Invest:

An in-depth review of the key issues facing North & Central Jersey's economy, featuring the exclusive insights of prominent business and political leaders as well as a special report on the City of New Brunswick.

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HELIX



City of New Brunswick:

Ideally situated between New York and Philadelphia, the City of New Brunswick is the hub of New Jersey's health and life sciences industries, hosting Fortune 500 companies, world-class higher-education institutions and a bustling, walkable Downtown that furthers the city's vibrancy.

Hub City:

A strong beat at the heart of New Jersey



Incorporated in 1730, the City of New Brunswick played key roles throughout the Revolutionary War because of its strategic location along the Raritan River and the location for the third reading of the Declaration of Independence.

Known as The Hub City, New Brunswick's vitality and strategic importance continues to this day, hosting the world headquarters of Johnson & Johnson as well as the state's flagship university, Rutgers, and two regional healthcare institutions.

Through careful long-term planning, the city is a center for healthcare, cultural, education and life sciences, and the proud seat of Middlesex County. New Brunswick sits on the regional transportation corridor; a stop on Amtrak's high-speed Northeast Corridor, the most traveled rail line in the country, with additional daily connectivity to commuter bus and rail.

Through ongoing smart redevelopment since the early 1990s, New Brunswick serves as a national example of revitalization.

The city works closely with its long-standing redevelopment partner, the New Brunswick Development Corporation (DEVCO), Middlesex County, and such institutions as Rutgers University, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital, Saint Peter's University Hospital, the New Brunswick Cultural Center, the State Theatre of New Jersey, the New Brunswick Performing Arts Center and other key private sector partners. Developing proactive public-private partnerships has also helped guide further investment and secure additional opportunities that enhance the quality of life for city residents.

New Brunswick's traditional urban downtown along the George Street corridor is an anchor for the community, connecting Rutgers' campuses, while serving businesses, students and the community as a whole, with a diverse mix of exciting retail, restaurants, hospitality and entertainment venues.

Large cranes dot the skyline in testament to the city's continuing growth. New mixed-use communities are under construction, while major public and private investments are further transforming New Brunswick's thriving healthcare and business sectors. **(...)**



State model

Investing in stronger neighborhoods, better infrastructure, more recreational amenities

Jim Cahill
Mayor – City of New Brunswick

What are the keys to New Brunswick's success story?
Working with the community and leaders in government, education, healthcare and business has helped propel our City forward. All embrace the importance of community stewardship and have transformed New Brunswick into a community known for its compassion, services, industry, hospitality, healthcare, education, arts and culture.

We are fortunate to have the help and support of so many agencies and civic and religious organizations that meet the social service needs of our community, from feeding the hungry, providing shelter to those without, enhancing the educational and nurturing opportunities for both young and old alike, creating jobs and preparing people for those jobs, providing the best in arts and cultural programming, and so much more.

What is New Brunswick's strategy for investment?
We are creative. And we have a strategic location at the center of New Jersey. We have anchor institutions that allow us to build upon a strong foundation for others to collaborate and work with. We have a reputation for those who invest in New Brunswick getting a great return on that investment. There is a diverse workforce, from service employees to leaders in the most high-demand professions in such areas as engineering and medicine, for example.

Our strategic location on the Northeast Corridor rail line continues to pay dividends. It is the most traveled rail line in the United States, serving both Amtrak and NJ Transit trains. New Brunswick is also just 24 miles from Newark Liberty International Airport, right off Interstate 95 and at the crossroads of New Jersey's major roadways. New Brunswick is a major artery, attracting enormous public and private investment because of its easy access.

How does the city leverage private redevelopment to strengthen local neighborhoods?
Over the past few decades, we have coordinated $6 billion in redevelopment throughout the city, a model for the state. Our work over the years has generated about $25 million annually in revenue, which is used to invest in safer neighborhoods, better infrastructure, more recreational amenities and a stable municipal tax rate that is the lowest in Middlesex County.

Through redevelopment we have created 6,000 new, quality homes for people of all income levels; 8,000 new jobs and an unemployment rate of 2.9% at the end of 2022; five new schools; new and renovated parks; and expanded and improved city services for all residents.

How do you maintain momentum?
New Brunswick makes smart, astute choices and works with partners and investors who share our passion for the city's unlimited potential. Our goal, at every turn, is to leverage development that ultimately supports our residents, creating job opportunities, improved housing for all income levels, new schools and a nurturing environment for our children, better access to healthcare and a healthier lifestyle, better municipal services and the financial support the city needs to pursue our ongoing neighborhood revitalization programs. If a proposed project does not fit that simple formula, it does not move forward in New Brunswick. We have a strong and ongoing pipeline of opportunity. ■



Leslie Hirsch
President & CEO
Saint Peter's Healthcare System

What separates Saint Peter's from other institutions?
We've been serving New Brunswick and the Greater Central New Jersey region for 116 years now. We're one of the few remaining Catholic hospitals in the state and certainly, we're the only one in Middlesex County. We represent what we think is important and that is Catholic healthcare. Because of that, we have a strong charitable mission. We serve the most vulnerable in New Brunswick and others who come to see us.

We're also a major teaching hospital. We have about 130 resident physicians and several fellowships. We also serve as a place where medical students, nursing students and other health professionals are trained. That means we are an important asset for the community. We have about 3,400 full- and part-time employees; we have 1,000 physicians or medical and dental staff and we have an annual operating budget of about $600 million.

Saint Peter's have about 23,000 admissions a year and 70,000 emergency visits. We have one of the largest neonatal intensive care units in the state and one of the largest maternity centers. To my knowledge, we have the state's only licensed birth center that is located on the premises of a hospital. While we're a full-service hospital, we're also very well known for what we do in terms of women's and children's healthcare.

Is your institution considering a major merger or partnership?
We are undertaking that evaluation. The critical mass that much larger systems have may offer some opportunities. We were in a definitive agreement with RWJBarnabas Health but the Federal Trade Commission blocked that transaction. I'll simply say that is unfortunate. I believe it was a lost opportunity for the community because it wasn't about trying to corner the market on rates. It was about serving the community and doing something unique and different in the state.

The fact of the matter is we can't avoid it. We live within the domain of the big business that healthcare has become. We live within the business of healthcare as well and we need to balance those needs to remain viable economically. ■



H-1 at the HELIX, a 574,000-square-foot, $730 million project being developed by DEVCO is located across the street from the New Brunswick Train Station.

(...) ■ **Innovation & expansion**

Much of New Brunswick's economic growth is coordinated through effective public-private partnerships, fostering relationships with stakeholders across the community. The city — in its overall efforts — has generated $6 billion in redevelopment. While many large-scale projects have helped to reshape New Brunswick, four of the latest downtown developments stand apart:

The Jack and Sheryl Morris Cancer Center

A major jewel of the city's redevelopment will be the Jack and Sheryl Morris Cancer Center, topped off in November 2022. The 12-story, 520,000-square-foot facility is set to be completed in early 2024 and will expand Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey's capacity with 96 inpatient beds, 84 infusion bays, 74 exam rooms, nine operating rooms, advanced technology and extended outpatient care, all connected via skywalk to the existing institute and Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital. Once open, the Jack and Sheryl Morris Cancer Center will provide between 500-600 new jobs. DEVCO, which serves as the project developer, is also constructing the Blanquita Valenti public school, a community contribution that is part of the overall project.

The HELIX

The New Jersey Health + Life Science Exchange, or HELIX, is planned for a total of 3.5 acres across from the train station. It is the largest investment in life sciences and medical education in New Jersey.

The first phase of the HELIX, taking place on a 1.1 acre portion of the site, will be a $731.5 million ecosystem that will bring together academics, researchers and (...)



Milestone

New cancer facility will double the number of people who can be cared for

Christopher Paladino
President & CEO – New Brunswick Development Corporation (DEVCO)

How has Devco recharged New Brunswick communities and created long-term solutions to community needs?
The Jack and Sheryl Morris Cancer Center at Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey (RCINJ) is an extraordinary milestone for New Brunswick, the state and the region. It will be the first and only freestanding cancer hospital and research center in New Jersey and is the state's only Comprehensive Cancer Center designated by the National Cancer Institute.

The cancer center will triple the size of the current facility, resulting in 750,000 square feet of cancer treatment and research space.

The new facility will continue RCINJ's commitment to "Science on Display," so patients and families see that new cures are being worked on and researchers are always reminded that there are patients benefiting from their work. The new building will double the number of patients being cared for both as inpatients and outpatients.

The building will fortify the state's resilience in the event of another pandemic or other health emergency. The cancer center is designed to be a self-contained facility so that cancer patients can continue to be treated without exposure to other patients on the RWJUH campus.

How does Devco select the type of projects that it focuses on?
We focus on creating partnerships between institutions, corporations and government entities that are stakeholders in New Brunswick. We find that when people row in the same direction we are able to maximize impact — taking good investments and leveraging them to have extraordinary results.

We focus in large part on helping governments at the local, county, and state level implement public policy goals through public-private partnerships.

We often find ourselves developing financing option and mixed use solutions to meet goals set by the mayor, the president of Rutgers, the county commissioners, the governor or the leaders of one of the state's health systems.

What key industries is the city determined to develop in the near or longer term?
Before there was Silicon Valley, Kendall Square and Research Triangle Park, there was New Jersey. New Brunswick has been a major component of the innovation culture for centuries.

From the Johnson brothers to Thomas Edison, Selman Waksman to Shirley Jackson, the Health and Life Science Exchange (HELIX) draws on the region's DNA as a place of innovation and invention ushering in a new era of ideas and inventions.

The 574,000 square feet of H-1, the first building of the HELIX, will represent nearly $800 million of investment, housing the Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, Rutgers Translational Research and the New Jersey Innovation HUB, which will serve as an epicenter for early stage companies and startups. We want to attract established technology and biotech companies to the other two buildings on the site, H-2 and H-3, in order to create an even more robust innovation ecosystem.

The HELIX will be an innovation district providing tech and life science companies, universities, entrepreneurs, and students the critical ecosystem to discover, learn, work and collaborate.

Simply put, we expect creative collisions to occur at the HELIX. ■

Hub City highlights

New Brunswick leaders share latest developments and opportunities across the city and region.



Merissa Buczny
Executive Director
New Brunswick Performing Arts Center



Sarah Chaplin
President & CEO
State Theatre New Jersey

What impact does the New Brunswick Performing Arts Center have on the city?

The impetus for the development of the New Brunswick Performing Arts Center, which opened in 2019, was to provide a venue that cultivates an appreciation for the arts while providing economic benefits and additional job creation for the local community. I should note, we had an amazing first six months of programming until the floor dropped out on us due to the Pandemic. But we have rebounded in the last year and are very excited to have been able to present our first Full season of programming.

Currently, the New Brunswick Performing Arts Center and our Member Companies (Crossroads Theatre Company, Mason Gross School of the Arts, American Repertory Ballet, and George Street Playhouse) attract more than 300,000 patrons annually. These visitors dine, meet for drinks and stay in hotels here in New Brunswick. This results in a significant economic driver for the business district and generates tax revenue for the city.

From your perspective, how has the city supported NBPAC and the arts community as a whole?

Those familiar with the economic ecosystem of New Brunswick have long understood the important role that the Arts have played in the vibrancy of the downtown. One of the fundamental strengths of the city's leadership has been their understanding of the value of the arts to the city's residents and stakeholders. Leaders throughout municipal and county government have consistently invested in the success of the theaters and cultural institutions here. In fact, the city of New Brunswick used several innovative financing tools to assist in the financing of NBPAC, including the issuance of Redevelopment Area Bonds to support the project. These bonds are repaid via the collection of property taxes from the residential building located above the theaters and effectively underwrote the development of a portion of the project. ■

How is your institution shaping the future of arts and culture?

We consider ourselves as having a curatorial vision instead of an artistic vision since we do not create the art, we curate the art. We also have various programs we are invested in to share these experiences to the most people possible. For example, this year we've hosted more than 8500 students from local schools at our performances for schools. We also go out into the schools to help with the arts education aspect because it is lacking in schools today. We recognize we have to partner with schools in order to provide that education and that is a big part of how we want to impact the community. This year, we also developed a program called DiscoveryTix which seeks to eliminate the economic barriers associated with seeing a show. We present some amazing artists who can have high-priced tickets. The program, which is part of a broader NJ program called Families First, allows participants to access $10 tickets to any show in our season. We subsidize the difference with the generous support of Bank of America.

What attracts people to New Brunswick's art scene?

We are also lucky to have some amazing institutions that produce great art like Crossroads Theatre Company, George Street Playhouse, American Repertory Ballet and Mason Gross School of the Arts. The art scene in NJ is particularly high quality and that is probably, in part, because of our proximity to NYC. We have an ability here to draw first-class artists and art creators, showing you do not need to go further than Middlesex County to enjoy an outstanding arts experience.

What is your outlook for the next three to five years?

Earlier this year I would have said recovery due to the drastic impact COVID had on the arts industry. Now, I think growth is key. After this past January, I feel we are well on our way to recovery and I think that is true for the arts in the city. We are focused on being efficient and effective with our budget with the overarching goal to grow and diversify our audience. ■



Doug Schneider

Chairman of the Board of Directors
New Brunswick City Center



Michelle Wilson

Executive Director
Elijah's Promise

What type of new or disruptive businesses would you like to see populating the City Center?

Our focus has always been to accelerate the recruitment of more retail. People need to know how wonderful and how vibrant the downtown is; how much foot traffic we have and how our downtown demographic has rapidly changed. With the development of all of these new residential buildings, there are some business concepts such as a grocery store that potentially might not have been sustained in the past by the Downtown, but will now be supported and welcomed.

Our residents need services ranging from dry cleaning to doggy day daycare and anything else that they would deem essential.

What partnerships between City Center and other stakeholders are vital to growth?

Almost every business that opens up in Downtown New Brunswick does so to tap into the Rutgers University market. It is only getting better in the Downtown area with the addition of the HELIX, DEVCO's translational research innovation hub project that will transform a key area of the Downtown.

What is the vision and objectives for a reimagined New Brunswick?

Our vision of a reimagined downtown focuses on a terrific customer experience, enhancing a friendly environment and further improving the many offerings provided to shoppers and diners. Our concept of fun leads to further investment, economic sustainability and the desire for people to want to live in our city. New Brunswick City Center has invested in a professional firm to develop a potential reimagined downtown that includes updated trash management, wayfinding, and pedestrian and traffic studies. New Brunswick is uniquely prepared for the future. ■

How do you decide what services to offer to the community and where to offer them?

In 30 years, we haven't missed a meal with the soup kitchen. During lockdowns, we had to revamp our services with meals to go, and the mobile truck. The mobile truck is important and has grown organically. It is aligned to serve low-income seniors and families, which is where the biggest new need is coming from. The need has been impressive, and every year the meals and services increase. I never would have imagined that growth in need 16 years ago when I started here. Our community partners need food and we do everything we can to make it available to them. For example, there is an area church in New Brunswick that is providing food a few days a week and we provide over 500 meals a week for them. New Brunswick is a great place to work and build and grow. The level of cooperation from this city is unprecedented. We partner with other nonprofits and we continue to scale our food programs.

What partnerships in the private or public sphere are important to your operations?

We have less than 20 full-time staff and everything we do is amplified through our board, volunteers and our supporters. Our work is only possible because of this unbelievable effort. When we hit a roadblock, they come to our rescue so we can raise more money. In the beginning of the pandemic, we couldn't find masks, so one of our partners found them so we could operate. Rutgers Health System and UBHC are significant partners, and we work directly with them several days a week to provide medical care and other outreach services. Also, the city of New Brunswick and Mayor Cahill have made tremendous efforts to support us. That partnership is very significant to our operation, and when we hit barriers, his office is really important. It is because of our partnerships and support of the city, corporate groups and higher-education groups that we can succeed. ■

(...) entrepreneurs under a single roof, including Rutgers University, Princeton University, RWJBarnabas Health, Hackensack Meridian Health and the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, expanding New Brunswick's role as a leader in healthcare and life sciences innovation.

Now under construction by DEVCO, which will own and operate the first phase, H-1 will include a 12-story, 574,000-square-foot tower and plaza, housing the Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, 80 translational researchers through Rutgers University, 170,000 square feet of innovation space as well as a 10,000-square-foot food hall, a 3,000-square-foot restaurant and other amenities all located within walking distance of the New Brunswick Train Station.

A second phase of the HELIX, known as H-2, will include 400,000 square feet of custom lab and office space that can accommodate a range of uses for large corporate life sciences and technology companies. The final phase includes a mixed-use, high-rise building with additional office space and 220 housing units.

When the HELIX project is completed, it will total 1.7 million square feet of innovation — research, development, commercialization and residential.

"We live in a state where there are more engineers and Ph.D.s and scientists per square mile than anywhere else in the world. We're creating a real ecosystem that will foster the next boom in life science, artificial intelligence and computer science," DEVCO President and CEO Chris Paladino told Invest: last year.

Plum 2

Plum 2 is a 200,0000-square-foot medical office building that is under construction at Somerset and Prospect streets. City officials are expecting a grand opening in early 2024.

New Brunswick Train Station

To help accommodate this growth, the city's historic train station itself will undergo a $49 million renovation and expansion, allowing more Amtrak trains to stop in New Brunswick and to better serve the community. The plans include replacing and extending the passenger platforms, replacing the elevators and escalators, installing brighter and more energy-efficient lighting, upgrading HVAC and providing many other enhancements to improve the passenger experience.

Economic landscape

City residents benefit from a diversified economic base of healthcare, higher education, life sciences and technology, alongside tourism-driven businesses.



New Brunswick has developed a reputation for its enticing urban amenities with a small-town feel.

New Brunswick's population, as of the 2022 U.S. Census, is estimated at 55,998 residents. The local housing stock offers quality homes at all price points, with the median home sale prices at $345,000 as of April 2023. For renters, the average rent for a studio apartment stands at about $1,800, according to Rent.com, with one- and two-bedroom apartments costing an average of $2,411 and $3,550, respectively, in monthly rent.

New Brunswick has crafted twin economic engines with its healthcare and life sciences industries, which align with higher education to provide a steady stream of qualified talent, research and job opportunities within the city.

They are the major reason for one of New Jersey's monikers: "The Medicine Chest of the World." A 2021 report by the Healthcare Institute of New Jersey shows a $120.9 billion economic impact from life sciences and medtech companies, while a similar report by the New Jersey Hospital Association shows another $62 billion impact across the state. Both Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital and Saint Peter's University Hospital have called New Brunswick home for generations, providing a community-wide benefit that tallies thousands of local, permanent jobs and quality, groundbreaking healthcare services to city residents.

Rutgers University, one of the nation's leading institutions of higher education, meshes with the city's healthcare and life sciences, offering a steady stream of brain power from a talented, career-oriented student body. The university works alongside RWJBarnabas



Health through the Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey to provide the state's only National Cancer Institute-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center. For every dollar it receives from the state budget, Rutgers University generates a strong ROI, fueling a $5.2 billion economic engine that supports 58,000 jobs both directly and indirectly across the state.

Tourism provides an additional economic boost that officials and local organizations can leverage, fueled by the Middlesex County Tourism Board, New Brunswick City Center and the Middlesex County Regional Chamber of Commerce, all headquartered in the downtown area. But way before current marketing and promotional programs, New Brunswick has long been a hub — visited by the likes of George Washington and Alexander Hamilton.

Today, citywide activations and festivals, supported by the New Brunswick Cultural Center, join an ecosystem that includes the State Theatre and the New Brunswick Performing Arts Center (NBPAC), providing additional economic heft that officials and local organizations leverage for growth and community development. Moreover, the restaurant, retail and hospitality industry thrive in New Brunswick, serving residents, business and visitors at all levels.

■ Quality of life

As New Brunswick's economy continues to expand, the local quality of life has improved in lockstep. Community development initiatives and partnerships, new housing communities that provide additional



Bill Arnold

Executive Vice President, President of the Southern Region
RWJBarnabas Health
Chief Executive Officer
Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital

What is Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital's contribution to New Brunswick and the state?

Patients come to New Brunswick from across the state, relying on our city for a wide range of healthcare services. As the flagship hospital of Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey, and with our deep partnership with Rutgers University and Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) is a crucial resource for New Jersey residents and a leader in advancing state-of-the-art care.

As one of only three state-designated Level 1 Trauma Centers and a Level 2 Pediatric Trauma Center, RWJUH supports residents across the state with its ground-breaking approaches to emergency medicine.

RWJUH has been woven into the very fabric of New Brunswick since 1884 when New Brunswick City Hospital opened its doors. We have worked closely with Mayor James Cahill, Chris Paladino at the New Brunswick Development Corporation and our elected officials, community partners and fellow healthcare providers to create a vision for this city. Our mission is to advance the quality of life for each and every member of our community – whether that's through increasing access to new technologies and bench-to-bedside research or collaborating on social impact initiatives.

What role does the Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Foundation play in your community efforts?

Since 1981, the Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Foundation has played a critical key role in fundraising to support our expansion projects and community endeavors. Through the Foundation's efforts, RWJUH has received millions of dollars in support of landmark initiatives and clinical services. One such initiative is the Jack and Sheryl Morris Cancer Center, which was a donation given to our health system by our hospital chairman. This will be the first and only freestanding cancer hospital in New Jersey and will include 96 inpatient beds and provide comprehensive inpatient and outpatient cancer services, support services and research in partnership with Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey, the state's only National Cancer Institute-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center. ■



Jaymie Santiago
President & CEO
New Brunswick Tomorrow

What has been your organziation's contribution to balanced growth?

Over the course of our city's history, we have always been a place where sojourners and immigrants can call their home. When you have large swaths of people coming into a city, they bring with them music, art and culture, and that is what creates community — a powerful connection and unity of purpose. Knowing that history, we celebrate the diversity in communities, to improve open spaces and inspire people to make this city their home. You cannot have revitalization without considering all parts of a community. We are a small urban city with a population of 60,000 but that feels like the right size to test models that can be used across the country and I believe that here, in the "Hub City" of New Brunswick, NJ, we are poised to be the model of what revitalization in urban centers looks like for the rest of the country.

What regulations are you monitoring?

As part of the Destination 2040 Strategic Plan, the county, in partnership with the state of New Jersey, has finalized its Community, Innovation, and Opportunity (CIO) Strategic Investment Plan. The plan is designed to transform Middlesex College and the Magnet School System, as well as meet the diverse needs of the entire community by investing millions into state-of-the-art facilities, workforce development activities and ultimately improving the quality of life for many. Much of the trending philanthropic awards put millions into supporting BIPOC and woman-owned businesses, positioning us for greater economic growth in the future.

What is your outlook for the organization in the next three to five years?

This city of New Brunswick has a spotlight on it. We are confident in our success but we also have to keep in mind that we just came out of an unprecedented pandemic. So, there is still a lot to do; while funding trends are shifting and people are quick to move past it, we can't move forward without fixing those fault lines that revealed themselves during the pandemic. The next few years will force organizations like mine to reconsider strategic priorities based on those lessons so we can do things better. ■



The City of New Brunswick is a national leader in collaboration in healthcare and life science, among other sectors.

options for new and established residents as well as a robust offering of things to do make the city a great place to live. City officials are continually upgrading the parks and other amenities, recently opening "Riverside Bark" in Boyd Park for local dogs to enjoy.

From views of the Raritan along the city's riverwalk, to shopping and dining, to catching a show at the NBPAC, Stress Factory, State Theatre New Jersey or other great venues, New Brunswick is as much a regional magnet as it is an economic hub.

Involved in many of the city's events are the New Brunswick Cultural Center, Inc., The Arts Institute of Middlesex County and the NBPAC. The city helps to promote, coordinate and stimulate the arts, as a lead supporter in several events including the New Brunswick Cultural Center's Hub City Sounds outdoor Festival Series (July through December) and New Brunswick Jazz Project's inaugural Middlesex County Jazz Festival to be held Sept. 30, 2023, in front of the NBPAC.

The New Brunswick Jazz Project, also welcomes top performers to play live twice a week at various downtown venues. In the summer months, these talented musicians take to the outdoors, performing on George Street, as restaurants serve outside.

There are also numerous plays and musicals at the New Brunswick Performing Arts Center which is also the performance venue for world renowned organizations such as American Repertory Ballet, Crossroads Theatre Company, George Street Playhouse and Rutgers, Mason Gross School of the Arts. New Brunswick is also the origin of several iconic cultural festivities, such as the New Brunswick Hungarian Festival, which harkens to the city's diverse immigrant past and present. **(...)**



Broad impact

A 'facilitator and accelerator of the potential for success of many young people'

Jonathan Holloway
President – Rutgers University

How would you characterize Rutgers University's economic impact in New Brunswick?
Rutgers has a tremendous economic impact. The university is a good neighbor to the city of New Brunswick. We see ourselves as an engine of social mobility throughout New Jersey. We do a lot of work in the healthcare space by staffing local clinics serving the non-Rutgers population. We pull in students from the larger metropolitan area around New Brunswick. About 35% of our students are from low-income families, and English is not their first language for a significant portion. These are individuals whose chances of success would be limited if it weren't for a place like Rutgers. Rutgers is a facilitator and accelerator of the potential for success for many young people. One of our goals is to ensure that students get to know the city better and their first jobs are within the New Brunswick metropolitan area. That's where the HELIX, when fully realized, will be a fantastic transition vehicle for our graduates to get research experience and placement with companies doing development work and then go on from there.

What meaningful shifts in enrollment at the New Brunswick campus have you noticed over the past year?
We had the highest enrollment we've ever had in terms of a first-year class, which is excellent for us. New Brunswick is such a strong value proposition, and we can pull students from all of New Jersey, and we need to pull them from other states and outside of the nation. And that's just for the health of our community. We are already one of the most diverse universities in the country, so we're not seeing the radical changes that people talk about, such as enrollment cliffs. The area of concern is the transfer population and trying to get more out-of-state and international students and keep New Jersey's high school students from leaving the state. We want them to stay in the state. We have to work on those goals, but none is at the crisis level that you're seeing in other schools with plummeting populations. We're okay, but if we aren't careful, we could see a problem.

There will be no demographic shift toward more students from modest backgrounds because this is the first year we've had the Scarlet Guarantee in New Brunswick. It complements the Garden State Guarantee, which provides free tuition for seniors and juniors. We now offer this for first-year and second-year students if their family income threshold is at a particular level.

Which university initiatives are having a profound impact on the community?
Our Rutgers Summer Service Initiative is about trying to help people from less-resourced backgrounds. This past summer was the first year with 100 students. This year, 150 students will be placed in public service opportunities and 95% of them in the state of New Jersey. Many of them were in New Brunswick, from working for an elected official, a Boys and Girls Club, or working in a homeless shelter, and everything in between.

The idea is that many of these positions would be unpaid internships, so with the RSSI, we give them a fellowship. It would pay better than most summer jobs would pay. They get exposed to doing work at the local level to federal issues. This is part of being a good neighbor and learning about civic service, public service and helping give folks from modest backgrounds the same set of opportunities as those from wealthier backgrounds. ■

Cornerstones:

The New Brunswick Performing Arts Center and the State Theatre New Jersey

The New Brunswick Performing Arts Center is both an anchor and a stage – two of them, in fact. The NBPAC, a $172 million project between 16 public and private partners, including the city of New Brunswick, DEVCO, Middlesex County, New Jersey Economic Development Authority and Rutgers University, provides the city with two state-of-the-art theaters and 207 market-rate and luxury apartments. The center hosts George Street Playhouse, Crossroads Theatre Company, American Repertory Ballet and Mason Gross School of the Arts, a part of Rutgers. Meanwhile, the State Theatre of New Jersey, founded in 1921, continues to flourish as premier venue for New Brunswick's arts community. State Theatre presents a diverse roster of entertainment, including international orchestras, Broadway, comedy, dance, pop, rock, family events, and more.

Hotel and conference centers

The Hyatt Regency New Brunswick, a short walk from the New Brunswick Train Station and across the street from Johnson & Johnson's world headquarters, is a regional destination, a contemporary convention/conference center hotel in the Downtown. The hotel features 288 cozy hotel rooms, including 14 suites, each featuring views of the tranquil Raritan River or Downtown New Brunswick.

The Heldrich Hotel, located in the center of the city and just across the street from the State Theatre of New Jersey and New Brunswick Performing Arts Center, provides ample offerings for visitors, as well as businesses seeking networking and conference events. Opened in 2007 after a $120 million renovation, the hotel, named after New Brunswick civic leader John Heldrich, provides 248 rooms for guests, a 50,000-square-foot conference center, academic spaces for Rutgers University's John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development, ground floor retail and an additional 48 market-rate condominiums.

Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey and The HELIX

New Brunswick continually looks forward, elevating its reputation as the centerpiece for healthcare, life sciences and technology. These two major projects, just steps from the train station, are indicative of where New Brunswick is headed, as city officials consider future redevelopment projects that build off groundbreaking redevelopment over the past 30 years. ■

(...) New Brunswick City Center, meanwhile, is the city's promotional arm to support these great events, as well as the unique and specialty restaurants and shopping in the downtown area at all price points.

Quality housing for all income levels remains a key factor in improving residents' quality of life. In this regard, New Brunswick officials, private partners and local community organizations have been hard at work ensuring a diverse housing stock, with many new projects in the pipeline across the city. Civic groups play an important role in chartering the direction of the city, like New Brunswick Tomorrow (NBT) founded as a public-private partnership in 1975 between community leaders, Johnson & Johnson and residents to encourage neighborhood revitalization. Johnson & Johnson continues to financially support NBT.

While the city continues to use redevelopment dollars to rejuvenate neighborhoods, it also continues to diversify the housing stock, approving in 2022 the redevelopment of a shuttered Sears department store and mall. The 30-acre site will be redeveloped to provide a mix of 530 rental units, 190 for-sale townhouse units and 20,000 square feet of grocery-anchored retail space just off of Route 1. Construction is set to begin later in 2023, with completion anticipated by 2027.

Looking ahead

New Brunswick is humming. With landmark redevelopment and continual new opportunities emerging across the city, it is the ideal market for new residents, businesses and investors looking to invest and support a strong urban community.

Through Rutgers University, Middlesex College, New Brunswick High School and its Health Science & Technology High School, and many vocational and technical programs within the city, New Brunswick provides a steady stream of talent for the city, which has successfully shifted to a 21st century economy focused on in-demand industries, an increasing portfolio of transit-oriented and new development, more diverse housing stock and proactive leadership between public and private partners.

The Hub City is certainly the appropriate description of all that New Brunswick has to offer. ■

CITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK
THE HEART OF NEW JERSEY

Capital Analytics would like to thank the City of New Brunswick and DEVCO for its contributions in compiling this chapter. To learn more, visit their website at:
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