

**STRONG**  
CITIES  
**STRONG**  
PROVINCE

SPEAKER SERIES

SUMMARY REPORT

HELPING ENSURE EQUALITY FOR ALL NEW  
BRUNSWICKERS AND A STRONGER, MORE  
SUSTAINABLE PROVINCE MOVING FORWARD.

Considering the severe economic headwinds currently being faced by the Province of New Brunswick, the Cities of New Brunswick Association (CNBA) proactively organized a virtual Strong Cities = Strong Province Speaker Series in February 2021. The Speaker Series consisted of four, one-hour panel discussions examining the future role of New Brunswick's cities and their critical importance as economic, innovation and population growth hubs and addressed the important question of how New Brunswick's 8 cities can contribute to a viable and sustainable future for our province at a time when we are facing a challenging pandemic recovery that is amplified by legacy economic, social and demographic challenges.

Below are summaries of each panel discussion:

### **Panel Discussion 1 - The Role of New Brunswick's Cities as Economic, Innovation & Growth Hubs**

*Registered participants:* 266

*Guest Speakers:* David Campbell (Jupia Consulting), Dr. Herb Emery (UNB), Don Mills (Founder/Former CEO of CRA, now Narrative Research) and Richard Saillant (Economist & Author)

*Host:* Mayor Mike O'Brien (City of Fredericton)

*Summary:* These four respected regional economists shared their perspectives on the future role of New Brunswick's 8 cities as economic, innovation and population growth hubs, reinforcing that all 8 of our cities share this important role. Key takeaways from this session include:

- New Brunswick remains one of the most rural jurisdictions among the 60 Canadian provinces and U.S. states, not because there has been significant growth in our rural population, but because our urban growth has not kept pace with the rest of North America
- The exceptionally strong growth of larger cities around the globe is evidence that cities are drivers of growth as centers of innovation and attractors of population
- Population growth comes largely through immigration, and population growth means economic growth - population growth is largely limited to urban communities and the best way to protect rural communities is to have growing nearby urban centres able to attract newcomers from outside the province to those urban communities
- For New Brunswick to benefit from urban growth, we need greater coordination, cooperation and networking of our 8 cities
- Adopting an economic hub strategy will deliver public services more efficiently, create more full-time job opportunities for those living within each economic hub and allow residents to continue to live in their rural communities

### **Panel Discussion 2 - Driving Sustainable Growth Outcomes Through Regional Cooperation**

*Registered participants:* 189

*Guest Speakers:* Gerard Belliveau (Executive Director, Regional Service Commission Southeast), Myriam Mekni (Executive Director, MAGMA), Dr. Denis Prud'homme (Rector and Vice-Chancellor, Université de Moncton) and John Wishart (Chief Executive Officer, Chamber of Commerce for Greater Moncton)

*Hosts:* Mayor Dawn Arnold (City of Moncton) and Mayor Yvon Lapierre (Dieppe)

*Summary:* Our guest speakers discussed the importance of leveraging regional cooperation and increasing linguistic and cultural diversity as a driver for regional population and economic growth. Key takeaways from this session include:

- Newcomers are the drivers of demographic growth, increasing linguistic and cultural diversity which drives economic development
- A strong diversified economy is essential to a sustainable region and province, and requires immigration attraction with proper immigration training and progressive integration to ensure understanding of the diversity and benefits that international experience provides
- Everyone benefits from regional collaboration – it's critical to focus on what benefits New Brunswickers regionally instead of by municipal boundaries and to create community and regional partnerships that effectively and efficiently deliver regional services

### **Panel Discussion 3 - Lessons Learned - Canadian Urban Case Studies & Best Practices**

*Registered participants:* 173

*Guest Speakers:* Carole Saab (CEO, Federation of Canadian Municipalities), Mayor Philip Brown (Charlottetown), Mayor Bryan Paterson (Kingston) and Mayor Mike Savage (Halifax)

*Host:* Mayor Don Darling (City of Saint John)

*Summary:* Our guest speakers explored innovation, municipal governance and service delivery learnings from three of Eastern Canada's fastest growing Cities and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. Key takeaways from this session include:

- Municipal reform is needed now more than ever - the pandemic has brought on a significant municipal financial crisis affecting vital services New Brunswickers depend on, but all significant challenges create significant opportunities
- Communities of all sizes are experiencing massive changes and the province needs utilize this as a moment for innovation and transformation which can only happen with real collaboration, cooperation and compromise
- The pandemic has revealed that inclusive recovery is key and extends beyond jurisdiction boundaries – any durable recovery is rooted in cities and communities and collaboration between all levels of government is critical to this recovery
- Cities are driving the agenda on municipal reform and bring unmatched expertise in the daily realities of New Brunswick, leading the charge for a better, stronger province
- Developing resilient urban centres relies on measuring progress toward goals. Data driven decision making is needed to emulate best practices on issues such as equality, sustainability and development.

### **Panel Discussion 4 - Strong Cities = Strong Province - The Path Forward**

*Registered participants:* 195

*Guest Speakers:* Dr. Paul Mazerolle (President & Vice Chancellor, University of New Brunswick), Ginette Gautreau (Executive Director, New Brunswick Multicultural Council), and Daniel Allain (Minister of Local Government and Governance Reform, Province of New Brunswick)

*Host:* Mayor Stephanie Anglehart-Paulin (Campbellton) and Mayor Adam Lordon (Miramichi; CNBA President)

*Summary:* Our guest speakers focused on the path forward, exploring “Innovation to Action” with representatives from Bathurst, Fredericton, Edmundston and Saint John. This discussion reviewed the key themes of the Speakers Series, including the critical importance of New Brunswick’s 8 cities in facilitating diversity and population growth while providing leadership in shaping our province’s future. Key takeaways from this session include:

- Partnerships are key to thriving and surviving - rather than competing for population growth resources and new immigrants, municipalities need to work together to rapidly accelerate population growth efforts to provide economic opportunity for all of New Brunswick
- Immigration fosters diversity, creating opportunities for innovative environmental, social and economic development partnerships and solutions
- Equality and equal representation of immigrants will contribute to a successful and innovative growth strategy, requiring strong partnerships through all levels of government
- Fair taxation and municipal reform are essential to moving New Brunswick forward and a more widespread awareness and understanding of taxation and services provided is required for a collaborative approach to solving this issue
- Entrepreneurship drives innovation, and innovation drives population and economic growth
- Regardless of where we live in New Brunswick, the path forward is working together

**Key takeaways from the Speaker Series include:**

1. The status quo is no longer an option - there is an urgency for meaningful and substantive municipal reforms that accelerate urban growth in New Brunswick
2. The success in addressing our Province’s demographic crisis lies in innovative community partnerships – New Brunswick’s Cities must be properly equipped and resourced to drive successful population growth outcomes
3. Our success going forward lies in shaping a municipal governance model that recognizes the role of New Brunswick’s 8 Cities in driving both regional and provincial growth outcomes, while facilitating the efficient and effective delivery of regional municipal services

The CNBA will continue to advocate for municipal governance and property taxation reforms that will give all 8 cities the ability to participate in decision-making that directly affects their costs, growth opportunities and residential tax rates and will ensure that we have strong cities in New Brunswick. We will help ensure equality for all New Brunswickers and a stronger, more sustainable province moving forward.

To view the full discussion, opinion pieces, guest speaker bios and other relevant materials from the full Speaker Series, please visit <https://www.8citiesnb.com/strong-cities-speaker-series.html>.

**8 Cities, One Voice!**

Bathurst, Campbellton, Dieppe, Edmundston, Fredericton, Miramichi, Moncton, Saint John

