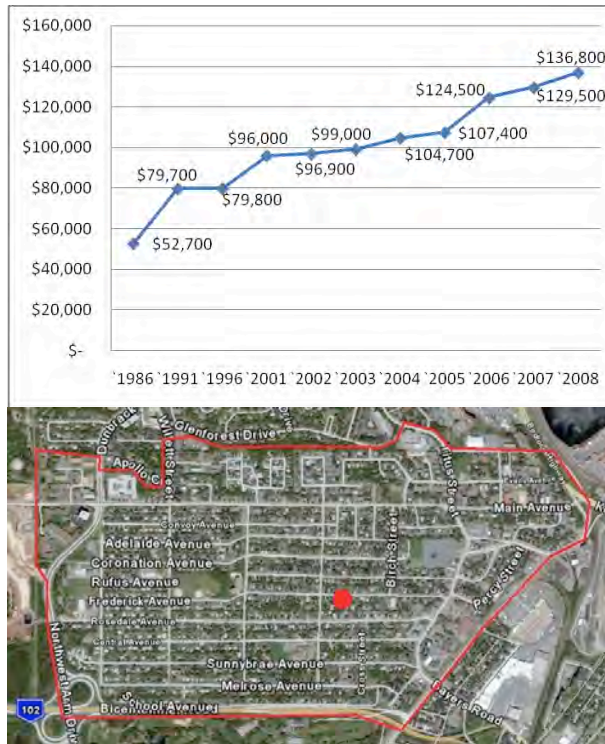


Fig. 4.21: This property showed signs of decline such as rotting wooden shingles and chipping paint. What made it especially interesting was that it neighbours a similar yet much better looking property, seen in Fig. 4.25.

21 Ashdale Ave.: +69.8% (2001 – 2008).

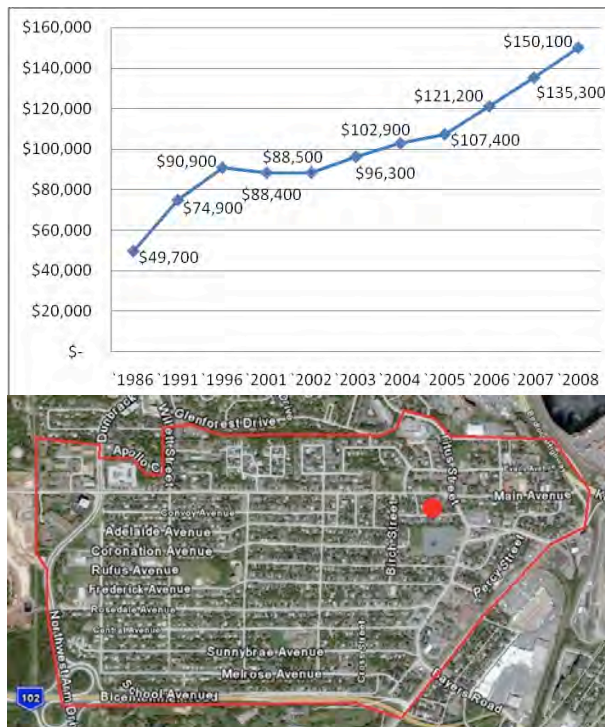


Fig. 4.22: Boarded-up windows, paint decay, and an unkempt lawn imply decline. The assessment, however, suggests otherwise. With such a prime location, it is likely more representative of increasing land values. It will likely be torn down or renovated soon, as has happened with many properties in the area.

3342 Westerwald St.: +74.3% (2001 – 2008).

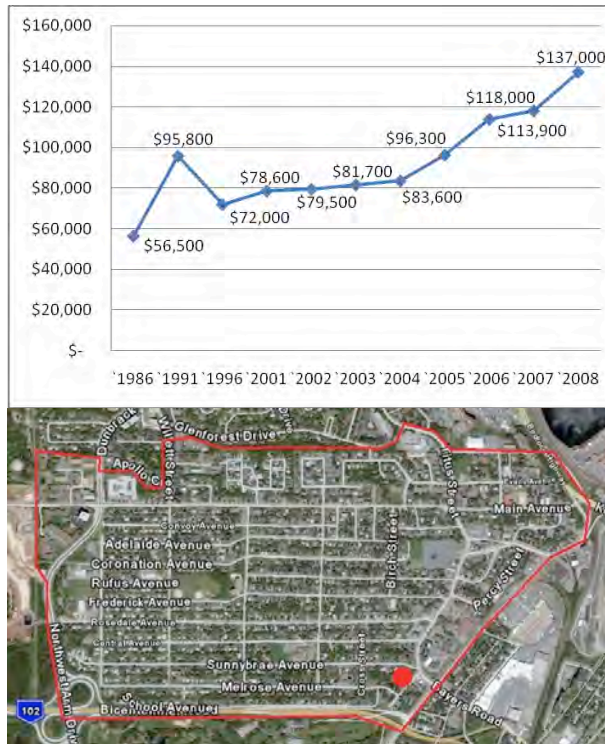


Fig. 4.23: Like the property in Fig. 4.22, this house also shows signs of decline, like peeling paint and a dilapidated appearance. Its values took a large dip from 1991 to 1996, but have surprisingly been increasing since. Once again, this is likely due to increasing land values.

An assessment of the 58 properties appearing to be in decline throughout Fairview shows that their collective values increased by an average of **48.1%** between 2001 and 2008.

4.3.2: Properties Showing Physical Signs of Improvement

The following five properties profile the prime examples of those that I noted from my qualitative, physical form assessment as properties appearing to be experiencing revitalization. They were selected from 50 properties appearing to revitalize, based on that assessment.

123 Central Ave.: +28.7% (2001 – 2008).

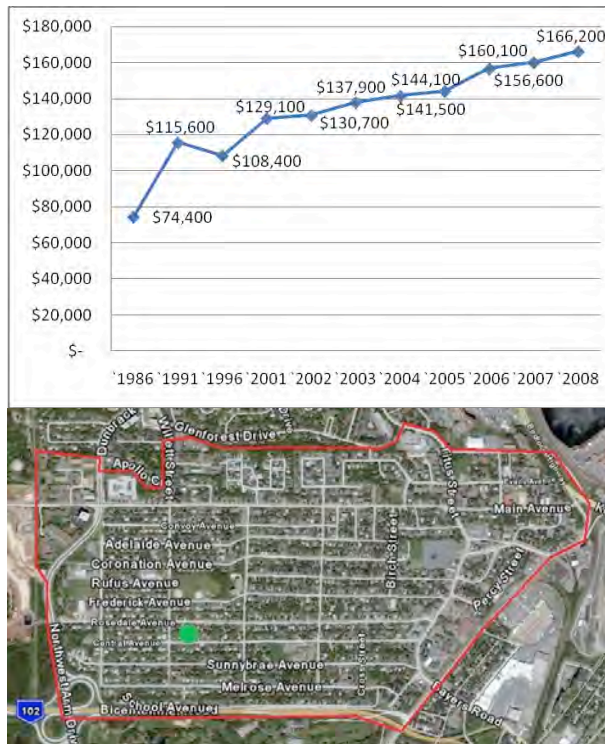


Fig. 4.24: While this house appeared to show the hallmarks of a revitalized property, with a new deck, new siding and windows, and three new cars in the driveway, the assessment increase did not. The house may look nice, but it is still small and not in a prime location.

60 Frederick Ave.: +105.3% (2001 – 2008).

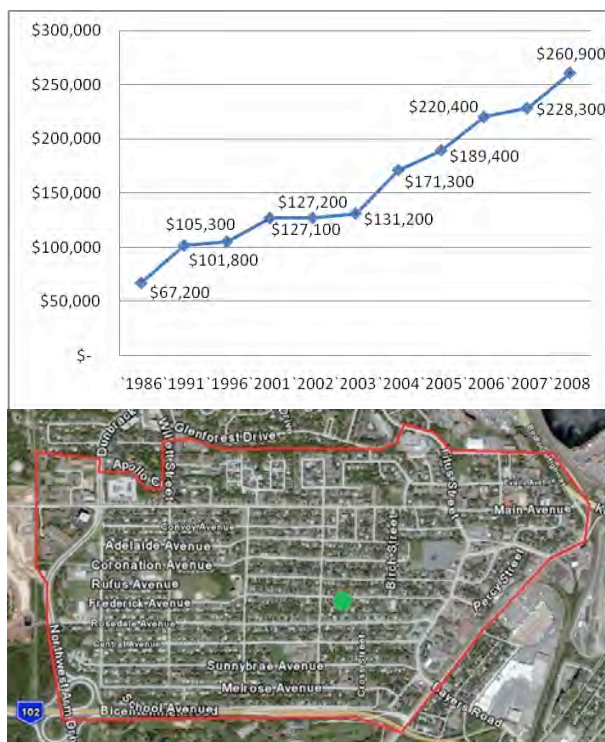


Fig. 4.25: This house neighbours the one seen in Fig. 4.21. In contrast to that dwelling, this home looks almost completely new, and the assessment values suggest it is a relatively recent construction or serious renovation.

64 Adelaide Ave.: +308.7% (2001 – 2008).

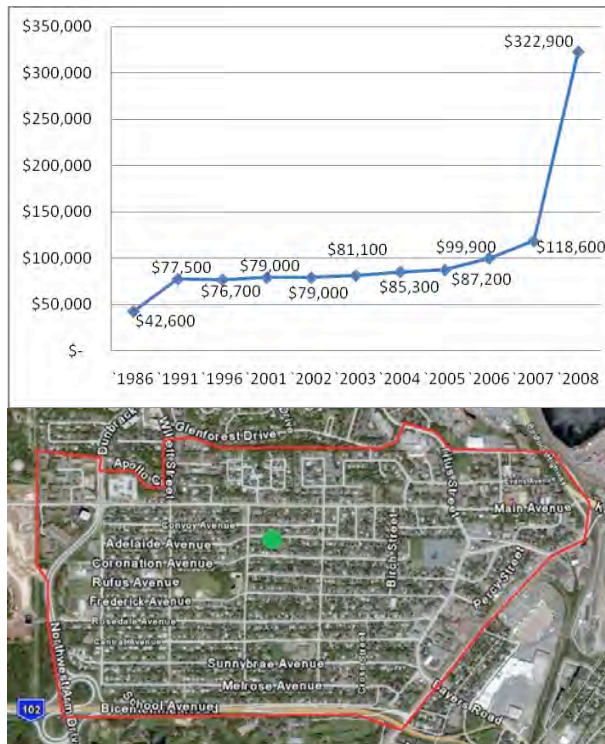


Fig. 4.26: Judging from the assessment values, likely a new house built within the

111 School Ave.: +506.4% (2001 – 2008).



Fig. 4.27: I was surprised to find many revitalizing properties along School Ave, as it is adjacent to the Bicentennial Highway and therefore experiences a lot of noise that often makes property less valuable. New homes like this one on streets like School Ave could imply increasing demand to live in Fairview.

3606 Deal St.: +609.6% (2002 – 2008).



Fig. 4.28: New homes like this one on formerly empty lots (this was a Royal Bank parking lot), especially in areas observed to be in decline (see **Fig. 4.3**), suggest recent revitalization in parts of Fairview. A duplex discounts gentrification and implies affordable housing, as well.

be revitalizing throughout Fairview shows that their collective values increased by an average of **110.7%** between 2001 and 2008. Overall, it appears as though my assumptions on properties I observed to be in decline were correct, although there were exceptions.

4.3.3: Summary and Conclusion

These property value assessments appear to paint a brighter picture of Fairview than the demographic analysis. While it still does not seem as though Fairview's values are expanding quite as rapidly as those in Halifax, many are still increasing rapidly. The high number of new and refurbished homes throughout Fairview accounts for much of this increase. As mentioned throughout, however, increasing assessment values on many of the existing properties are likely due to a change in how properties are assessed and broader economic factors, rather than a surge in demand to live in Fairview (MacFarlane 2008).

An analysis of these results as a whole will now be discussed, and final conclusions will be drawn from these results.

5.0: Analysis and Conclusion

5.1: Overview

These results are very ambiguous, and do not allow for any definite conclusions to be drawn. The demographic analysis seems to show Fairview being in decline when compared to Halifax, while the property value assessment and much of what I saw in the physical form assessment suggests some revitalization. Even if Fairview is not improving at the same rate as Halifax, there is definitely some revitalization occurring. On the other hand, decline appears to be continuing with some properties according to my observations, even as their assessment values increase.

The fact that some revitalization is more definite than some decline occurring implies an overall improving situation, however. On the whole, it is likely that the question I asked was too vague, leading to these ambiguous results and no definite conclusions.

5.2: Trends

Are there pockets of extreme decline and extreme revitalization happening in Fairview? No. As mentioned in the “Property Value Assessment,” there are many examples of well-kept houses next to very rundown ones. This has the potential, however, to create a “keeping up with the Joneses” affect, inducing people in the rundown homes to fix them up (Poteri 2008). MacFarlane predicts that many of the older post-WWII homes in Fairview will soon start to be torn down in favour of larger, more modern homes.

While some revitalization is likely occurring, it appears that gentrification is not. Although several do exist, Fairview still generally lacks historically significant homes and the trendiness of places like Halifax’s North End that usually attracts gentrifiers. The style of home construction and renovations, with relatively cheaper construction materials such as vinyl siding, suggests that most of these changes are likely to existing working-class homes by working-class people. Wealthier and white-collar areas generally prefer to use more wood panel siding or brick when carrying out home renovations, in order to minimize vinyl, and this is seen in the wealthier parts of the Halifax Peninsula such as the South End.

5.3: Lessons Learned

Many valuable lessons were learned from this study that I will hold with me for the rest of my life as an urban planner.

5.3.1: Evaluation of Assumptions and how they Affected my Work

Despite my best efforts to remain objective in my documentation and analysis of the area, it is obvious that many of my old stereotypes and assumptions remained by what I chose to take pictures of, especially earlier on in my analysis. 100 photographs could be shown to give the idea the area is rundown and in decline, while another 100 photographs could show the exact opposite leading to completely different viewpoints.

Oftentimes, I had to catch myself making the assumptions I did. There were several homes, for example, which I saw as either shabby (**Fig. 5.1**) or ugly (**Fig. 5.2**), and incorrectly noted them as being in decline. In actual fact, the home I thought was in disrepair was being repainted, while the home I saw as ugly was worth a lot more money than I thought it would have been, based on its appearance. How I saw these homes goes back to my own personal perceptions, biases, and assumptions. The old phrase “beauty is in the eye of the beholder,” and “one person’s junk is another’s treasure” come to mind when judging properties, and these expressions must apply to planners, as well.



Fig. 5.1: House assumed to have chipped paint and therefore in decline, McFatridge Ave (MacGregor 2008).



Fig. 5.2: House assumed to be unattractive looking and therefore in decline, Melrose Ave (MacGregor 2008).

5.3.2: Critique of the Question

What a stupid question! I could not help but to think this many times throughout researching and writing this thesis. While seemingly so simple to answer at first, perhaps even requiring a yes or no answer, it soon became the cause of much unnecessary work and frustration. It was much too vague and led to many ambiguous, ineffective results. As mentioned in the “Question Analysis” section, it also led to even more complicated questions. What is decline? What is revitalization? There are numerous ways to define those terms, and while I did give a description for both in “Glossary,” it is likely that another thesis could be written on one of those definitions alone.

5.3.3: Evaluation and Limitations of the Study

Clearly, a narrower focus is required for less tedious and time-consuming research and a better analysis. This includes reducing the study area from all of Fairview to a smaller area, even focussing only on particular streets or types of homes. Some information, such as property assessments, is also very difficult, or next to impossible, or not worth the time to find.

A broader understanding of home assessments and land economics is likely needed for a more complete analysis. MacFarlane mentioned it would be useful to compare related properties in Fairview to those in other areas of Halifax, such as post-WW II, working-class homes in the North or West End to similar post-war homes in Fairview. Time constraints prevented this.

5.4: Conclusion: What is Happening in Fairview?

Although a definite conclusion cannot be drawn due both to very mixed results and an ambiguous question, it appears as though Fairview is experiencing stability overall, but may be on the brink of a period of modest revitalization. There are many examples of home improvements and new infill construction (**Fig. 5.3**), all indicative of a revitalizing neighbourhood, and real estate values are increasing at a greater rate than ever before. These values are, however, either just keeping pace or increasing slightly less than in Halifax as a whole. As Bruce MacFarlane said, it is likely more indicative of demand for the peninsula pushing prices in the area up, rather than a huge demand to live in Fairview.

However the statistics or stereotypes show Fairview to be, it is clear that the vast majority of the people who live there like living there. My aunt's negative experiences which influenced my assumptions of the area appear to be in the minority. She left over ten years ago now and has never looked back. For someone like Jack Poteri, though, you could not pay him to leave the community he, and thousands of others, are proud to call their home.



Fig. 5.3: Advertisement for new townhouse development on Berts Drive, off Main Ave (MacGregor 2008).

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Glossary

For the purposes of this thesis, I used the following definitions. These are based on numerous readings, observations, knowledge, and my own personal experiences as both an Urban Planner and lifelong resident of the Halifax region.

“Contemporary” refers to physical property defined by what is considered by the present standard to be new, convenient, attractive and modern. Essentially, this is what is generally considered not old. In this thesis, the term will usually refer to the built environment.

“Decline” occurs when physical deterioration in the quality of housing stock, commercial business, and institutions are observed through visual surveys, combined with numerical measures of relative decreases in property value and decreasing real income compared to the city as a whole over the recent history of the neighbourhood. Decline can also include, but may not necessarily be characterized by, a noted increase in drug-related and violent crime, a higher proportion of single-parent families, and an increasing mean age of population when compared to the city as a whole.

“Fairview [area/community/neighbourhood/suburb]” constitutes the streets, buildings and open space that is primarily (but not entirely) contained within Statistics Canada’s Census Tract 2050024.00. Fairview is roughly bounded by Glenforest Drive, Lacewood Drive, Vimy Avenue and Bedford Highway to the North, North West Arm Drive to the West, Bicentennial Drive to the South, and Joseph Howe Drive to the East.

“Gentrification” means the “revitalization” of an area primarily caused by upper-income persons from outside the area. These people purchase and renovate rundown and relatively inexpensive homes in predominantly working-class neighbourhoods and, over a period of time, change the socio-economic structure of the neighbourhood to a higher level than before. Gentrifying neighbourhoods are usually within an attractive, convenient location relative to the urban core, and oftentimes contain houses which are deemed historically significant and therefore worthy of renovation.

“Historically significant” includes that which is considered valuable and worthy of preservation based on the qualities of its age, cultural significance, rarity and attractiveness to those who value eras of the past. In this thesis, the term will usually refer to the built environment.

“Inner-ring suburb” is a predominantly residential suburban area built primarily in the twenty-five years after WWII, from 1945 to 1970. They are usually, but not always, built with poorer

quality building materials than other developments, and are characterized by strong working-class features.

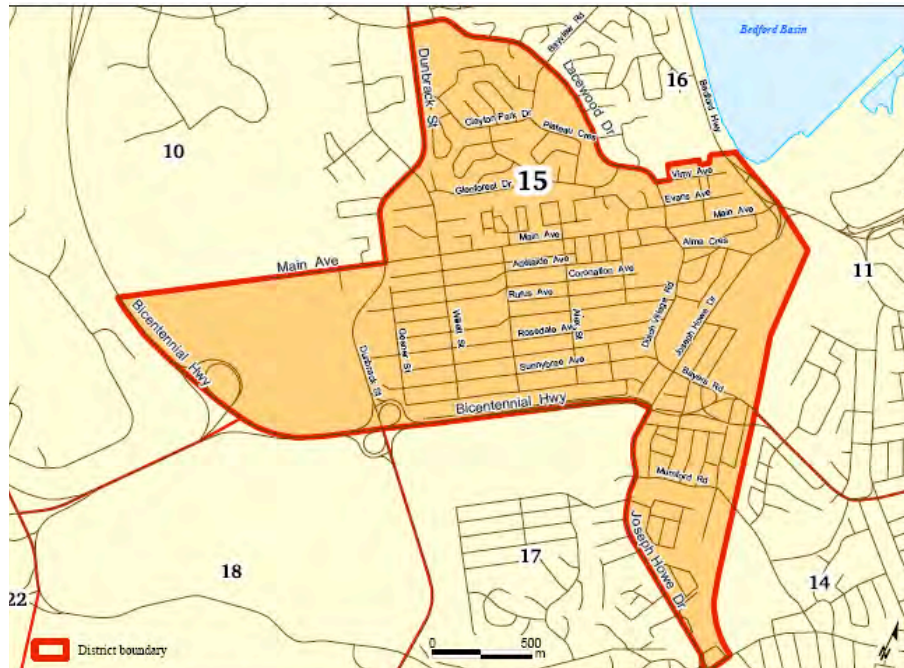
“Outer-ring suburb” is a predominantly residential suburban area built beyond and primarily after the inner-ring suburbs, beginning in the late 1960s and continuing today. They are usually, but not always, built with better quality building materials, and are characterized by more middle to upper class characteristics, than inner-ring suburbs.

“Revitalization” occurs when, after a period of known “decline,” there is a qualitative observation of physical improvement in the quality of housing stock, commercial business, and institutions, combined with numerical measures of relative increases in property value and increasing real income compared to the city as a whole since the end of “decline” in the neighbourhood. Revitalization can also include, but may not necessarily be characterized by, a noted decrease in drug-related and violent crime, a lower proportion of single-parent families, and a decreasing mean age of population when compared to the city as a whole, as well as a jump in permits for renovation granted by the municipality.

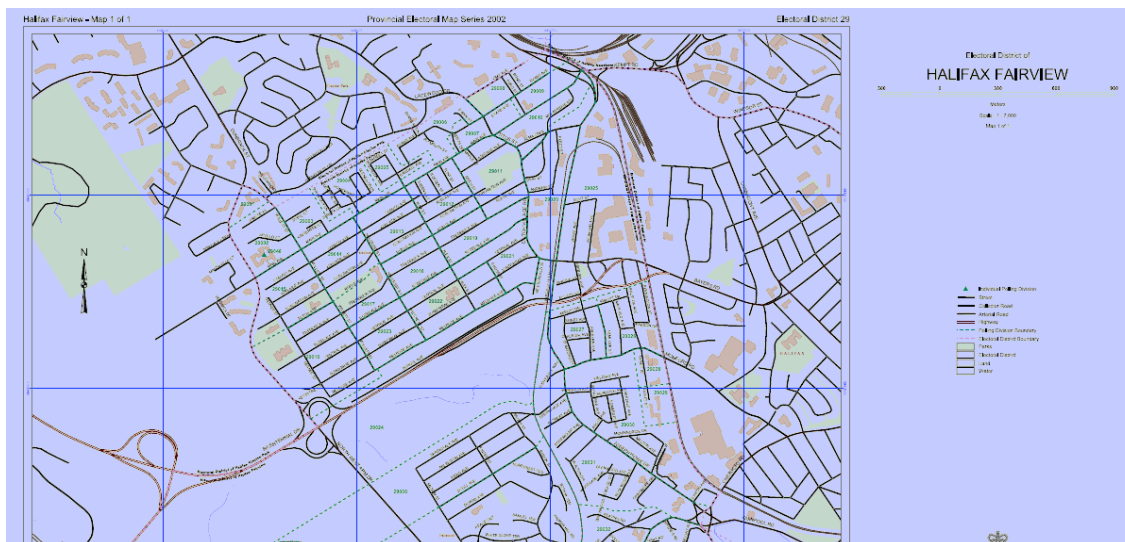
“Working-class/blue-collar” implies physical, social and economic characteristics of people who work lower-wage jobs in the manual labour and service industry, usually characterized by a lower overall education compared to the rest of the city as a whole.

Appendices

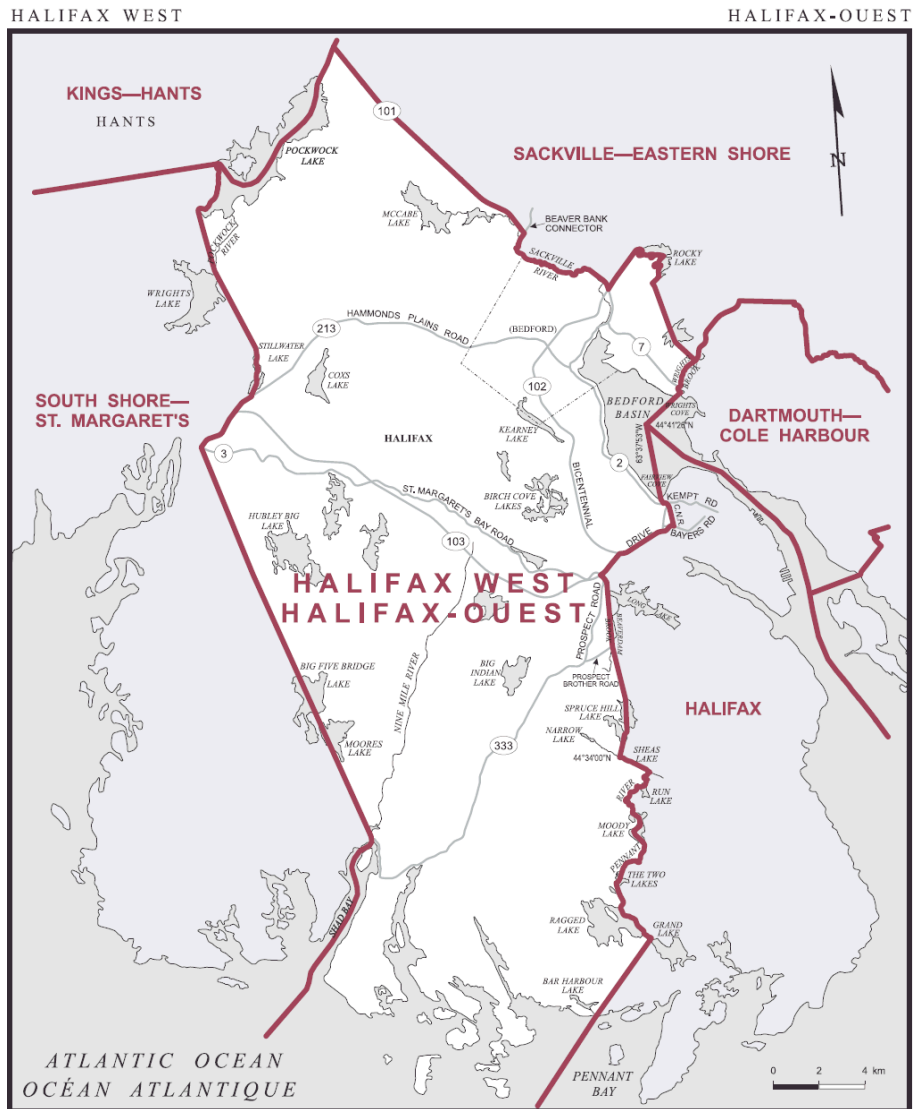
Appendix 1.1: HRM District 15: Fairview – Clayton Park



Appendix 1.2: Province of Nova Scotia Electoral District of Halifax Fairview



Appendix 1.3: Federal Electoral District of Halifax West



Appendix 3.1: Qualitative, physical form assessment

Sources: Site visits, Historical photographs, HP Photosmart Digital Camera, Pen and Paper, Local residents, Researched literature

With regards to decline, this included the observer noting such features as:

Buildings, particularly residences and businesses, which appeared as the following:

Unoccupied, either through being for sale for a long period of time, abandoned, or boarded-up.

Those with crumbling, rotting, dirty, or plain facades; broken windows; graffiti; chipping exterior paint; worn front steps and other accessory features; broken and/or 1960s and 1970s-style front doors; shoddy or unfinished repairs made with cheaper materials; and decaying cars surrounding the property.

In comparison to other similarly-aged or older parts of the city as a whole, a higher number of older, cracked, crumbling or vandalized sidewalks, streets, bus shelters, road signs, and other significant infrastructure.

Businesses generally regarded as lower-quality when compared to those in the city as a whole, which included pawn shops, dollar stores, pizzerias, non-“vintage” used clothing stores, etc.

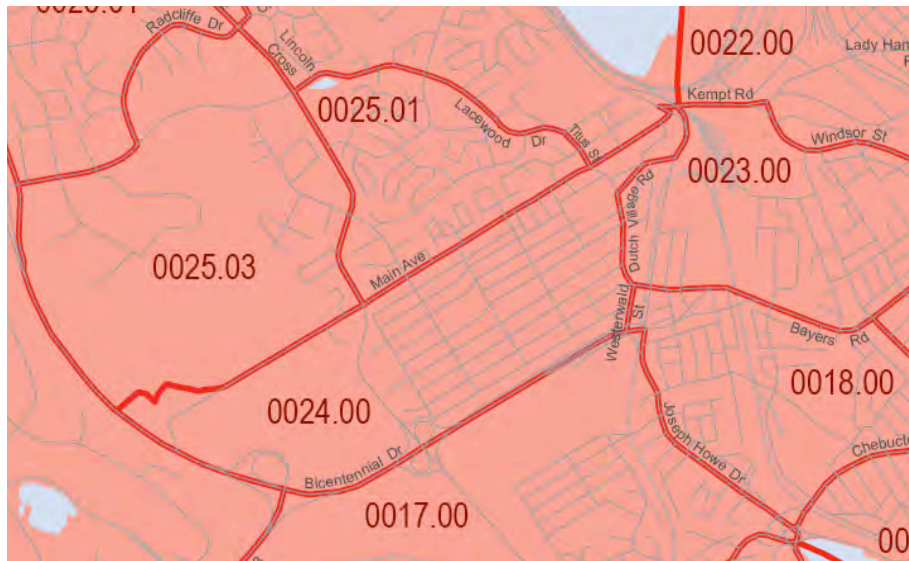
With regards to revitalization, this included the observer noting such features as:

Buildings that appear to have recently been occupied, and those which have recently been or are in the process of being repaired, renovated, upgraded, modernized or added to with a higher-quality building material than what had been used before.

In comparison to other parts of the city with a similar demographic, a higher number of new and repaired sidewalks, streets, bus shelters, and other significant infrastructure.

Businesses generally regarded as higher-quality recently opening in the neighbourhood, either newly constructed or replacing what were once lower-quality commercial businesses. This included professional offices, higher-end coffee shops, restaurants, clothing stores, boutiques, specialty food stores, salons, spas, etc.

Appendix 3.2: Statistics Canada Census Tract 2050024.00



Appendix 3.3: Individual Property Assessments

Appendix 3.4: Property Value Assessment

In order to give a simpler yet well-rounded look at the socio-economic situation in Fairview to help achieve the goals of this thesis, properties were selected for further analysis based on the following criteria:

Those showing either the most obvious newest construction or refurbishment, or the most physical decline were included.

Declining properties with the lowest increase or highest decrease in assessment value, and revitalizing properties with the highest increase in value.

Significant declining and revitalizing properties next to one another. Adjacent declining or revitalizing properties were narrowed down to the most representative one.

Properties that stood out due to certain peculiarities, such as those with very narrow lots, unique or historically significant homes, architectural styles that did not fit with the norm in Fairview, unique design, and especially extravagant or squalid looking homes. These types of unique properties could potentially be candidates for gentrification if deemed significant.

Properties were deselected based on the following criteria:

Properties still being developed, or those where significant renovations were currently taking place, as this would likely not yet be accounted for in the assessment values.

Properties where the physical observation could not accurately determine whether or not the property was in decline or revitalizing, such as those with chipped paint that may either be coming off naturally due to deferred maintenance, or because the home is about to be repainted.

From this point, I did the following:

From the Nova Scotia Property Assessments available online, recorded the yearly values available for the selected properties, from 2001 to 2008.

From the Nova Scotia Public Archives, recorded the values from 1986, 1991, and 1996 – those tied to the Statistics Canada Census years.

Consolidated, analyzed, mapped, and graphed the changes.

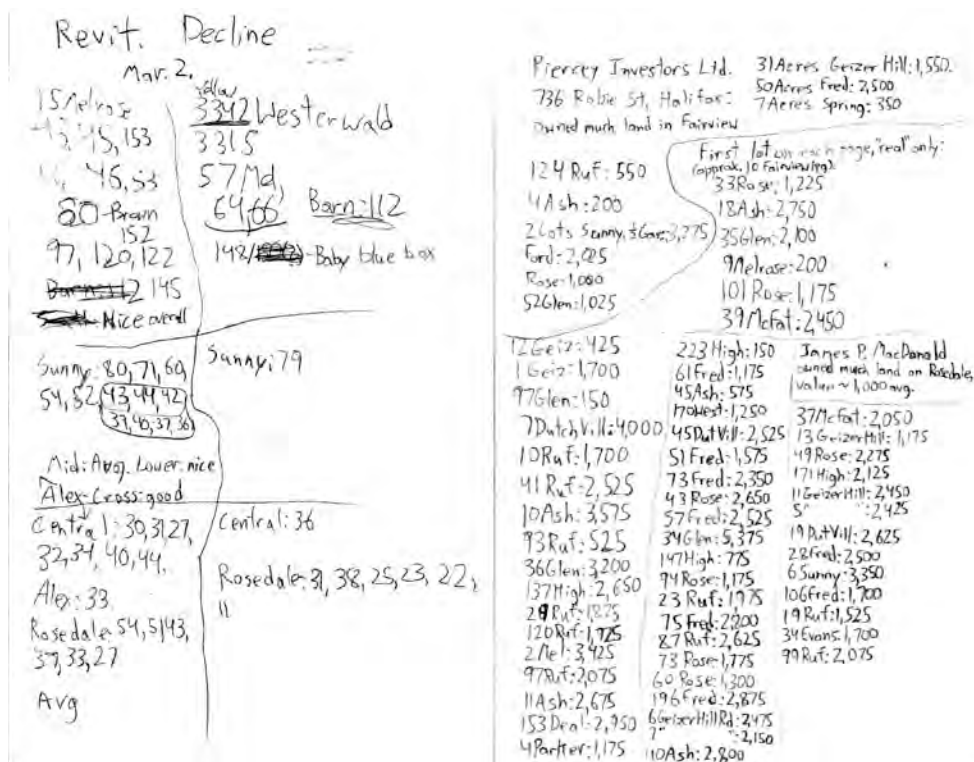
Appendix 4.1: Rough Notes

Journal: Friday February 29, 2008. 10:30 am to 11:30 am.

Today I further explored and documented Rufus and Frederick. As mentioned previously, the lower end of Rufus appears to be one of the lower-income parts of Fairview, with many smaller homes that have not been improved or repaired, but most still being kept in decent shape, with some exceptions. There is a mix of small single-family bungalow-style homes, and some larger homes which are mostly converted into apartments, along with some more conventional lower-income 3 to 4 storey 60s-style apartments. In general, the lower end of Rufus is not as nice as the upper end where it becomes more average when compared to the rest of Fairview, around its end at Hillcrest at the sports field.

Frederick has some very good views of peninsular Halifax, like most Fairview streets but unlike Rufus, and the housing is definitely nicer than on Rufus overall. The homes are generally bigger, in better condition and show more signs of renovation and expansion. Like Rufus and most of Fairview though, it becomes less nice closer to the bottom of the hill, with more apartments (both in house-style buildings and 60s-style box buildings) and some rundown homes, although it does not look as bad as Rufus. At Dutch Village however, some obvious decline can be seen with the abandoned former gas station, crumbling asphalt and lower-scale rundown shops. It was in a nicer business, at Harbourside Realty Ltd., that I got to speak with Bruce MacFarlane, a real estate agent in the area.

Site Notes:



Appendix 4.2: Qualitative, Physical Form Assessment

Fig. 4.2.1 to **Fig. 4.2.34** shows 34 pictures to compare and contrast some examples of declining, revitalizing, or stable properties located throughout the Fairview area. This photo-essay is meant to give a visual overview of what the community looks like through its streetscapes, businesses, institutions, community centres, parks, housing stock, and any other significant features. All photographs were taken by the author from the January to March, 2008.



Fig. 4.2.1: Looking east down Melrose Ave from Hillcrest St.



Fig. 4.2.2: Looking east down Rosedale Ave from Hillcrest St.



Fig. 4.2.3: Looking south down Cross St. from Central Ave.



Fig. 4.2.4: Looking south down Alex St. from Main Ave.



Fig. 4.2.5: Fence on top of bedrock outcrop, looking east down Rufus Ave.



Fig. 4.2.6: Retaining wall on Sunnybrae Ave.



Fig. 4.2.7: Path leading to Percy St. from Joseph Howe Drive.



Fig. 4.2.8: Path leading to School Ave. from top of Melrose Ave.



Fig. 4.2.9: Path leading to Joseph Howe Superstore from Percy St.



Fig. 4.2.10:
Informal sidewalk
along Willett Ave.



Fig. 4.2.11: New Shoppers Drug Mart at Dutch Village Road and Joseph Howe Drive.



Fig. 4.2.12: One of several boarded-up service stations on Dutch Village Road.



Fig. 4.2.13: Commercial complex on Dutch Village Road: Pizza, Chinese food, mini-mart.



Fig. 4.2.14: Businesses on Dutch Village Road: Pizza, pool, cafe, and unoccupied



Fig. 4.2.15: Dutchie's Restaurant & Lounge: main bar in Fairview.



Fig. 4.2.16: Super Mike's Convenience store, Central Ave. One of several found throughout Fairview.



Fig. 4.2.17: Seasons Motor Inn, Melrose Ave and Westerwald St.



Fig. 4.2.18: Royal Canadian Legion, Main Ave. and Hillcrest St.



Fig. 4.2.19: Church of Christ, Convoy Ave and Hillcrest St.



Fig. 4.2.20: Burton Ettinger Elementary School, Sunnybrae Ave and Alex St.



Fig. 4.2.22: W.D. Piercey Sports Field, Frederick Ave. and Willett St.



Fig. 4.2.21: Nova Scotia Power substation on Percy St.



Fig. 4.2.23: Burton Ettinger Field, looking north from Sunnybrae Ave to Central Ave.



Fig. 4.2.24: Titus Park, Evans Ave and Titus St.



Fig. 4.2.25: Low-density multi-unit dwellings, Randall Ave and Gebhardt St.



Fig. 4.2.26: Mobile homes, trailer park north of Main Ave.



Fig. 4.2.27: Single-family homes on Central Ave at Dutch Village Road.



Fig. 4.2.28: Homes at Sunnybrae Ave and Cross St.



Fig. 4.2.29: Homes on Rufus Ave at Alex St.



Fig. 4.2.30: Homes on Deal St. at Dutch Village Road.



Fig. 4.2.31: Duplexes on Evans Ave at Ford St.



Fig. 4.2.32: Duplexes and single-family home on Convoy Ave near Alex St.



Fig. 4.2.33: Apartment buildings on Evans Ave at Dutch Village Road.



Fig. 4.2.34: Looking up Frederick Ave. from Dutch Village Road.

Appendix 4.3: Dwellings

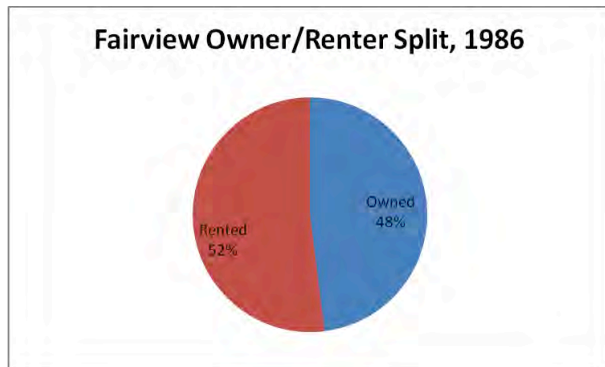


Fig. 4.3.1: Slightly more renters in Fairview in 1986.

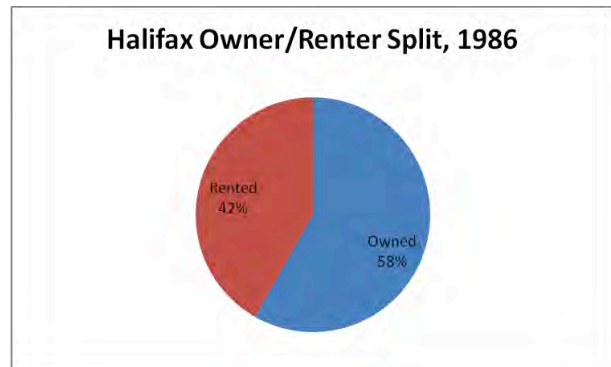


Fig. 4.3.2: More owners in Halifax in 1986.

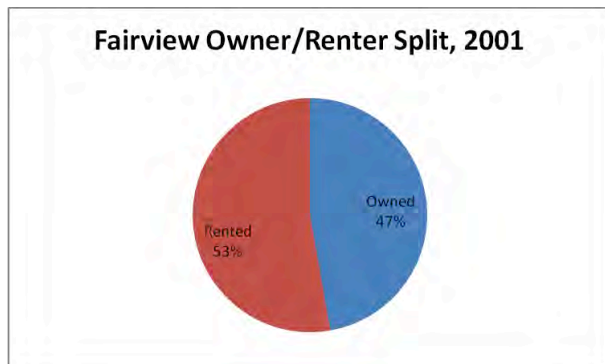


Fig. 4.3.3: Approximately same values in Fairview in 2001.

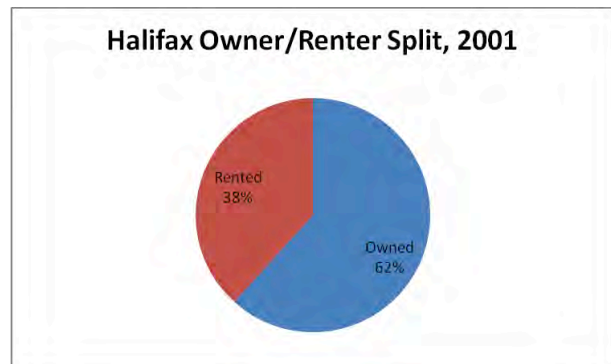


Fig. 4.3.4: Slightly more owners in Halifax in 2001 than 1986.

Appendix 4.4: House Condition

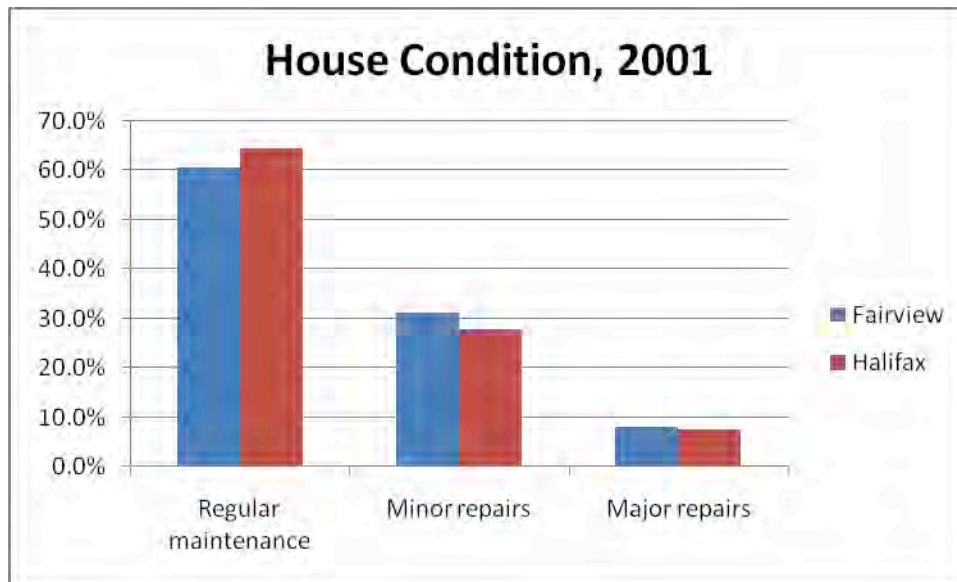


Fig. 4.4.1: Fairview and Halifax homes requiring regular, minor, or major repairs. This offers a numerical representation of housing condition.

Appendix 4.5: Employment

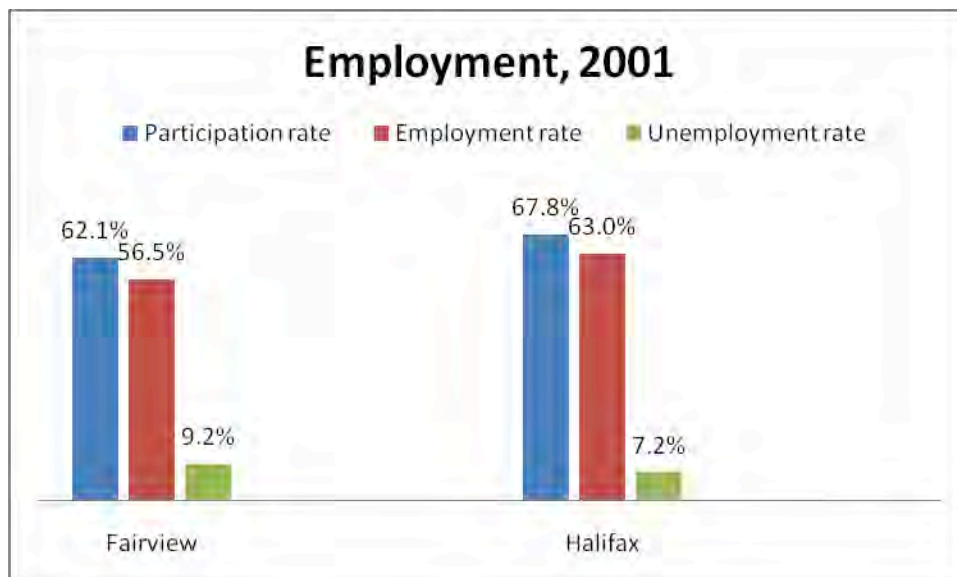


Fig. 4.5.1: Participation, employment, and unemployment rates in Halifax and Fairview.

Appendix 4.6: Professional vs. Working-Class Jobs

	1986	2001
Professional	<p>Managerial, administrative and related.</p> <p>Teaching and related.</p> <p>Occupations in medicine and health.</p> <p>Technological, social, religious, artistic and related.</p>	<p>Management.</p> <p>Business, finance and administration.</p> <p>Natural and applied sciences.</p> <p>Health.</p> <p>Social science, education, government and religion.</p> <p>Art, culture, recreation and sport.</p>
Working-Class	<p>Service.</p> <p>Processing.</p> <p>Machining, product fabricating, assembling and repairing.</p> <p>Construction trades.</p> <p>Transport equipment operating.</p>	<p>Sales and service.</p> <p>Trades, transport and equipment operators.</p> <p>Occupations unique to primary industry.</p> <p>Processing, manufacturing and utilities.</p>

Appendix 4.7: Education

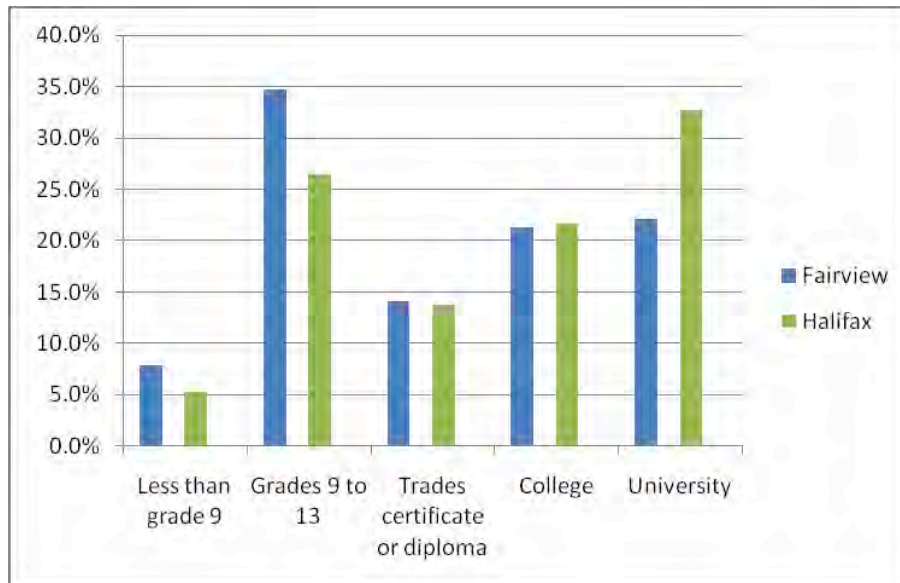


Fig. 4.7.1: A better-educated Halifax compared to Fairview.

Appendix 4.8: Income

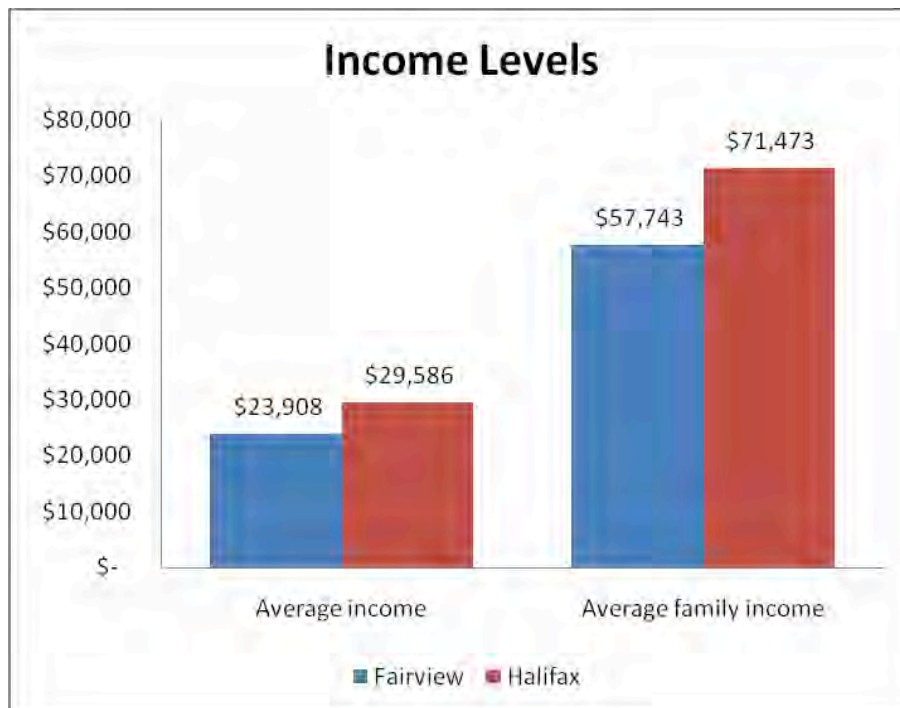


Fig. 4.8.1: Lower income levels in Fairview compared to Halifax.