

# 2005

University of New  
Brunswick



## SeaChange/Métamorphose 2005

**[NEXT NB][AVENIR NB]**

A bilingual project initiated by the University of New Brunswick to raise awareness of New Brunswick's challenges and inspire the province's citizens to step forward and lead.

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## **Introduction**

### **The Idea**

That's where it begins.

It might pop into your mind like a firecracker on a holiday weekend or perhaps it has been slowly simmering in your thoughts waiting for that final ingredient to complete it. We've all got ideas and rather than keep them to ourselves we often sit down with friends, colleagues and family to talk, spar, tease and debate each other about our thoughts and opinions. The record of a favoured sports team. The new direction set down by head office. The plot twists of last night's movie. The choices we make. We talk about it all – both the trivial and the substantive – and through those discussions we can reach answers and conclusions. Oftentimes we are also compelled to act, particularly when the issue at hand pertains to our own lives.

But when we leave our private space and enter the public domain, we sometimes hesitate to move beyond the conversation. Faced with the complexities of public policy – health care, education, economic development, population growth and government budgets – we just don't know where to start.

Consider the facts.

New Brunswick is a small province with some very big problems.

It's population growth is stagnant at 750,000 people, it has experienced a net loss of its citizens in every census since the mid-1970s and in 2006 it will become one of the first provinces in Canada to see its annual number of deaths overtake the annual number of births.

In 2000, Industry Canada conducted a standard of living comparison between Canada's 10 provinces and the 50 American states. New Brunswick ranked 57<sup>th</sup> out of 60. The same report placed New Brunswick 58<sup>th</sup> out of 60 in a ranking of productivity.

Money and people: New Brunswick needs both if it is to tell a new story, but in order to create wealth we need leaders to mould a society receptive to new ideas.

Next NB/Avenir NB, a bilingual project initiated by the University of New Brunswick, seeks to raise awareness of New Brunswick's challenges and inspire the province's citizens to step forward and lead.

Next NB/Avenir NB is built upon three pillars:

### **Inspire new stories**

Between February 2004 and May 2005 Next NB/Avenir NB released eight discussion papers and host 16 public roundtables to discuss community-based solutions for New Brunswick's challenges.

- *The Next New Brunswick: A Story of Transformation* (Feb. 2004)
- *The Face in the Mirror: Defining New Brunswick's People* (Mar. 2004)
  - Fredericton & Caraquet
- *Town, Country & Coast: Community Development in New Brunswick* (May 2004)
  - Woodstock & Bouctouche
- *Moving In, Moving Out: Immigration and Migration in New Brunswick* (June 2004)
  - Grand Falls & Bathurst
- *A Covenant with our Children: Education in New Brunswick* (Sept. 2004)
  - Sackville & Edmundston
- *Standing in the Shadows: Understanding Poverty in New Brunswick* (Nov. 2004)
  - Tracadie-Sheila & Saint John
- *Ebb & Flow: The Rhythm of the New Brunswick Economy* (Feb. 2005)
  - Miramichi & Campbellton
- *A House into a Home: Renovating Health Care in New Brunswick* (Mar. 2005)
  - Minto and Dalhousie
- *Global World, Small Province* (May 2005)
  - Moncton and St. Stephen

### **Involve new voices**

This groundwork in public policy analysis naturally feeds into the second tenet of Next NB/Avenir NB's philosophy, that of empowering citizens to take on leadership roles.

In October 2004, Next NB/Avenir NB launched, in partnership with Aliant and with support from the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, *21 Leaders for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century/21 Leaders pour le 21<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, a province-wide search for the next generation of leaders, people between the ages of 20 and 35. Lieutenant Governor Herménégilde Chiasson is honorary chairman. During the last week of April 2005, the Leaders toured New Brunswick's five regions, where they met and exchanged ideas with business, political, cultural and community leaders.

## **Initiate new ideas**

This is what SeaChange/Métamorphose 2005 will accomplish.

The Summit's mandate is to design an action plan of new, tangible ideas to transform New Brunswick. It will also foster a new intergenerational network of leaders that will cross sectors. This is particularly important because in this increasingly complex world, New Brunswick will need a strategic plan that links together economic progress, social development and core values.

## Your Role

Thank you for joining us in telling a new story for our province at SeaChange/Métamorphose 2005. It is a gift to be entrusted to tell someone else's story. To take it and relay it to others so they can either relate, commiserate or learn from that experience. Stories are what connect us. Through them we learn the values we share, we seek to understand our differences and we consider where all these stories may lead.

That is the challenge we now lay before you because we believe that if we are to have transformational change in New Brunswick, it must be championed by a new cadre of leaders.

At SeaChange/Métamorphose 2005, each of you is a member of a discussion group. Over the course of three sessions, you will work through the specific challenges of your topic and then propose one tangible idea that can be enacted at either the personal or community level.

The sessions are:

Wednesday morning

9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Introductions and Issues

You'll start by introducing yourselves to members of your group. Moderators will begin with opening remarks about the topic and then participants will have an opportunity to engage in a free-wheeling discussion about the challenges facing New Brunswick specific to the topic.

Wednesday afternoon

2 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Setting Priorities

Now that you've got everything off your mind, it is time to narrow the focus and set the priorities for your topic. You will consider the root causes of the challenge before you, differentiate between assumptions and facts and determine which of the many issues raised, are key to finding solutions.

Thursday morning

10 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

The Big Idea

It all comes down to this - developing, and then initiating, a plan of action. You will spend this final session determining what it is you want to accomplish, how to do it and why it is important to act. Each group will then announce their big idea following lunch.

## **Beginning the Conversation**

There is no shortage of things to talk about in New Brunswick: a lack of sustainable jobs; the continuing out-migration of people, particularly those under the age of 30; old infrastructure; lack of wealth; and, a polarizing political culture. Complex problems such as these cannot be examined in a vacuum but rather must be considered in relation to other factors. To do that, we must develop a new model of public policy analysis, one that considers far deeper roots, causes and connections for the issues that confront us. This model sees relationships as organic and interconnected, with each building upon each other, in much the same way, the earth itself is supported and sustained by distinct layers.

### **The Outer Layer: The Economy**

The most easily identified part of society, the jobs, commerce and trade, that drives community development. However, the economy is actually created and sustained (or devalued) by larger, but less visible, elements.

### **The Second Layer: Infrastructure**

Roads, airports, ports, rail lines, schools, hospitals, recreation centres, walking trails, public spaces, community agencies, broadband, industrial parks, commercial spaces and residential neighbourhoods, these are the physical structures that support communities. We need to consider our infrastructure priorities and how best to develop and sustain it.

### **The Third Layer: Institutions**

These are the rules of the game, both large and small that impact New Brunswick's development both positively and negatively. This includes; unemployment insurance, regional economic development programs, the softwood lumber agreement, equalization, federal-provincial relations, municipal zoning bylaws, local service districts, foreign credential approval systems, teacher training and the institutions that enact and maintain these rules such as the Legislative Assembly, municipal councils, regional health authorities, district education councils and the civil service that assists each. we don't get the rules correct, then this has an effect on the economy and its ability to develop.

### **The Core: Culture and Values**

Deciding who we are as New Brunswickers lies at the heart of this conversation because good public policy must reflect the aspirations and core values of New Brunswick citizens. We must consider our shared identity and determine what we value as New Brunswickers. Our artists, writers, poets, songwriters, actors and craftspeople have long given expression to these unspoken feelings. To build a strong community, we must first understand who we are and what we want to accomplish.

To initiate transformational change in New Brunswick, we will need three things:

#### Personal Leadership

Change will come to New Brunswick because its citizens took up the challenge. It has been done before. In the late 1940s, veterans returned from the Second World War with a shared experience and understanding of the world beyond their province's borders. Trusting their instincts, they ignored local naysayers and set about to develop and implement transformational change in rural and urban New Brunswick. It was a similar story in the 1960s when Premier Louis J. Robichaud, supported by a generation of men and women, set about to change the social, educational and political structure of New Brunswick.

#### A Culture of Innovation

The word innovation comes from the Latin root *innovare*, which means "to make new or to alter". That's the definition. Far more interesting is the spirit behind the word, which is often used to describe something experimental, different or unexpected. To be innovative is to dream, to conceptualize and, after you've examined the issue or item from all angles, to take a leap of faith in yourself and your idea. In New Brunswick we need to take that leap and more importantly, we need to celebrate and encourage those who do.

#### Public Investment

Bottom line: We're going to need money and we're going to have to find it ourselves. Let's not wait for someone else to tell us where they'd like to invest their money in New Brunswick. Instead we must design our own plan that sets key spending priorities with focused outcomes and then we need to aggressively market it to those who share our outlook and who have access to the capital we will need.

## **The Story**

Through its discussion papers and public roundtables, Next NB/Avenir NB has asked a lot of questions. At the heart of it all is one key question: what do we want of New Brunswick?

The answer lies in our stories. Through its papers, Next NB/Avenir NB framed issues of public policy around a central narrative that was defined by five questions. We will explore the answers to each at SeaChange/Métamorphose 2005. Each of the 15 discussion groups forms a part of the answer to these questions. The groups were selected based on the feedback Next NB/Avenir NB received from hundreds of New Brunswickers who participated through public roundtables, in email exchanges, at invited speaking engagements, at two Aboriginal talking circles and at two day-long seminars, one held in partnership with Moosehead Breweries and the second with the Commission on Legislative Democracy.

## **Chapter One: Who are we? We need to define the modern New Brunswick identity.**

### **Language and Ethnicity**

*“Back then (in 1995) the Aboriginal parents didn’t want their children to learn our language because it wasn’t the language of power.”*

Aboriginal talking circle, Tobique First Nation, August 2004

New Brunswick is Canada’s only officially bilingual province, but being bilingual does not mean it is bicultural too. Its origins are rooted in five cultures – Mi’kmaq, Wolastoqewiyik (Maliseet), Passamaquoddy, British and French. While New Brunswickers trace their origins back to at least one of 83 ethnicities, the bulk of the province’s citizens have European roots. According to the 2001 Canadian census, 415,810 out of 729,500 New Brunswickers identified themselves, at least in part, as Canadian. This was followed by French (193,470 people), English (165,240 people), Irish (135,830 people) and Scottish (127,630 people). About 16,770 Aboriginal people call New Brunswick home. Only 1.3 per cent of New Brunswickers are visible minorities; Canada-wide it is 13.4 per cent.

Central to New Brunswick’s identity is the relationship between anglophone and francophone people. A key element of bilingualism is language training in the public school system, a program that has been the topic of recent debates. At public roundtables on the state of education held in Sackville and Edmundston, participants all agreed that New Brunswick’s second language training needs improvement. Issues were also raised at these and other roundtables on the need to build bridges between francophone and anglophone communities.

Equally important is New Brunswick’s relationship with Aboriginal people. It is a heartbreaking story of racism, exclusion and broken promises. A modern New Brunswick needs a modern relationship with Mi’kmaq, Wolastoqewiyik (Maliseet) and Passamaquoddy people. That includes a recognition of their unique place in New Brunswick and a renewed understanding of their cultural and spiritual traditions.

- What are the elements of the modern New Brunswick identity?
- Is it inclusive?
- Who are we missing?
- What is the state of the relationship between the Aboriginal and the non-Aboriginal population?
- What should it be?
- How will that be accomplished?
- What does it mean to be bilingual?
- How do we do that?
- New Brunswick has two separate public school systems based on language. How can we build a bridge between them that encourages understanding between the two groups while continuing to nurture the development of both?

## Values

*“New Brunswick didn’t give birth to us; we gave birth to New Brunswick.”*

Public roundtable on culture, Fredericton, March 2004

At its most basic, New Brunswick is a geo-political definition but to those who call it home it represents something much deeper than a border on a map. In 2003, three political scientists at the University of New Brunswick set out to explore the province’s social capital, a school of thought that believes our social networks – both organized and organic – have value. Within these networks there are degrees of trust, information exchange, a sense of reciprocity and a defined identity to the larger group. Healthy societies have strong elements of each.

The project surveyed 850 people between July and September 2003. Among its findings it determined that, of the New Brunswickers polled:

- 87 per cent feel attachment to their local community;
- 93 per cent feel attachment to New Brunswick;
- 36 per cent have worked with others in their community at least once in the past five years to solve a community problem;
- 50 per cent feel that when an individual’s rights and the good of the community come into conflict, the good of the community should come first;
- 89 per cent said family is more important than work;
- 61 per cent believe people should look out for themselves;
- 72 per cent feel a part of their neighbourhood; and,
- 91 per cent don’t mind hearing other people’s opinions.

To create a strong society we need a strong sense of ourselves. Something draws us here – the land, the water, a shared cultural community, family and the comforts of home. During Next NB/Avenir NB’s travels around New Brunswick, we heard one recurring thought – New Brunswick is our home and despite its problems, we are proud to live here and value what it has to offer. It is time to identify what those values are and how they sustain us.

- Why do you live in New Brunswick?
- Without using the expression ‘quality of life’ describe what you value about your community?
- What should we value?
- Are there pan-provincial traits that cause us to pull ourselves down?
- How do we express our values?
- Do Aboriginal, Anglophone and Francophone people have different sets of values?
- What values do they share?
- How do you define yourself? To what groups, if any, do you belong?
- How does New Brunswick reflect its values?
- How do we connect our core values with policy development?

## The Arts

*“We show off our artists only when we have company coming from away.”*

Public roundtable on culture, Caraquet, April 2004

History remembers the victors but it celebrates the artists. So too should New Brunswick. The province is filled with history. Metepenagiag (Red Bank) First Nation is the oldest continually occupied community in the province. It is the site of two national historical sites, Oxbow, an Aboriginal camp and the largest in the Maritimes, and the Augustine Mound, an ancient burial ground. Both date back 2,500 years. In 2004, Francophone New Brunswickers marked the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of Samuel de Champlain and Loyalists, a group that includes Dutch, Huguenot, English, Scots, Irish and African Americans, both slave and free, have lived here for over 225 years.

We have a strong sense of our history and our artists, poets, writers, playwrights, actors, singers, songwriters and musicians have long celebrated those stories. They also explore our collective soul, sometimes revealing uncomfortable truths, other times giving expression to our aspirations. They explore our identities, challenge our values and give us reasons to think and to feel.

There is a distinct difference between Francophone and Anglophone communities and their relationship to the arts. In Francophone New Brunswick, the visual arts are proudly on display. For instance, during the 21 Leaders tour, the group learned of the Fédération des caisses populaires acadiennes, collection of contemporary Acadian art, begun in 1995 as a unique way to mark the institution's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Works of photography hung on the walls of L'Acadie Nouvelle's Caraquet office and a mural of local artists decorated the wall of a hotel in Grand Sault/Grand Falls.

During public roundtables in Fredericton and Caraquet, participants spoke of a personal appreciation for the arts, and in particular the work of New Brunswickers, but none felt that New Brunswick's institutions – political, cultural and corporate – adequately celebrated or nurtured the provincial artistic scene.

- How do you support the arts in New Brunswick?
- Do you have a favourite form of artistic expression?
- How aware are you of the current scene in the visual arts? In theatre? In literature and poetry? In music?
- What role do the arts play in the life of a community?
- What role can the arts play in economic development?
- What should New Brunswick's priorities be in the development of the arts?

## **Chapter Two: Where does it start? By confronting the realities of our demographics.**

### **Retention and Repatriation**

*“I think it is marvelous that young people go out [into the world]. They bring back a richness and new ideas. The key is to get them to come back.”*

Public roundtable on immigration and migration, Grand Falls, June 2004

This, more than any other issue, was raised at every public roundtable hosted by Next NB/Avenir NB. For the most part, people leave for two overriding reasons – a job or higher education that will lead to one. The group most likely to be on the move is young people under the age of 30 and their parents can't really blame them for moving away. When questioned by Next NB/Avenir NB why they leave, young people listed a variety reasons including; a belief that they couldn't find work in their chosen field, an opportunity to earn more money in a larger city and a desire to experience life away from home.

There are two types of migration in New Brunswick: movement out of the province and a movement from rural and northern communities into one of New Brunswick's southern centres. The main beneficiary of the latter group is the Moncton region, and in particular Dieppe, the fastest growing community in New Brunswick. The movement of young people out of northern Francophone communities has fueled that growth. If Francophone young people are more likely to stay in the province, Anglophones are more apt to leave New Brunswick for Halifax, Toronto or larger centres in Alberta.

Participants in Next NB/Avenir NB roundtables were split on the best approach to increasing the population. While some believed the province needs to work harder at retaining its young people, others argued that we should encourage young people to explore the world but leave with an appreciation of New Brunswick that is strong enough to lure them back. All agreed that the key to either retention or repatriation is a strong economy with a variety of jobs.

- Do you know anyone who has left New Brunswick?
- What will it take to bring them back?
- Where should we place our emphasis – retention or repatriation?
- What are the elements of a repatriation strategy?
- Who needs to be included in those efforts?
- Should we repatriate people to any place in New Brunswick or should we specifically target regions?
- Why would someone born and bred here, stay in New Brunswick?
- What elements of a community make it an attractive place to live?
- Beyond a job, what do people look for when they are considering a move?

## Aging Population

*“Our seniors want a hospital, sure, but they want a waterfront view and Tim Horton’s too.”*

Public roundtable on community development, Woodstock, May 2004

It is the natural progression of the cycle of life. People are going to get older and in the next decade the percentage of senior citizens is expected to rise as the first of the baby boomers – that generation born between the late 1940s and the mid-1960s – hit their golden years. This is a trend that will be felt across North America, including in New Brunswick. Atlantic Canada already has a slightly older population than the rest of the country and within New Brunswick, northern communities such as Bathurst, Campbellton, Edmundston, Miramichi, Dalhousie, Shippagan and Grand Falls have an older citizenry than in the south. Obviously health care, and in particular the future of palliative care, continuing care, home care, prescription drugs and nursing homes are of great importance to the province’s seniors and to the communities they call home. However, there are other issues to consider when addressing the specific needs of the province’s older population.

The provincial government’s recent decision to abolish the mandatory retirement age is a reflection of the growing importance of creating public policy that reflects the aspirations of an increasingly mobile and active seniors’ generation. Other issues that were raised during Next NB/Avenir NB’s public forums, was a need for more accessible public transportation and housing, expanded walking trails, sidewalks and green spaces to facilitate seniors (and other New Brunswickers’) desire to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Seniors also remain active volunteers in their communities at a far greater rate than younger citizens. It is important to ensure people continue to be active and respected members of their communities long after they retire from the workforce.

Like so many public policy issues that confront New Brunswick, addressing the needs of an aging population is, depending on your outlook, either a challenge or an opportunity. The opportunity lies in developing innovative delivery methods that could be a model for the rest of the country.

- What does a community need in order to provide a comfortable lifestyle for an aging population?
- What adjustments will communities need to make as New Brunswick’s population ages?
- What health care issues are of greatest concern to senior citizens?
- How can technology assist in providing adequate health services to seniors?
- Do you know anyone who returned to New Brunswick upon retirement?
- What brought them back?
- What is it about their community that is of value to seniors?
- What values do all generations of New Brunswickers share?
- What are the benefits to New Brunswick of an aging population?

## Immigration

*“Education is the number one request from people considering immigration to the region.”*

Public roundtable on immigration and migration, Bathurst, May 2004

If New Brunswick is to maintain its 750,000 population it needs more people. It is as simple as that. The challenge is in attracting enough people and then providing them with the supports and opportunity that will convince them to stay. Between July 1, 2003 and June 30, 2004, 753 immigrants arrived in New Brunswick. That's significantly less than the 1,697 that moved to Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan's 1,891 new arrivals. In the past year, the federal, provincial and some municipal governments have begun to earnestly discuss increasing immigration to the region. Federal immigration officials have spoke of designing a national immigration policy that would direct immigrants to less populated parts of the country and the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency have made immigration part of a multi-step strategy to slow population decline in the region.

Locally Saint John, Fredericton and Moncton are jointly lobbying the federal government for a \$30 million immigration processing centre that would be based in Saint John and provide services and support to both immigrants and refugees. The goal is to attract up to 6,000 people annually over five years and to then convince at least 70 per cent of them to remain in New Brunswick. Smaller communities are also trying to attract new Canadians. For example, Next NB/Avenir NB was told of efforts in Bathurst to welcome Asian immigrants, particularly those from Korea; Edmundston has actively recruited French-speaking immigrants from the Middle East and Africa; and McCain Foods has literally changed the face of the Florenceville area with its recruitment of foreign-born skilled tradespeople, long-haul truckers and professionals to its headquarters in rural New Brunswick.

- How important is immigration in any strategy to either slow or reverse population decline?
- To annually attract 6,000 immigrants to New Brunswick, the province would need to attract eight times more people than it did last year. Is that goal realistic?
- What, if any, supports are currently available to immigrants in New Brunswick?
- What will need to be added in order to accommodate these new arrivals?
- What will communities need to do to attract and retain immigrants?
- New Brunswick does not have a strong tradition of immigration, particularly in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. What do you think New Brunswick citizens think about the push to increase immigration?
- Are the attitudes and opinions similar or different between the Anglophone and Francophone communities?
- What do immigrants want in their new community? What is important to them?
- New Brunswick officials want to attract immigrants in order to fill an expected labour shortage and to stem population decline. That's what they represent to us. What does New Brunswick offer to them?

## **Chapter Three: How do we get there? By changing the rules of the game.**

### **To Have and Have Not: New Brunswick's relationship with Ottawa**

*“If the Premier and cabinet ministers are crying on Ottawa’s shoulder because we’re going broke, that helps to create the image that we need help.”*

Public roundtable on New Brunswick’s place in the world, St. Stephen, May 2005

Nothing quite defines New Brunswick and Atlantic Canada to the rest of the country quite like the region’s relationship with the federal government. Regardless of whether you’re in favour of greater provincial rights or a strong national government, one overriding theme about the Ottawa/Atlantic Canada relationship comes through in discussions with Next NB/Avenir NB - someone owes someone else.

If you’re a strong believer in the Atlantic region and have studied the history of Confederation and the building of the continental railway, you probably believe that the region’s fortunes decidedly dipped after joining Canada. Now as the 21<sup>st</sup> Century dawns, those who subscribe to this viewpoint, argue that the federal government owes the region and should invest heavily in education, infrastructure and increasing access to capital. If, however, you ascribe to the view that the Atlantic provinces are economically depressed and have depended far too long on federal largesse, you’re far more likely to scoff at any grand plan for the region.

New Brunswickers are split on what role the federal government should play in developing public policy. Some want a far more prominent role for Ottawa while others want the federal government to leave the region to decide its own fate. This polarizing of the debate extends to two of the region’s most well-known federal programs – ACOA and Employment Insurance – both of which were criticized more often than praised, during Next NB/Avenir NB roundtables, the former for failing to have any perceived effort on regional development and the latter for its emphasis on maintaining seasonal industries rather than encouraging the transition to full-time work.

- Which do you favour, a strong central government or more provincial power?
- What do you think of the relationship between the two levels of government?
- As the federal government reconsiders its role in the region, where should it place its emphasis?
- What does the federal government do well?
- What are some the successes in the ongoing relationship between the provincial and federal governments?
- What are the challenges?
- What do you think is the role of ACOA?
- Should EI be reformed? How?
- How well do you think the New Brunswick government represents the province’s interests at the federal level?

## Information and Influence

*“Government isn’t going to lead us out of this.”*

Public roundtable on poverty, Saint John, November 2004

The media and politicians, it is both a symbiotic and an adversarial relationship. Each needs the other to either access or divulge information but neither quite trusts the other in the execution. While neither group was the subject of any of Next NB/Avenir NB’s discussion papers or roundtables, the effectiveness of both was raised by a number of people throughout the year.

Oftentimes, contributors accused both groups of failing to provide leadership on issues. For instance, during the daylong Alpine Summit last spring, participants, all of them between the ages of 19 and 30, said that both politicians and the journalists who covered them tended to reinforce rather than challenge stereotypes about New Brunswick. A similar comment was made during a forum on youth participation in government and public policy development, held last September in Fredericton. At that event, the students said they did feel that their viewpoints or interests were reflected in politicians’ statements or party platforms. Neither did they see themselves reflected in the newspapers, radio reports and television news. Instead, they were far more interested in international developments than primarily local ones and found most of their information via the Internet and from online discussions.

At its roundtables, Next NB/Avenir NB was told that if New Brunswick is to tell a new story and set a new, and aggressive, agenda it should be championed, debated and explored by both the provincial media and politicians.

- Do you pay attention to political news?
- How do you access information?
- What interests you?
- How effective are local media at disseminating public policy?
- What do you want to read, hear or see in your local media?
- How effective is your municipal council? How about the Legislative Assembly?
- Are your views, opinions or interests adequately reflected in the political arena?
- Are there specific issues that you think should be more fully explore in the public domain?
- What does it mean to set the public agenda? Do you think this is the role of media and/or politicians?

## Bridges and Barriers

*“The feds, the province and Indian Act chiefs are meeting and making decisions that will have an effect on me and my grandchildren... Maybe we [the people] would like to have a say in our rights too.”*

Aboriginal talking circle, St. Mary's First Nation, August 2004

In New Brunswick we have rules for just about everything. From municipal bylaws that dictate what side of the street we're allowed to park to far-reaching federal regulations that determine how and where the provincial government can spend money destined for health care reform. Rules and regulations affect the development of a community in two very different ways. When each works well, they act like a bridge, linking people and projects together. However, these rules and regulations can just as easily turn into barriers to development or change. Determining which rules work and which ones don't is one of the challenges facing Atlantic Canada as it considers its future development.

The rules that oversee the region's Aboriginal population are particularly troubling. The restrictive and out-dated Indian Act, the lack of clarity on land claims and issues of Aboriginal title to natural resources conspire to thwart efforts to improve the lives of the region's Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqewiyik (Maliseet) people. At two Aboriginal talking circles, held in Tobique and St. Mary's, the overriding message was one of intense anger and frustration with all political leaders – both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal – for failing to move fast enough to reform these restrictions.

During roundtables in non-Aboriginal communities, Next NB/Avenir NB was told of other regulations that hampered development. These included rules restricting access to migrant workers by local companies, particularly those in the forestry and agriculture sectors; the limits placed on how long foreign students may remain in Canada following their graduation; the myriad of rules that regulate the province's social assistance system; the strings attached to both federal and provincial funding for a variety of programs, in particular those earmarked for economic development, anti-poverty initiatives, amateur sports and the arts.

- What should be the purpose of rules and regulations?
- Are there specific sectors that should be more heavily regulated than others?
- Do you think the three Maritime provinces should move aggressively to harmonize rules and regulations for such things as trade, transportation and energy?
- What rules or regulations do you think have aided New Brunswick's development?
- What rules or regulations do you think hinder it?
- How well do you understand the rules that govern the Aboriginal population?
- What should be the priority of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal governments in seeking to reform this system?
- What should be the overriding value reflected in the spirit of New Brunswick's rules and regulations?

## **Chapter Four: What do we want? Access to capital, markets, knowledge and people.**

### **Capital**

*“Companies are not going to spend money where populations are declining.”*

Public roundtable on community development, Bouctouche, June 2004

In the end it comes down to this – New Brunswick needs more wealth. We need to create more of it among our citizens and we need to encourage greater investment in the region, either by attracting in from somewhere else or by keeping more of the locally generated wealth here. Access to capital to invest in New Brunswick businesses has long been a challenge due to a number of factors, including the relatively small size of the local marketplace, its distance from major markets in central Canada and the American northeast and the seasonal nature of natural resources-based industries.

Increasing productivity is an important part of the equation. However, productivity in New Brunswick lags behind the rest of the country, indeed the rest of North America. Going hand-in-hand with that is the province’s real income levels, which also remain chronically below national figures. Then there is the issue of risk. Because access to capital – particularly private equity – is so difficult to acquire for small and medium-sized businesses, young would-be entrepreneurs sometimes don’t take the risk on their ideas. This can temper the growth of entrepreneurship in New Brunswick.

Finally, as Next NB/Avenir NB repeatedly heard, particularly from the business community, there is the ongoing debate over the role of government in economic development. In recent years the New Brunswick government has reduced (but hasn’t eliminated) its direct investment in companies, preferring to offer loan guarantees. In its place it created the New Brunswick Innovation Foundation, which provides venture capital to small companies and funding for researchers interested in commercializing their ideas. At the federal level, ACOA has also revamped its investment policies, although it continues to offer capital investment to local businesses.

- Do you personally invest in any of Atlantic Canada’s publicly traded companies through your own investment portfolio (mutual funds, etc)?
- What is the role of federal and provincial governments in providing capital?
- What are some of the practical barriers to accessing capital?
- How can these barriers be overcome?
- How could New Brunswick communities and businesses increase access to private equity?
- How could government increase access to capital either directly or indirectly?
- Are there public regulations or policies that limit access?
- Where should Atlantic Canadian companies look outside the region for possible investors?

## A Place to Call Home

*“The river unites us, it defines our season and our life. It is the constant in our lives. The river is healthy and so are the people on it.”*

Public roundtable on community development, Woodstock, June 2004

Everyone is proud of their hometown. At Next NB/Avenir NB roundtables some participants spoke of spectacular views as they did in Tobique, Campbellton and Woodstock. Others, such as the residents of Bouctouche, Moncton and Caraquet talked proudly of their community’s renaissance. Then there were people such as the citizens of Saint John, Nackawic and Miramichi who spoke of the spirit of community that brought people together in times of trouble and celebration.

The exodus of young people, uncertainty over public services, the balance between development and preservation, the long-term sustainability of natural resource companies and aging infrastructure all concerned participants who wondered what effect each of these things might have on the make-up and survival of their community. Interestingly, when asked what they thought made their community attractive to others, the number one reason listed was the physical environment. Preserving it, be it heritage buildings in a downtown core, the health of area rivers, the biodiversity of local woods or access to public green space, was a priority oft repeated at public roundtables.

Next NB/Avenir NB also heard about the importance of maintaining services that enhanced community life, whether it was accessible sidewalks and walking trails for seniors and people with disabilities, affordable activities that reduce the feeling of isolation for people living in poverty or an active nightlife and recreational facilities for younger citizens. Rural residents also spoke about their fear that they are caught in a cycle of decline, as more people move away, small communities are losing public services, which in turn either discourages others from moving in or pushes the remaining citizens out. Clearly tension between urban and rural residents must be addressed if New Brunswick is to develop a strong community development agenda.

- Do you live in a city, small town or rural area?
- Why do you like about your community?
- What defines your community?
- What are essential elements of a strong community, in your opinion?
- Is your community’s population increasing or decreasing? Why?
- Do you think it is possible for your community to be smaller than it is today and be vibrant?
- How does your community address development in all its forms – economic, architectural, commercial, social, cultural and the use of public spaces?
- Does your community have an official plan?
- Does it reflect what you and your neighbours value?

## Healthy Living

*“On paper it [the community health centre] looks good but is it working as well as we were told it would?”*

Public roundtable on health and wellness, Minto, March 2005

Let's face it, New Brunswickers aren't the healthiest of Canadians. We smoke, we don't exercise, we eat a lot of fast food and unsurprisingly, we're overweight. Cleaning up our act (along with our lungs and our blood stream) is something that lies largely within our power to control. It's called prevention and the prescription includes a spoonful of self-control. However, beyond our own attempts to improve our health (reach for a piece of fruit instead of a chocolate bar, walk, rather than drive to the store and quit smoking) there are larger, environmental issues that effect our health.

New Brunswickers told Next NB/Avenir NB that they are particularly concerned about air and water quality. They struggle with trying to balance economic development and the promise of jobs with the desire for clean air and water. Those who favour stronger air and water regulations argued that it would enhance New Brunswick's image and might be an added attraction for anyone considering relocation. A similar argument was made towards improving access to public spaces, such as walking trails, green spaces and beaches.

Finally there is the issue of sport. Next NB/Avenir NB was told it was important that communities maintain recreation facilities, ensure there are enough facilities to support local needs recreation facilities and increase accessibility by making amateur sports and recreation affordable to individuals and families. During Next NB/Avenir NB's roundtable on poverty in Saint John, the latter issue was raised as a relatively affordable way to improve both the health and self-esteem of children living in poverty.

- Do you consider yourself healthy?
- Do you or any member of your family play a sport or participate in a recreational activity?
- What elements within your community encourage healthy living?
- What deters it?
- If we are to encourage healthier living in New Brunswick's citizens, what is the best means of doing that?
- Does your community provide preventative health services such as early detection of diseases, smoking cessation and obesity programs, access to immunization and physical education in your local school?
- Our public health care system is maintained by the provincial government. Nonetheless, what can municipalities do to improve the health of citizens?
- Are you satisfied with your community's air and water quality?
- What would New Brunswick communities need to do to become models of preventative health for the rest of the country?

## **Chapter Five: Why?**

**Because we all want the opportunity to prosper and savour the sweetness of life.**

### **Entrepreneurs and Employment**

*“You don’t make a sailor by sending him to sailor school... People learn from each other.”*

Public roundtable on the economy, Campbellton, February 2005

We can cherish the view from our front window but there is only one way to pay the rent or make our mortgage payments – with a job. Unsurprisingly this topic occupied the thoughts of many participants in Next NB/Avenir NB roundtables. In northern and rural communities there is great concern over the fate of the natural resources sector, particularly forestry, following the closings of mills in Miramichi and in Nackawic, where a new owner has recently been named. While job growth remains stable in the three southern cities, there is a push to diversify these economies and attract more businesses to the area.

Within all this talk of employment an interesting side topic surfaced – that of nurturing a culture of entrepreneurship. As Next NB/Avenir NB was told repeatedly, the province’s economy is largely supported by family-owned firms, both big and small. Those who live here, see value here and are therefore more likely to invest in starting a business in New Brunswick than someone from elsewhere who has access to larger markets. With that in mind, participants wondered what could be done to encourage New Brunswickers to take a risk on themselves and start their own business.

Finally a strong connection was made between education and employment. Almost everyone emphasized the importance of getting some form of post-secondary education. A special emphasis was placed on reintroducing apprenticeship programs for skilled trades and revamping the community college system to create areas of specialty on each campus.

- Does New Brunswick have a culture of entrepreneurship?
- How can it be nurtured?
- What role does the school system – either K-12 or post-secondary – play in encouraging students to consider becoming entrepreneurs?
- Would you ever consider starting your own business?
- Where will the jobs be in New Brunswick in the next decade?
- What sectors will need employees?
- Rural communities are particularly concerned about creating jobs. As the natural resources sector evolves, what sectors might fit into a rural environment?
- What is the best way to address New Brunswick’s expected labour shortage?
- How can we improve access to the job market for groups within New Brunswick

that are chronically underemployed such as Aboriginal people, seasonal workers and people living in poverty?

## **Social Development**

*“Poverty is not something you inherit. Wealth is something that escapes you”*

Public roundtable on poverty, Tracadie-Sheila, November 2004

Here, more than with any other topic, there was a strong opinion that the capacity to actually affect changes lies with non-government, community-based organizations. However, while these groups may possess the understanding of the issues surrounding poverty and underemployment, they usually lack the money to fund much-needed programs. Community groups repeatedly told Next NB/Avenir NB that they wanted greater access to provincial and federal funding and greater flexibility to spend the money on innovative programs.

Next NB/Avenir NB also heard that corporate New Brunswick has an important role to play too. In New Brunswick there is a direct connection between economic and social development. With a labour shortage expected, the corporate sector has four ways to add to the workforce: through immigration, through hiring people from outside the region, by encouraging young people to stay and work in New Brunswick and by hiring those in the province who live in poverty due to underemployment. To accomplish this fourth goal, access to education and training is essential. This is particularly true for young people, who must be encouraged to stay in school. This will require community supports, many of which need increased access to funding.

But while many participants spoke of the need to increase community and corporate involvement, there was also a strong belief that this issue needed direct provincial government support. This reaches beyond the social assistance program, which was heavily criticized by both clients and poverty activists, who felt it failed to provide adequate funds for shelter, food and clothing. There was concern for the fate of the working poor, who, because they are employed, do not qualify for the support programs available to people on social assistance, such as a health plan or job transition funding.

- What does it mean to be poor?
- What is the role of the three levels of government in addressing the challenges of social development in New Brunswick?
- What supports do community groups provide?
- What are the barriers faces by people living in poverty?
- What programs should be offered by government organizations? Non-profit groups?
- When corporate New Brunswick considers its role in social development, where should it place its emphasis?
- What types of programs will assist the underemployed to find full-time work in New Brunswick?
- What needs to be done to enable people living in poverty to participate more fully in

- the provincial workforce?
- What do children living in poverty need in order to participate fully in their school – both academically and in extracurricular activities?

## Education

*“I was born with a Roget’s Thesaurus. Now, children are born with a mouse. We must adjust our education aims and objectives.”*

Public roundtable on education, Edmundston, September 2004

Everyone talked about it. It didn’t matter the topic – immigration, the arts, civic engagement, economic development, poverty, health care or globalization – in the end, the conversation eventually turned to the state of education in New Brunswick. For instance, both anglophone and francophone parents expressed concern over the state of language education in the province. While most supported the idea of French immersion and French-language schools, many were worried about the gap between the promise of bilingualism and their children’s actual capacity to speak, read and write both official languages by the time they graduated. There was also concern from rural residents about the fate of local schools as populations continue to decrease. The quality of education in rural and small town New Brunswick is a major issue that must be confronted.

The public education system (K-12) was offered up as the clearinghouse of many suggested reforms. There were the usual requests for increased physical education and arts training in the school. Add to that a call to introduce a comprehensive multi-year civics curriculum to teach children how to be responsible citizens, a desire for healthier food in school cafeterias and improved Aboriginal programming, both for Aboriginal children (particularly language training) but also to teach all students about the role Mi’kmaq and Wolastoqewiyik (Maliseet) people played in New Brunswick’s development.

Post-secondary education was viewed as essential to improving New Brunswick’s economic performance. Roundtable participants suggested both universities and community colleges set research and teaching priorities. In addition, both were seen as important to nurturing innovation and invention, by encouraging research, particularly in areas of interest that pertained to New Brunswick’s development.

- If you have children in the public school system, what do you want them to accomplish by the time they graduate?
- As the New Brunswick government reforms the public school system, where should it place its emphasis?
- How should government reform the community college system?
- What about universities?

- In your opinion, what is the major issue facing the province's public school system?
- How should it be resolved?
- How should government and communities address the effect of population decline on small rural schools?
- There have been many suggestions as to what should be taught in the public school system? What, if anything, would you add to the curriculum?
- What supports can a community provide to its local school?

