

**RESIDENTS' VIEWS ON
25 YEARS OF REVITALIZATION
IN NEW BRUNSWICK**

Summary report of biennial surveys 1978-2000

Conducted for:



Conducted by:

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**Eagleton Institute of Politics
Center for Public Interest Polling**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 1975, New Brunswick, like many other American cities, was in distress. That year saw the formation of a unique public-private partnership which came to be called New Brunswick Tomorrow ("NBT"). From its inception, NBT saw its role as a catalyst and innovator for revitalization of the city. An important part of this role was to continually obtain the feedback of residents on the changes in New Brunswick.

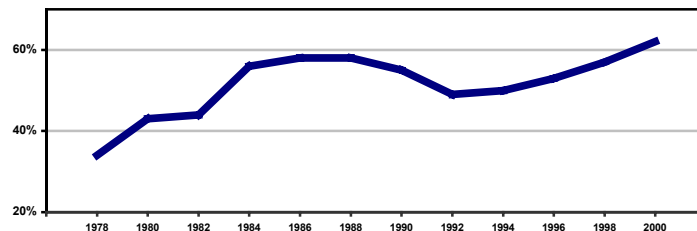
In 1976, the Eagleton Institute of Politics' Center for Public Interest Polling was commissioned by New Brunswick Tomorrow to conduct a needs assessment and evaluation of city services. That survey of 600 residents led to a formalized biennial evaluation effort to monitor progress in the city's revitalization program. Since 1978, Eagleton has conducted a survey of 1,000 city residents every two years. This is believed to be the longest-running public opinion study of a community.

From 1978 to the present, the biennial survey has included a core set of questions. This report is a retrospective analysis of more than 20 years of opinion data on the quality of life in New Brunswick.

New Brunswick as a Place to Live

Since 1978, the biennial survey has asked residents "How would you rate New Brunswick as a place to live?" The number of residents who have given positive answers to this question has climbed from less than 40 percent in 1978 to more than 60 percent in 2000.

NEW BRUNSWICK IS A POSITIVE PLACE TO LIVE



Residents' positive attitudes toward the city experienced dramatic growth from 1978 to 1984, then leveled off for about 4 years before dropping in 1990 and 1992 and then climbing again throughout the 1990s. That first growth corresponds to the initial revitalization phase in the city. The time when residents attitudes held steady (mid to late 1980s) corresponds to a period of affordable housing construction. The drop in attitudes (early 1990s) occurred during a lull in building activity and a rise in the crime rate. The most recent climb in residents' attitudes has occurred during an increase in building activity.

Some observers may claim that the trends in resident opinions of the city may be a function of the economic times. While there appears to be a correlation with unemployment levels and resident opinion, i.e. as unemployment goes down resident opinion goes up, the correlation is not exact. This indicates that something more than standard economic conditions (while undoubtedly a factor) contribute to New Brunswick residents' feelings about their city.

Another way to view the survey finding is to compare the same type of evaluation from New Brunswick residents about their city to New Jersey residents' opinion about their state. From 1978 to 2000, New Jerseyans' positive opinion about their state as a place to live rose by 15 percentage points. During this same time period, New Brunswick residents' positive opinions about their city as a place to live rose by nearly 30 percentage points.

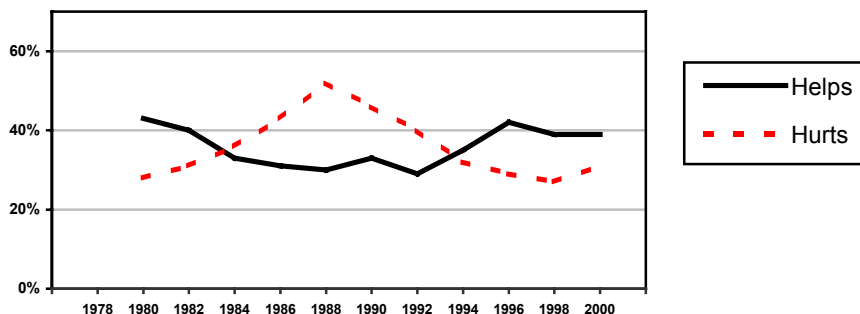
Even through times of controversy over different building projects, changes in resident evaluations in the neighborhoods affected by these transformations has not been significantly different from residents in other neighborhoods.

While there do not appear to be any significant gender or age differences in residents' opinions about New Brunswick there are some racial differences. While non-Hispanic white and Hispanic residents tend to have similar levels of positive regard toward New Brunswick, African-American residents tend to be about 10 to 20 percentage points below their fellow residents in positive attitudes toward the city.

Impact of Revitalization on the Poor

There was a period in the late 1980s when more New Brunswick residents felt that revitalization efforts hurt rather than helped the poor of the city. However, with a renewed emphasis on housing and human services, more New Brunswick residents now feel that revitalization helps the poor of the city rather than hurts them.

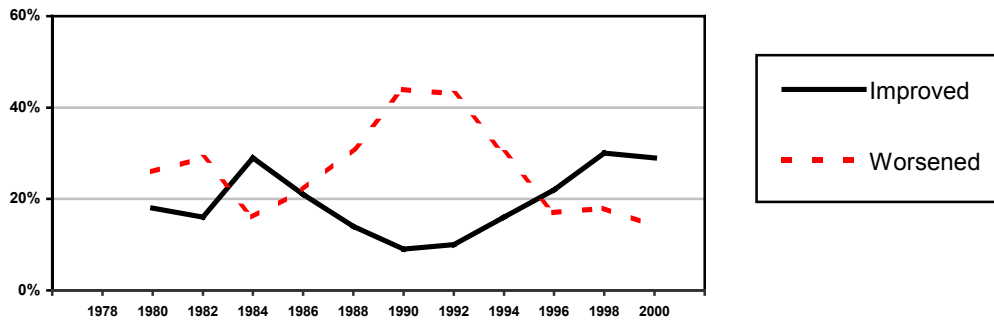
REVITALIZATION HELPS OR HURTS THE POOR



Crime and Safety

Starting in 1980, survey participants were asked whether crime in the city had improved or gotten worse during the previous two years. From 1980 to 1986 opinions were somewhat ambivalent, with similar numbers feeling the crime situation had improved or worsened. From 1988 to 1994, residents became more pessimistic about the state of crime in the city. That trend reversed itself in 1996, however, and resident attitudes have grown steadily positive regarding the state of crime in the city. These trends follow changes in the crime index, indicating that residents were aware of improving safety conditions.

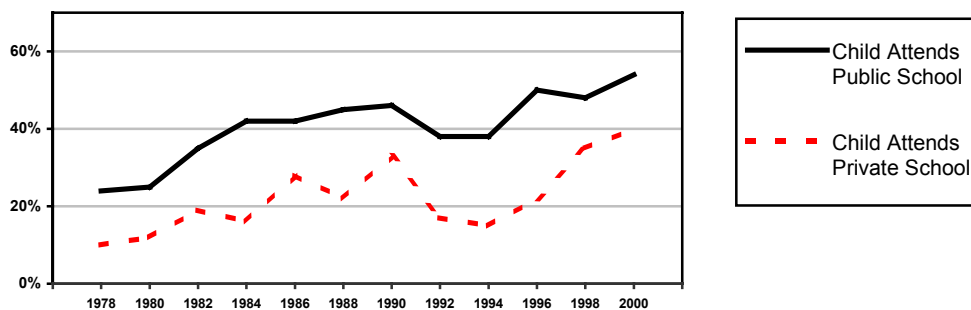
PERCEIVED CHANGE IN CRIME



Public Schools

New Brunswick's public schools have also been the recipient of greater resident regard over the past 25 years. In 1978, less than 1-in-5 residents felt the schools were doing a good job. Today about half of the city's residents view the public schools as excellent or good. Opinion is even higher among parents of public school students.

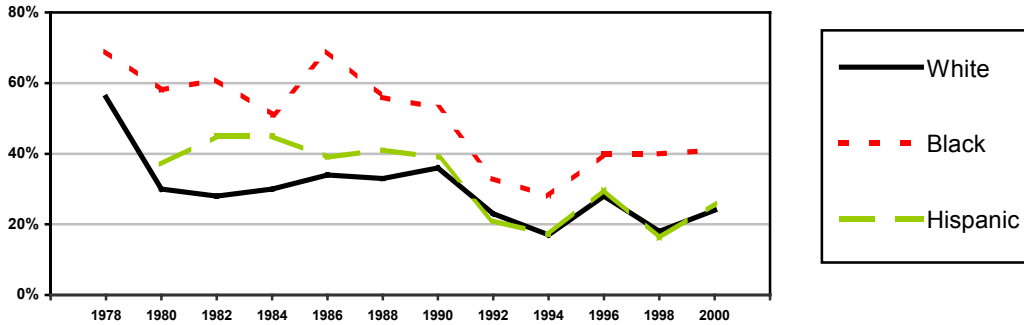
NEW BRUNSWICK SCHOOLS POSITIVE RATINGS



Housing

Although this issue has decreased in importance since 1978, housing is still an important concern for residents in all neighborhoods of New Brunswick and it continues to be a somewhat higher priority for African-American residents than it is for non-Hispanic white residents and Hispanic residents.

NEED TO IMPROVE HOUSING by Race

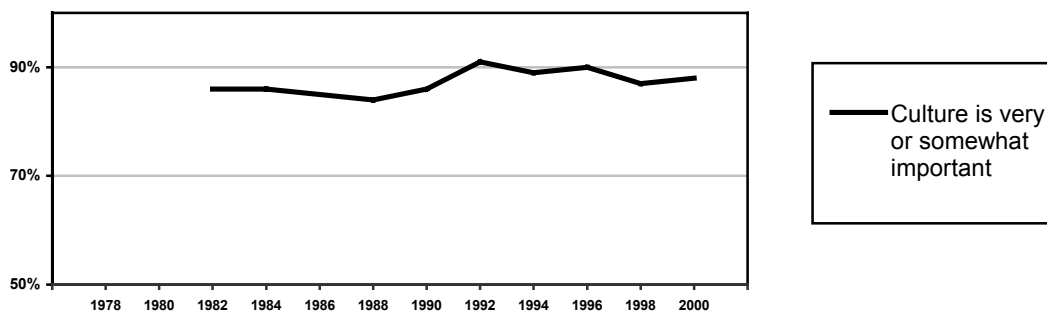


The survey results demonstrate that resident opinion has responded to the affordable housing programs of the late 1980s. As more low income and affordable housing was constructed, resident concerns about housing diminished. However, housing concerns started to rise again as the focus on housing development moved into the upper income levels in the mid to late 1990s.

Culture and the Arts

From the earliest days of the revitalization effort, the role of culture and arts was considered an essential element. Since 1982, about 9-in-10 residents consistently see this as important to the revitalization of the city.

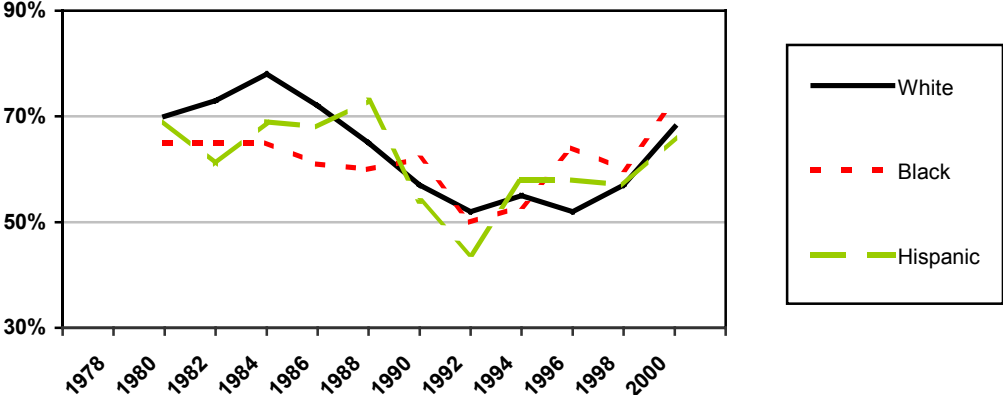
ROLE OF CULTURE IN NEW BRUNSWICK REVITALIZATION



Tomorrow's New Brunswick

During the course of revitalization, the majority of New Brunswick residents have remained positive about the future of the city. While this optimism diminished somewhat during the late 1980s and early 1990s, higher levels of optimism have returned with an interesting transformation. Since 1996, African-American residents have become the most optimistic with regard to the future of New Brunswick. This may indicate a heightened sense of expectation in sharing the benefits of revitalization over the next few years.

NEW BRUNSWICK WILL IMPROVE by Race



Most city residents are not aware of the planning that is necessary to achieve the tangible results of revitalization. As such, it would be difficult for them to evaluate the unique public-private process that has helped to bring about these changes in New Brunswick today. However, the biennial opinion surveys indicate that New Brunswick residents are becoming more and more optimistic about their city. They are much more likely to give the city high marks as a place to live than they were when revitalization started 25 years ago. The survey results indicate that residents respond to the very real changes they see in the city's life and fabric. These areas include increased approval levels during periods of construction renewal and social service activity, decrease in concern about safety as crime rates drop, and decrease in housing concerns when housing is being built.

**RESIDENTS' VIEWS ON
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RESIDENTS' VIEWS ON 25 YEARS OF REVITALIZATION IN NEW BRUNSWICK

INTRODUCTION

There has been a long history of surveying public opinion in the City of New Brunswick. In 1976, the Eagleton Institute of Politics' Center for Public Interest Polling was commissioned by New Brunswick Tomorrow, the recently created public-private redevelopment organization, to conduct a needs assessment and evaluation of city services. That survey of 600 residents led to a formalized biennial evaluation effort to monitor progress in the city's revitalization program.

Since 1978, Eagleton has conducted a survey of 1,000 city residents every two years. This is believed to be the longest-running public opinion study of a community.

Marking the 25th anniversary of both New Brunswick Tomorrow's formation and the current revitalization efforts, Eagleton has compiled a short summary of the survey results since 1978. This report attempts to place the survey findings in a context of the specific revitalization ventures that have occurred in the past two and a half decades as well as other data for the time period.

About this Report

A few notes about the short report that follows. From 1978 to the present, the biennial survey included a core set of questions. These are the questions which are presented here. The survey also differentiates between permanent residents and student residents (Rutgers University students who reside in the city, either in dorms or off-campus apartments). The U.S. Census includes students in their official count of the city. However, this report focuses on permanent residents only. Thus there will be some variations between the demographic picture presented here and in Census numbers.

For purposes of this report, New Brunswick has been divided into six "neighborhoods" to aid with geographic analysis. These neighborhoods do not correspond to any political or census boundaries, although there may be some similarities. East New Brunswick includes the Edgebrook, Rutgers Village, and the Dewey Heights sections. Central New Brunswick, includes the area roughly bounded by Route 18, Nichol Avenue, the Railroad tracks, and Sanford Street. South New Brunswick includes the area from about Sandford Street to the North Brunswick Border. The Jersey Avenue neighborhood includes the whole area north of the Railroad tracks from Sandford Street west. The French Street neighborhood includes the area bounded by the Railroad tracks and Hamilton Street, from Easton Avenue to Sandford Street. The Easton Avenue neighborhood includes the northwestern section of the city from Hamilton Street.

The report that follows is organized around a few basic sections. The first describes the demographic changes in New Brunswick as revealed by the survey data. The following sections examine resident perspectives on revitalization and on specific aspects of life in New Brunswick. The final section discusses residents' perceptions for the future of New Brunswick.

The report includes graphs and comments from city residents. The comments – or “New Brunswick Voices” – are verbatim remarks from people who participated in the 2000 survey. Additional graphs can be found in the appendix.

Caveat

This report is not designed to be a comprehensive history of the revitalization efforts in the city. Its purpose is to put the results of the opinion data on the same timeline as the revitalization efforts. The value of this report is to provide a context for evaluating opinion change over the past 25 years. As such, some programs and activities during the revitalization era may have been omitted from the tables in this report. Readers are encouraged to refer to the bibliography for more information about the history of revitalization in the city of New Brunswick.

Acknowledgments

Eagleton would like to thank current NBT president, Jeffrey Vega and past president, Stephen O'Connor for providing the opportunity to review this wealth of data. Thanks also to NBT chairman Christian Kjeldsen, and past chairman John Heldrich for their support. Thanks to Angelo Baglivo for the invaluable information provided in the course of this project. Thanks also to the New Brunswick Office of Economic Development, the New Brunswick Board of Education, and Devco for information provided. Most especially, thanks go to the thousands of New Brunswick residents, past and present, who gave their time and their opinions as survey participants and made this ongoing project a reality.

REVITALIZATION TIMELINE (SELECTED EVENTS)

	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	
Commercial Revitalization	Memorial Parkway (1965) Plaza I Last Dept. Store closes	Devco purchases Commercial Plaza	Plaza II J&J Headquarters Route 18 (to late 80s) Hyatt Hotel Ferren Mall George Street Albany Street	Albany Street Plaza Golden Triangle City Market formed	Kilmer Square Civic Square Sony Cinema Hospital expansions	Civic Square II Civic Square III Liberty Plaza	
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	Housing		Hiram Square and Peace street Area relocation	UAW and St. Mary's senior apartments "Renters' equity" Program	Renaissance Station Delavan Court Hampton Club HARP program	Renaissance 2000 Formed Livingston Manor	Riverwatch Richmond Court HOPE VI at Memorial Homes
		<hr/>					
Education		Career Prep Center Washington School closes	Robeson School opens State certification issues	School Based Youth Services PIC-C	A-STEP		
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Human Services	Family Health Center Closure threatened God Squad founded	Middlesex General expansion	YMCA closes UMDNJ forms Eric B. Chandler Health Clinic	MRI Center City Senior Resource Center Expands	St. Peters Family Clinic Chandler moves Salvation Army Center Elijah's Promise moves HUB Teen Center YWCA/God Squad close	NJ Cancer Institute Project Access	
	<hr/>						
	Culture	Joyce Kilmer Park 1st street festivals "Music in the Parks" (to 1991) Devco reopens State Theatre Rutgers Arts School moves downtown		New Brunswick Cultural Center Raritan Rivers Festival starts Zimmerli Museum opens George Street Playhouse moves	Hungarian Cultural Center Crossroads Theatre moves		
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RESIDENTS' VIEWS ON 25 YEARS OF REVITALIZATION IN NEW BRUNSWICK

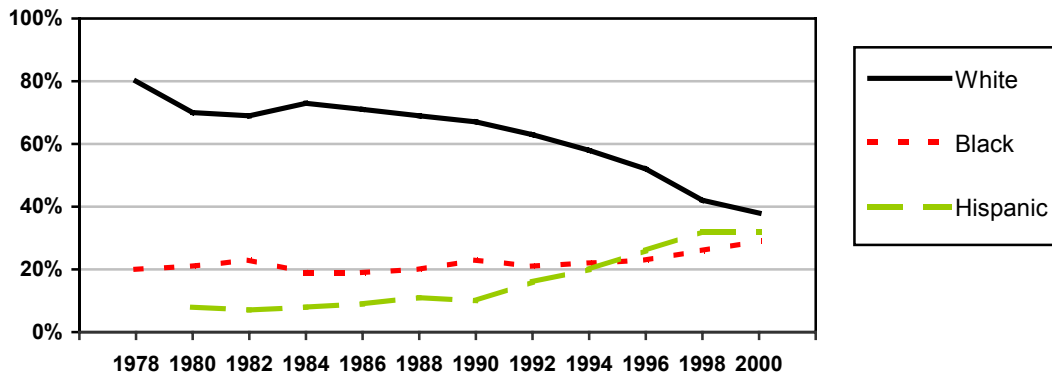
DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES

Race

While the total population of New Brunswick (approximately 48,000, including about 38,000 permanent residents and 10,000 student residents) was stable throughout the 1970s and 1980s and has grown by about 15 percent in the 1990s. An important factor in this growth has been the changing face of New Brunswick. This comes as no surprise to anyone who walks down George or French Streets or visits the city's public schools.

Figure 1 shows the changing racial composition of the city's adult population. Up through the early 1990s, the majority of adult New Brunswick residents were non-Hispanic Caucasian. African-American representation was stable at about 20 to 25 percent of the adult population during this time. Hispanic adults comprised about 10 to 15 percent of the adult population until about 1990, when the proportion of Hispanic adults began to grow at a strong pace. By the mid-1990s, the adult Hispanic population had grown larger than the adult African-American population.

**Figure 1: NEW BRUNSWICK RACIAL COMPOSITION
Adult Permanent Residents only**



New Brunswick has experienced a major shift in racial/ethnic composition during the past two and a half decades of revitalization. Moving from a city whose adult population was approximately 70 percent non-Hispanic white, 20 percent African-American, and 10 percent Hispanic to a more racially diverse city whose adult population is now approximately 40 percent non-Hispanic white, 30 percent African-American, and 30 percent Hispanic.

These shifts have occurred to varying degrees in each of New Brunswick's neighborhoods (Figure 2). The Eastern area of New Brunswick continues to be a majority non-Hispanic white area, although there have been increases in the African-American and Hispanic populations there. The Central New Brunswick area went from a majority non-Hispanic white area 25 years ago to having about equal numbers of non-Hispanic white and African-American adults in the 1980s to now having about equal numbers of African-American and Hispanic adults and a minority of non-Hispanic white adults. This is the highest growth area for Hispanic residents in the city.

Southern New Brunswick is now the most racially diverse of the six neighborhoods as drawn by this study, with approximately equal numbers of African-American, non-Hispanic white, and Hispanic adults. However, up until about five or six years ago, this was a majority white neighborhood.

New Brunswick Voices:

"The best thing about New Brunswick is the diversity. There are people of different nationalities as well as college students so it's fun.."

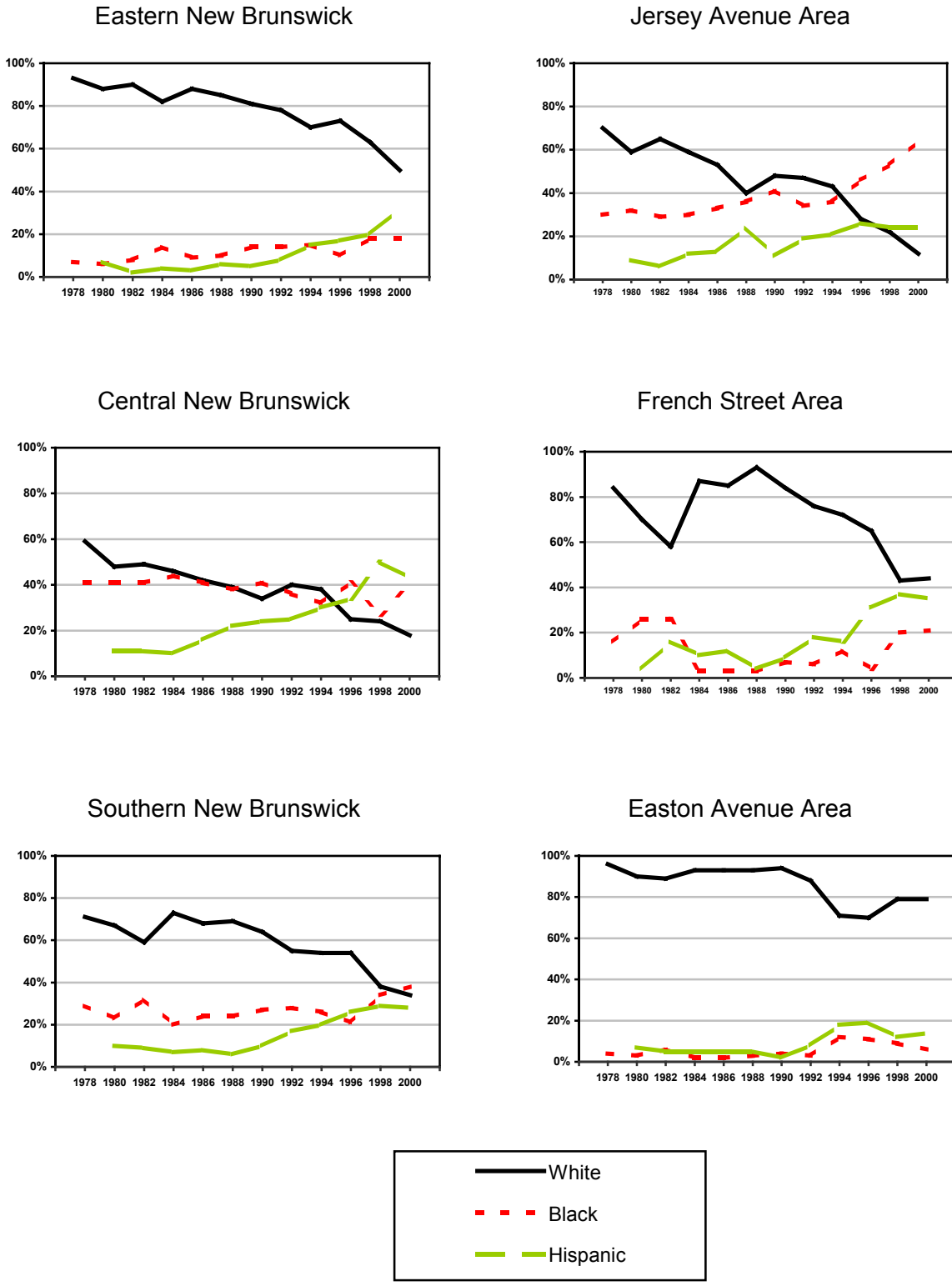
*-- 8 year resident, Easton Ave. area
white female, age 54*

The French Street area has also become a more racially diverse area, with a large growth in the Hispanic population in the past six or seven years. There are approximately the same number of non-Hispanic white and Hispanic adults, with a minority African-American population in this neighborhood.

The Jersey Avenue neighborhood has seen the largest growth in the proportion of African-American adults. While the Hispanic adult population has grown slightly (from about 10 percent to 25 percent), the African-American adult population has grown from about 30 percent to 65 percent, overtaking the non-Hispanic white population in size about five years ago.

Of all the neighborhoods, the Easton Avenue area has remained the most stable racially over the past 25 years. There has been some growth in the Hispanic and African-American populations in the past ten years, but the area is still largely non-Hispanic white.

Figure 2: THE CHANGING FACE OF THE NEIGHBORHOODS



* Does not include Rutgers Student population

Income

Each biennial survey asked residents about their household income. Because "real income" changes from year to year it is not possible to make direct comparisons over a 25 year period. So, for this analysis, the income reports for each year were divided into three tiers, with approximately one-third in each tier (upper income tier, middle income tier, and lower income tier). The middle income tier can be considered the median income level for a New Brunswick household. Note that these tiers are only based on city resident income levels and should not be compared with regional, state, or national income findings.

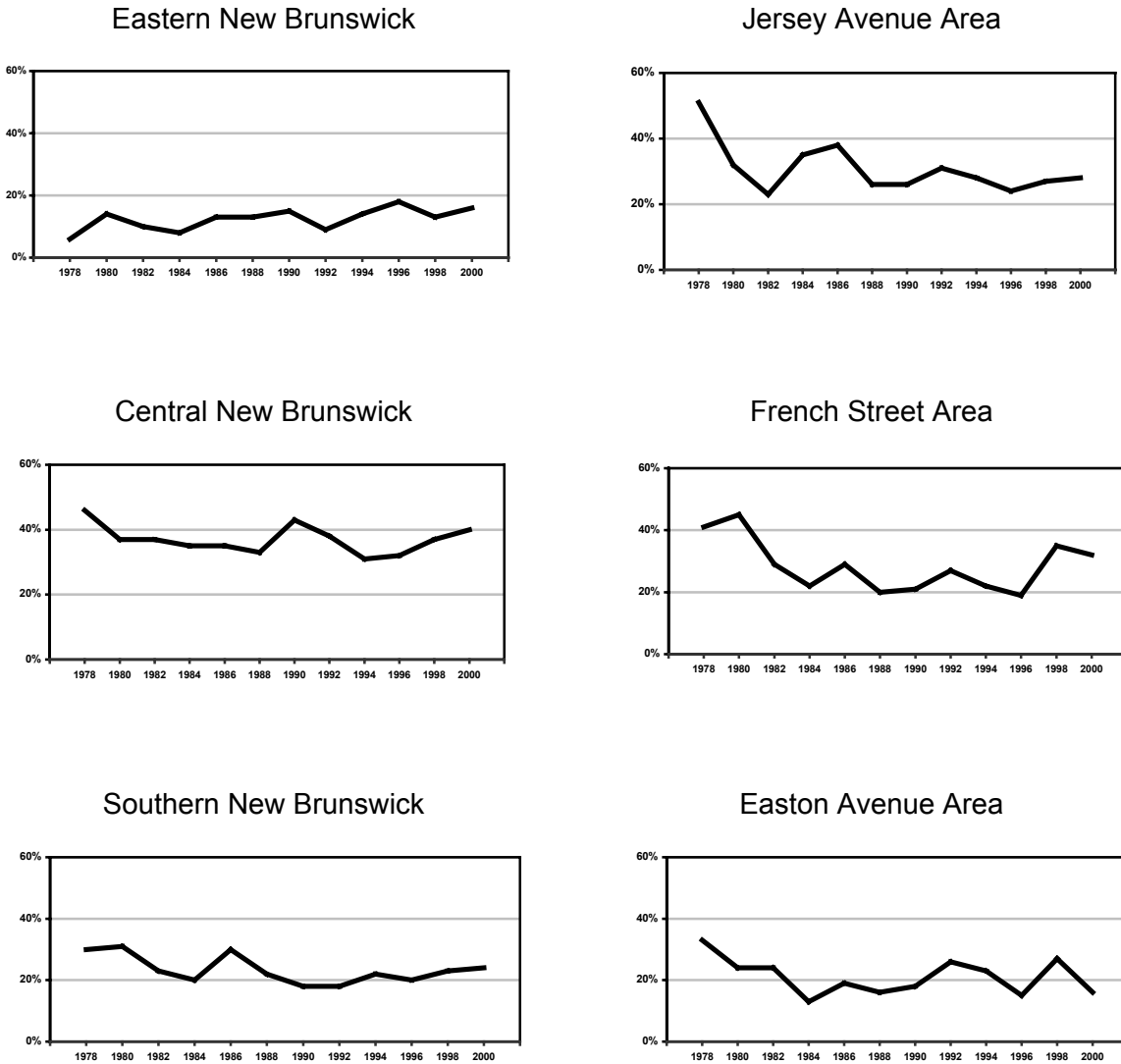
These income tiers can tell us if there is movement in earnings among different groups of New Brunswick residents relative to the city as a whole. One level to examine is by neighborhood (Figure 3). In 1978, between 40 and 50 percent of households in the Jersey Avenue, Central, and French Street neighborhoods were among the lowest income earning households in New Brunswick. This compared to about 30 percent in Easton Avenue and South neighborhoods and 10 percent in East New Brunswick. This is to say that Jersey Avenue, Central New Brunswick, and French Street contained a higher share of New Brunswick's lowest income households than did the other three neighborhoods at that time.

By 2000, the relative income standing in Central New Brunswick had not altered significantly (with about 40 percent in the lowest income tier). However, Jersey Avenue and French Street experienced noticeable declines in the number of lowest income households they contained and are on a par with South New Brunswick at this time. The number of lowest income tier households in the Easton Avenue neighborhood has decreased slightly while those in East New Brunswick have increased slightly in the past two decades.

Another way to utilize the income tier statistics is to assess income parity within groups. For example, if a group has about equal numbers in the highest, middle, and lowest third of the income continuum they are on a par with the city-wide average. Groups that have more upper income than lower income households, or vice-versa, would have less parity. Figure 3 illustrates these results by neighborhood and by race and age.

Over the past 25 years, East New Brunswick and Easton Avenue have consistently contained more upper income households than lower income households. For most of this period, South New Brunswick and the French Street area have had about equal numbers of upper income and lower income households. The Jersey Avenue area moved from having equal numbers of upper and lower income households in the early 1980s to having more lower income households in the mid to late 1980s. By the mid 1990s, the Jersey Avenue neighborhood returned to a more even situation regarding income levels. Finally, Central New Brunswick has experienced the least income parity throughout the past two and a half decades, with the lowest levels occurring during the recession of the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Figure 3: NEIGHBORHOOD POPULATION In Lower Income Tier



Race and age are also important factors to consider in an income distribution analysis. White residents under the age of 40 have consistently represented more upper income than lower income households. White residents age 40 and older generally had equal numbers of upper income and lower income until 1994. Since then this group has had more upper income than lower income residents.

African-American residents under the age of 40 have been about as likely to be in upper income households as lower income households relative to the rest of New Brunswick. The main exception was during the late 1980s to early 1990s recession. Up to the early 1990s, African-American residents age 40 and older were much more likely to be in lower income households, with very few in upper income households. While they are still more likely to be in lower income households, the gap has closed somewhat.

Hispanic residents, both under age 40 and those age 40 and older, have experienced fluctuating income status relative to other New Brunswick residents. However, over the past few years it appears that both groups are more likely to have more households in the lower income tier than the upper income tier. Hispanic adults under the age of 40 are the most likely of all New Brunswick residents today to be in the lowest income levels.

Figure 3A: INCOME DIFFERENTIALS by Neighborhood

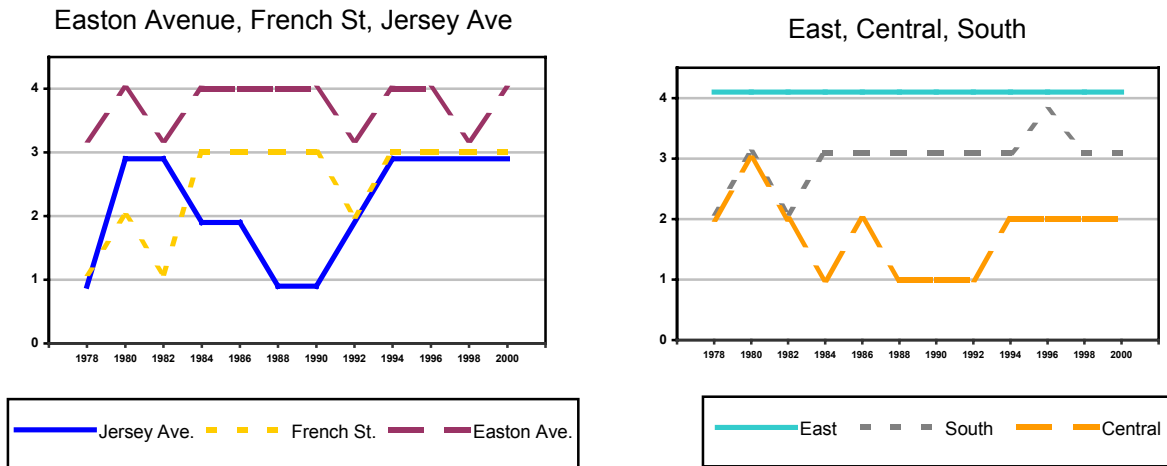
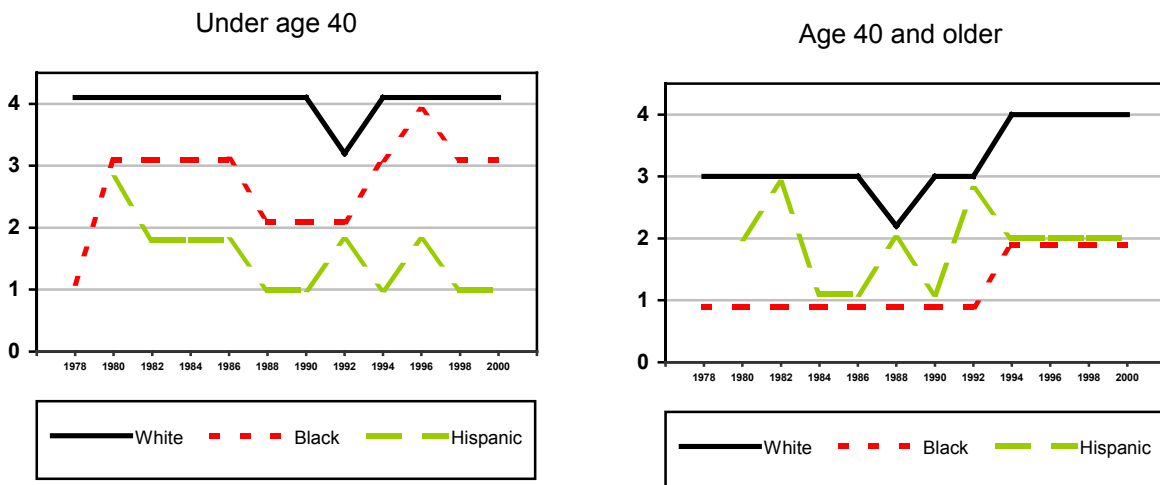


Figure 3B: INCOME DIFFERENTIALS by Race and Age



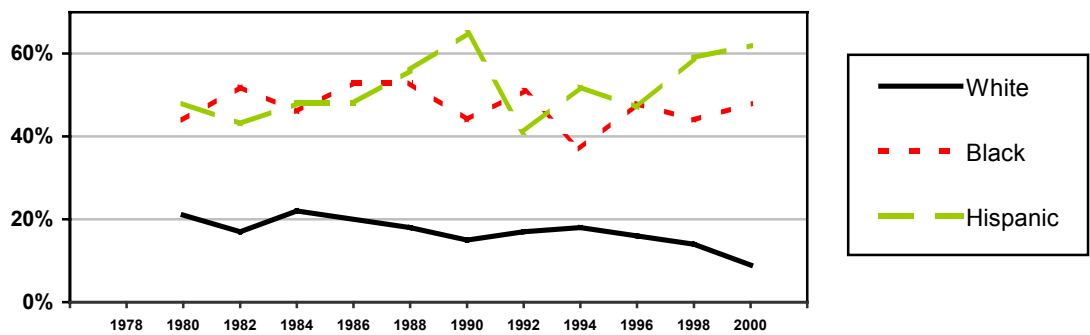
4 = more upper income than lower income households
 3 = about equal numbers of upper income and lower income households
 2 = somewhat more lower income than upper income households
 1 = many more lower income than upper income households

Children

While the survey results show an adult population with a slight plurality of non-Hispanic white residents, many observers will note that the school population is largely non-white.

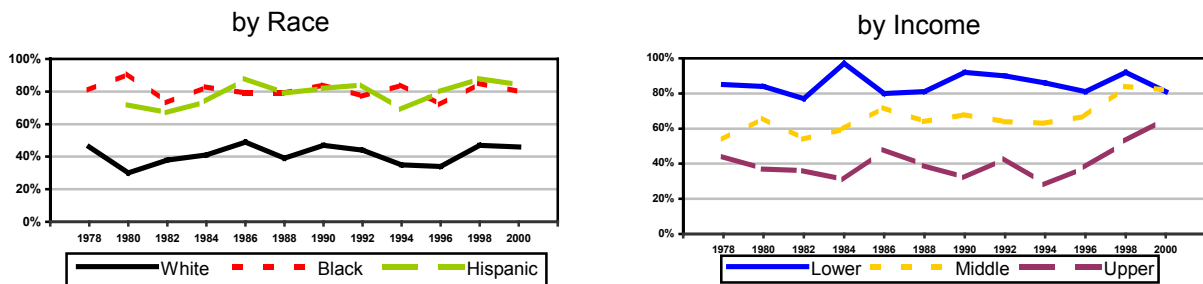
As Figure 4 shows, New Brunswick's Hispanic and African-American households are more likely than non-Hispanic white households to include children. Thus, racial changes noted in the adult demographics are even more pronounced among the city's children.

**Figure 4: HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN
by Race**



The number of households with school age children who send their children to a New Brunswick public school has increased from 60 percent to 80 percent (Figure 5). This growth has been most noted in the past five years. This is largely due to the growth of Hispanic families in the city. There are still disparities by income. Those households in the upper income tier are least likely to send their children to New Brunswick public schools. However, it is important to note that this trend has been reversing over the past five years. In 1994, only about 30 percent of upper income households with children utilized the public schools. As of the 2000 survey, that number has doubled to more than 60 percent.

Figure 5: SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN IN HOUSEHOLD ATTEND PUBLIC SCHOOL



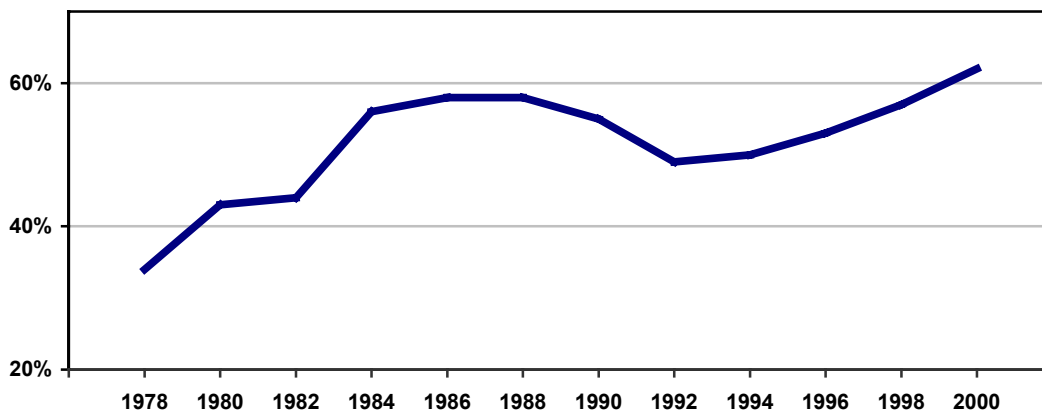
RESIDENTS' VIEWS ON 25 YEARS OF REVITALIZATION IN NEW BRUNSWICK

PERSPECTIVES ON REVITALIZATION

New Brunswick as a Place to Live

Since 1978, the biennial survey has asked residents "How would you rate New Brunswick as a place to live?" The number of residents who have given positive answers to this question has climbed from less than 40 percent in 1978 to more than 60 percent in 2000 (Figure 6).

Figure 6: NEW BRUNSWICK IS A POSITIVE PLACE TO LIVE

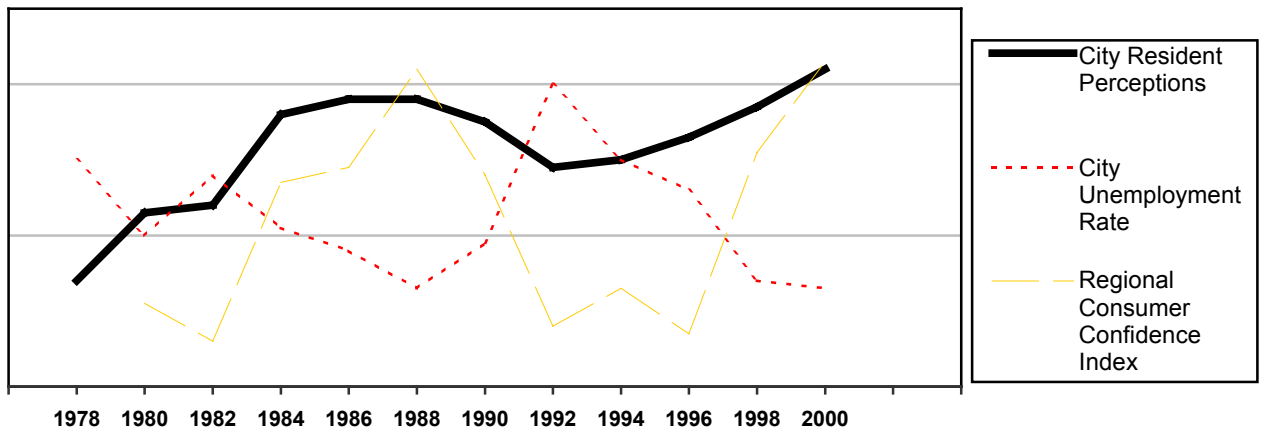


It is helpful to put this finding in perspective. Residents' positive attitudes toward the city experienced dramatic growth from 1978 to 1984, then leveled off for about 4 years before dropping in 1990 and 1992 and then climbing again throughout the 1990s (Figure 7). That first growth corresponds to the initial revitalization phase in the city. This includes the building of Route 18; the construction of Johnson & Johnson's world headquarters, the Hyatt Hotel, Plaza II, and the Ferren Mall; and major improvements to George Street and Albany Street.

The time when residents attitudes held steady (mid to late 1980s) correspond to a period of affordable housing construction; the construction of the Albany Street Plaza and Golden Triangle buildings; and the initial construction for Kilmer Square. The drop in attitudes (early 1990s) occurred during a lull in building activity and a rise in the crime rate.

The most recent climb in residents' attitudes has occurred during an increase in building activity, including luxury homes and townhomes in the old Hiram Square area; Liberty Plaza and the three Civic Square projects; and the Renaissance 2000 redevelopment area, with a new health clinic there as well as a new home for the Chandler clinic downtown.

Figure 7: NEW BRUNSWICK AS A PLACE TO LIVE

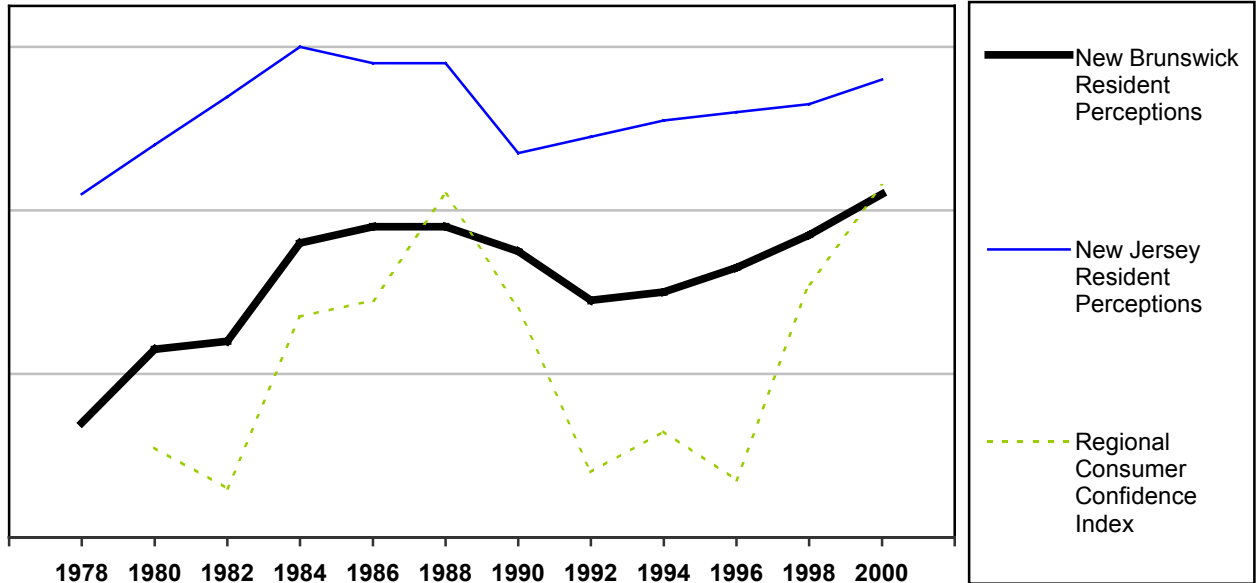


Commercial Revitalization Timeline

- 1955 – area now known as Boyd Park cleared to construct Memorial Parkway
- 1965 – New Street overpass built
- 1974 – Plaza I built on area cleared in 1965
- 1975 – Last major department store closes
- 1975 – American City Corporation report released
- 1975/76 – New Brunswick Tomorrow (NBT) and New Brunswick Development Corporation (Devco) formed
- 1977 – Devco purchase of Commercial Plaza lot
- 1977 – Railroad Plaza renovation
- 1977 – Rutgers School of the Arts moves into PJ Young building
- 1977-80 – major part of Route 18 construction accomplished
- 1977-79 – Plaza II built
- 1979 – Davidson’s closes, leaving no downtown supermarket for nine years
- 1979-82 – Middlesex General (now Robert Wood Johnson) University Hospital expansion
- 1979-84 – Hiram Square historic designation controversy
- 1980-82 – Hyatt Hotel built
- 1979-83 – J&J world headquarters completed, including Albany Street beautification
- 1981-82 – George Street shopping area renovation
- 1982-83 – Ferren Mall and deck opens
- 1985 – MGUH and St. Peters build MRI center at Washington School site
- 1984 – Eric B. Chandler Clinic founded
- 1985-94 – Kilmer Square built (Devco and DKM take over stalled project in 1987)
- 1986 – Monument Hotel sold (sold again in 1990, closed in 2000)
- 1986-89 – Albany Street Plaza built, Golden Triangle building completed
- 1987-90 – Renaissance Station and other affordable housing projects
- 1984 – Eric B. Chandler Clinic opened
- 1988 – C-Town food market opens on George Street
- 1988 – City Market established
- 1989 – Church Street deck built
- 1993 – Renaissance 2000
- 1993-2000 – major expansions at both city hospitals
- 1994-95 – Civic Square built
- 1995 – Hub Teen Center
- 1996 – Livingston Manor opens for senior housing
- 1996 – Sony-Lowes Movie Theater built on Route 1 Flea Market site
- 1998-2000 – Liberty Plaza opens, Civic Square II and III construction
- 1999 – Project Access grant

Some observers may claim that the trends in resident opinions of the city may be a function of the economic times. Figure 8 presents an overlay of New Brunswick residents' opinions compared with city and state unemployment rates and the Mid-Atlantic region Consumer Confidence Index. In addition, survey findings for New Jersey state residents for the same perception question ("Rate New Jersey as a place to live") are presented.

Figure 8: A PLACE TO LIVE – CITY AND STATE COMPARISONS



At first glance, there appears to be a correlation with unemployment levels and resident opinion, i.e. as unemployment goes down resident opinion goes up. However, this correlation is not exact. For example, while city-wide unemployment reached its highest level in 1992, the level of positive resident opinion that year declined only somewhat, and indeed did not return to pre-1982 levels (when the unemployment rate was in fact lower). This indicates that something more than standard economic conditions (while undoubtedly a factor) contribute to New Brunswick residents' feelings about their city.

Taking the analysis another step, it is impossible to separate the impact of the economy on the city's revitalization as a whole from changes in individual situations. For example, during this short downturn period in resident opinion a number of projects had stalled due to economic forces. These include the Kilmer Square Mall -- which commenced construction in the mid 1980s, but was not completed until the early 1990s -- and Hiram Square housing -- which was planned in the late 1980s but did not open its first unit until 1994.

Another way to view the survey finding is to compare the same type of evaluation from New Brunswick residents about their city to New Jersey residents' opinion about their

state. The two findings follow similar curves on the graph, but the changes between the endpoints are the most telling. From 1978 to 2000, New Jerseyans' positive opinion about their state as a place to live rose by 15 percentage points. During this same time period, New Brunswick residents' positive opinions about their city as a place to live rose by nearly 30 percentage points.

This is not to say that the revitalization of New Brunswick has been without dispute. During the early years of revitalization, there were a number of protests against the building of Route 18. The construction of J&J headquarters and the hotel required the relocation of businesses and families, whereas a number of businesses closed. A fight over the designation of Hiram Square as a registered historic area consumed much of the late 1970s and early 1980s, culminating in a court battle and a "Tent City" protest. More recent years have seen the expansion of RWJUH and UMDNJ in the French Street neighborhood, the closing of Monument Hotel, and the imminent closing of New Brunswick "Memorial" Homes.

New Brunswick Voices:

"I'm torn about revitalization. It should help the poor, but I'm not sure if those opportunities are being taken advantage of or if people haven't been given the opportunities."

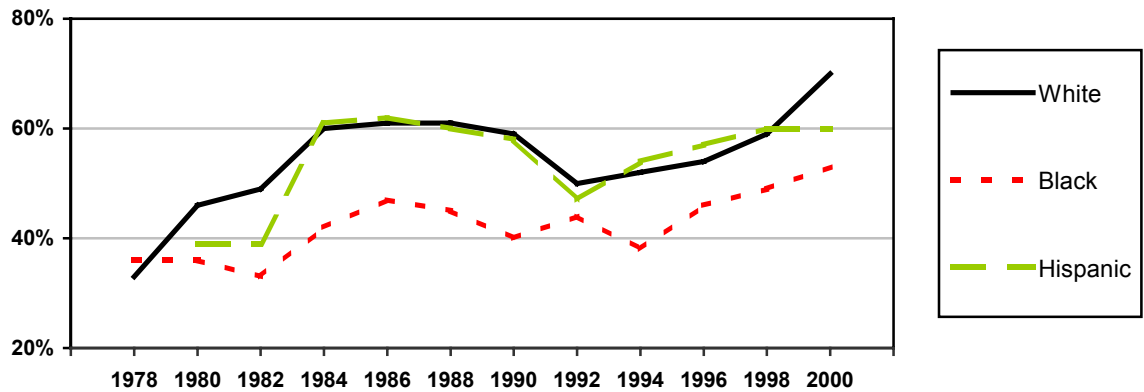
*-- 20 year resident, Central area
African-American female, age 42*

However, through all that time, changes in resident evaluations in the neighborhoods affected by these transformations has not been significantly different from residents in other neighborhoods. While residents in more affluent neighborhoods may have a more positive opinion of New Brunswick as a place to live, all six neighborhoods tend to rise and fall in their opinions at the same periods in time.

Moreover, there do not appear to be any significant gender or age differences in residents' opinions about New Brunswick.

On the other hand, the surveys do record some marked racial differences in residents' attitudes toward their city as a place to live (Figure 9). While non-Hispanic white and Hispanic residents tend to have similar levels of positive regard toward New Brunswick, African-American residents tend to be about 10 to 20 percentage points below their fellow residents in positive attitudes toward the city.

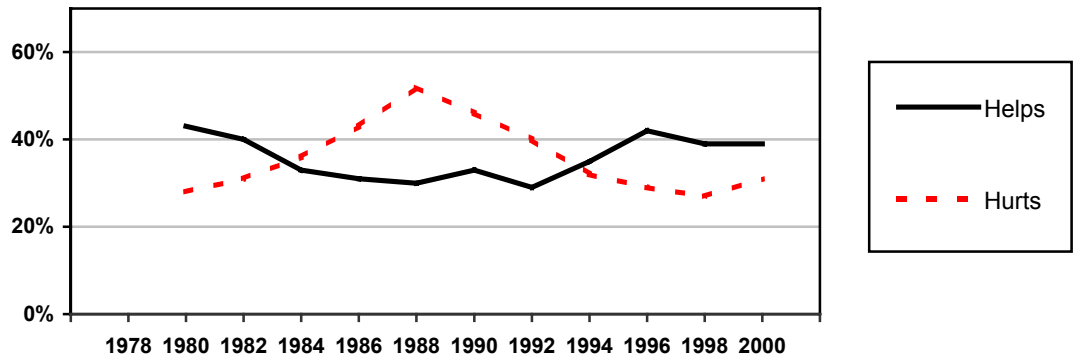
**Figure 9: NEW BRUNSWICK IS A POSITIVE PLACE TO LIVE
by Race**



Impact of Revitalization on the Poor

The early days of revitalization reflected a fresh sense of hope that the renewal efforts would benefit all city residents. In the early 1980s more New Brunswick residents felt that revitalization efforts helped rather than hurt the poor of the city (Figure 10). However, attitudes shifted during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Residents began to feel that revitalization efforts were negatively impacting the poor. By the late 1980s, though, with even more efforts being placed on housing concerns, human services, and neighborhood development, attitudes reversed again. Currently, more New Brunswick residents feel that revitalization helps the poor of the city rather than hurts them.

Figure 10: IMPACT OF REVITALIZATION ON POOR



Moreover, these views are consistent across most groups of residents. Residents in the upper, middle, and lower income tiers tend to hold the same view about revitalization's effect on the poor (Figures 11/12). However, there continue to be racial differences, with African-American residents more likely than white non-Hispanic and Hispanic residents to say that revitalization hurts the poor.

New Brunswick Voices:
“Some people have had to relocate outside of the city. The jobs created haven’t always gone to them. They need more training so they can benefit.”
-- life-long resident, East area
African-American male, age 57

Figure 11: REVITALIZATION HELPS THE POOR

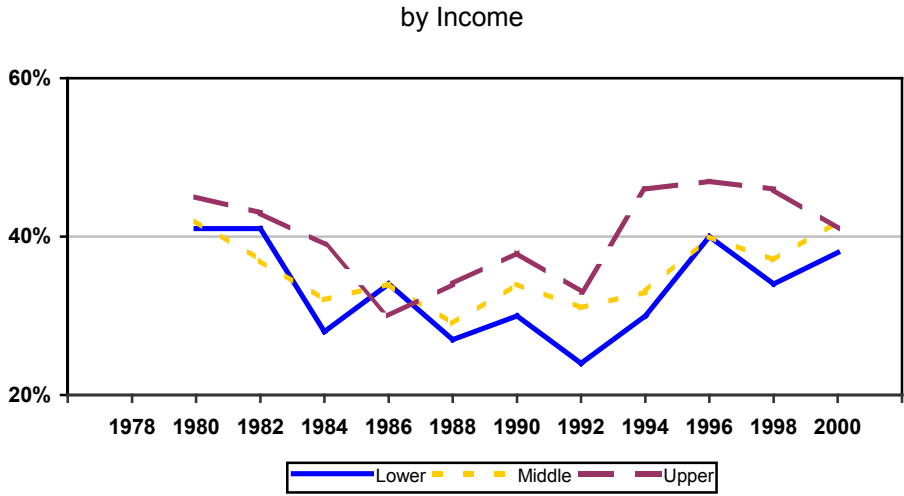
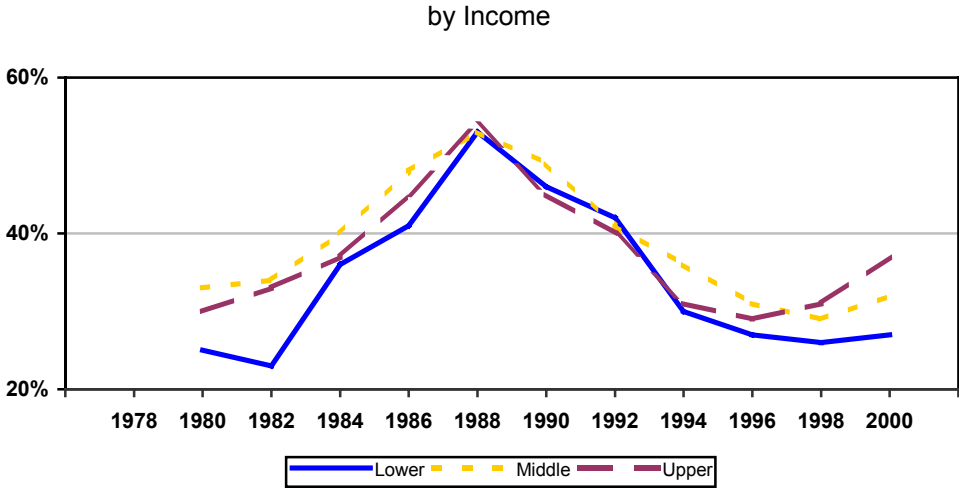


Figure 12: REVITALIZATION HURTS THE POOR



RESIDENTS' VIEWS ON 25 YEARS OF REVITALIZATION IN NEW BRUNSWICK

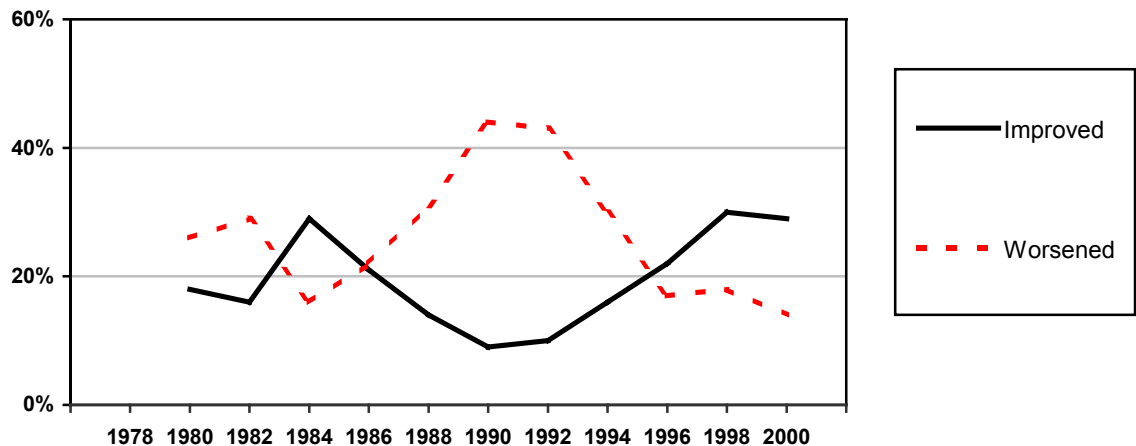
PERSPECTIVES ON LIFE IN NEW BRUNSWICK

The previous section examined overall attitudes toward New Brunswick as a place to live in the context of commercial and physical revitalization efforts. This section examines survey questions about specific aspects of life in the city.

Crime and Safety

Starting in 1980, survey participants were asked whether crime in the city had improved or gotten worse during the previous two years. From 1980 to 1986 opinions were somewhat ambivalent, with similar numbers feeling the crime situation had improved or worsened (Figure 13). From 1988 to 1994, residents became more pessimistic about the state of crime in the city. In fact, in 1990 and 1992 a majority of survey participants named crime and safety as the most important issue that New Brunswick needed to deal with. That trend reversed itself in 1996, however, and resident attitudes have grown steadily positive regarding the state of crime in the city.

Figure 13: PERCEIVED CHANGE IN CRIME



Crime and safety is generally an important concern in any urban environment. It is helpful to understand the factors which may impact perceptions of crime.

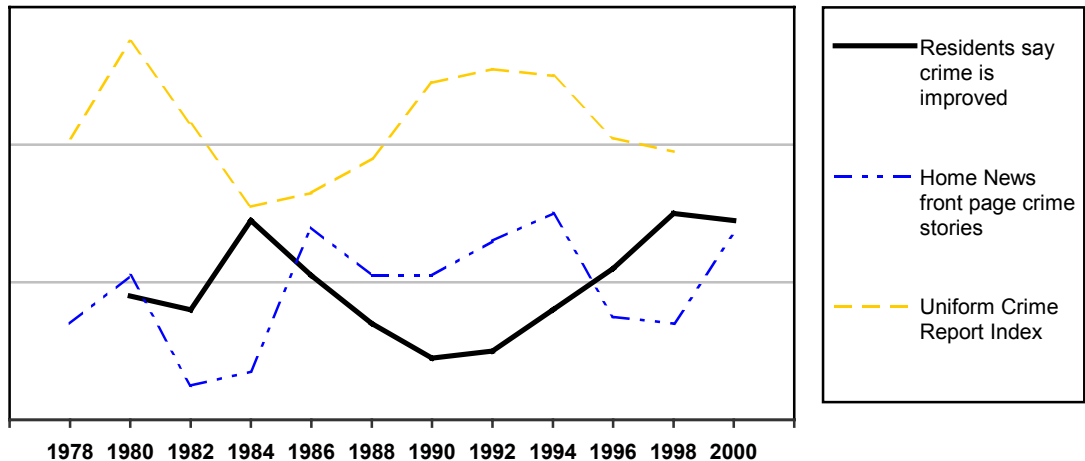
New Brunswick Voices:

“The crime situation is not perfect, but it’s gotten better in the last 4 or 5 years”

*-- life-long resident, Easton Ave area
white female, age 64*

Figure 14 overlays the graph line for residents' perceptions that crime has improved with city-wide crime index reports and the prevalence of crime stories on the front page of the Home News during the six month period preceding each biennial survey.

Figure 14: CRIME PERCEPTIONS AND STATISTICS



Sample of Crime Stories (not comprehensive)

1983 – series on arson incidents

1986-94 – increase in drug related crime stories

1988 - youth gang-related violence

1991-92 – drug-related shootings, RU campus assaults

1992-94 – police-related shootings

It is interesting to note that the number of crime stories in the Home News went up in 1986 when the crime rate went down, and went down in 1988 and 1990 when the crime rate went up. Resident opinions did not follow the media trend.

In fact, residents' attitudes tend to track along the same curve as the crime index. Of special note, while crime declined only slightly from the 1992 peak to 1996, residents noticed the change and there was a steady increase in the number of residents who said the crime situation had improved.

New Brunswick Voices:

“The drug problem has gone down and the police are more visible.”

*-- 25 year resident, Jersey Ave. area
African-American female, age 48*

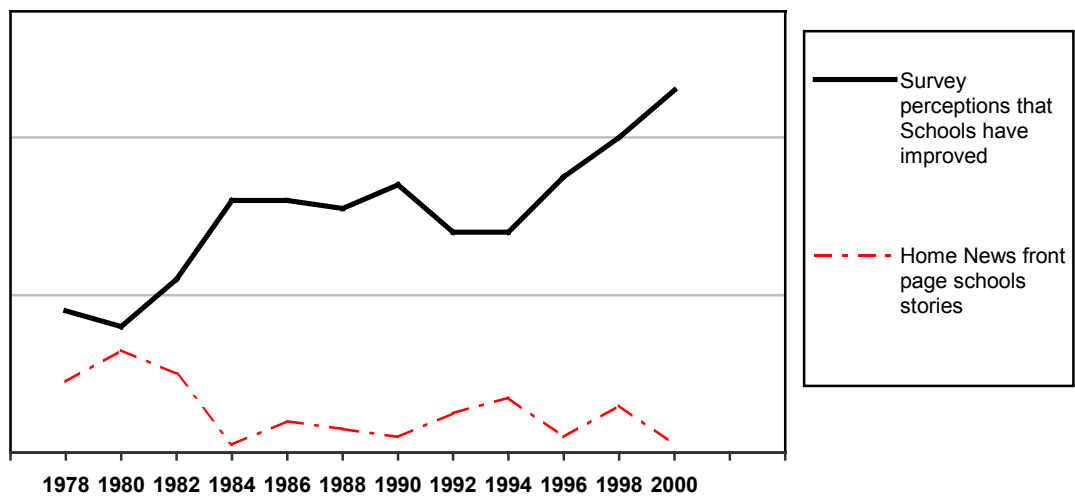
Public Schools

New Brunswick's public schools have also been the recipient of greater resident regard over the past 25 years (Figure 15). In 1978, less than 1-in-5 residents felt the schools were doing a good job. Today about half of the city's residents view the public schools as excellent or good.

Perceptions improved from 1980 to 1984 then held steady for six years. During the early 1980s, one school (Washington) closed while another (Paul Robeson) opened.

Resident opinion showed no movement, either up or down, during a period of turbulence in the mid 1980s. In 1984, the district's state certification was withdrawn. It was reinstated the following year, but the district continued to experience serious budget problems. By the late 1980s, a concerted effort on school improvement showed signs of progress. As an example, in 1988, the School Based Youth Services program was instituted at the high school and expanded to the elementary schools in 1991.

Figure 15: NEW BRUNSWICK SCHOOLS PERCEPTIONS



Education Timeline

- 1980 – Controversies at the School Board and Superintendent's office reported
- 1980 – Career Preparation Center opens in April
- 1980s – Training programs for teachers and administrators sponsored by J&J
- 1982 – Hepatitis scare in schools. Washington School to close
- 1982 – District receives \$350,000 grant to treat student physical/emotional health problems
- 1984 – Paul Robeson School opens
- mid-1980s – evening and summer programs instituted
- 1984 – State withdraws district certification
- 1985 – State re-instates district certification
- 1986 to 1990 – severe budget problems in district reported
- 1988 – District receives grant to establish School Based Youth Services in high school
- 1988 – Youth gang problems make front pages
- 1990 – Parent Involvement Corps started at NBHS
- 1990 – Civic League program to prepare Robeson/Lord Stirling students for high school
- 1991-92 – School Based Youth Services expanded to elementary schools
- 1991 – PIC-C (Parent Infant Care Center) opens for teen parents to remain in school
- 1992 – Problems with students bringing guns in schools make front pages
- 1994 – A-STEP (Alliance for Teen Employment) initiated
- 1994 to 2000 – several campaigns for elected school board fail
- 1995 – Hub Teen Center opens
- 1998 – changes in NBHS administration

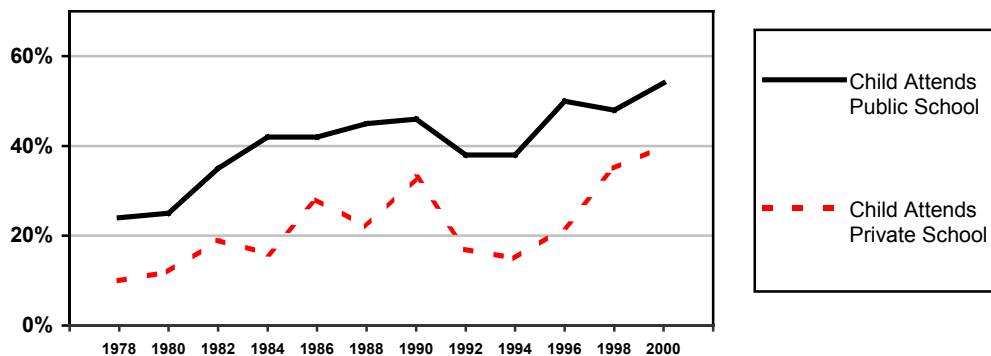
New Brunswick Voices:

“The schools are being more positive. There are more programs for kids to get extra help they need.”

*-- 25 year resident, Jersey Ave. area
African-American female, age 48*

After dipping slightly in 1992 and 1994, attitudes have steadily grown more positive. The change is particularly noted among public school parents, where a majority now view the school system positively (Figure 16). Private school parents have also seen marked improvements in the city's public schools.

Figure 16: NEW BRUNSWICK SCHOOLS POSITIVE RATINGS



New Brunswick Voices:

“The schools are bad only if you're not involved. If parents stay involved it's better. They have a gifted and talented program. It's what you make of it.”

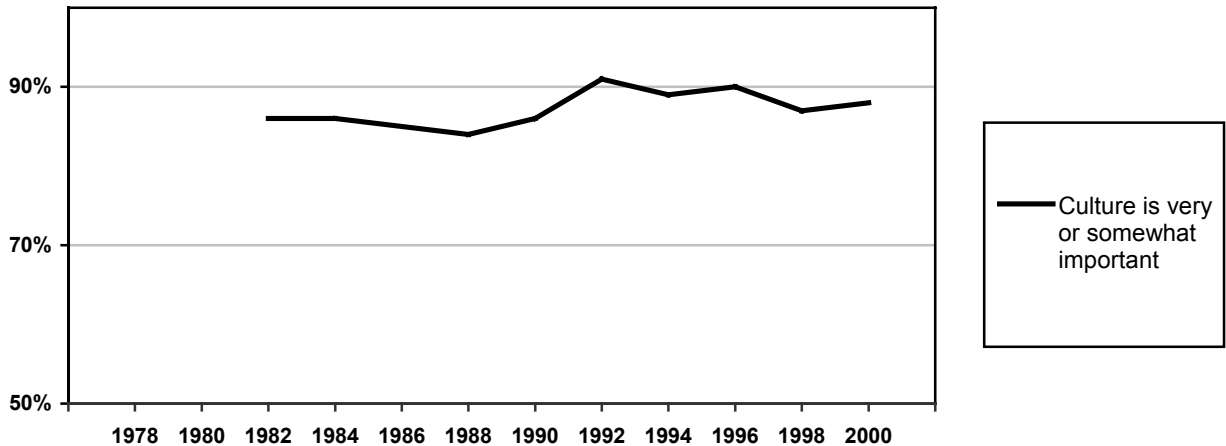
*-- 6 year resident, South area
Hispanic female, age 54*

Culture and the Arts

From the earliest days of the revitalization effort, the role of culture and arts was considered an essential element. In 1978, the report on "Finding a Unique Cultural Concept for New Brunswick" was released. Beginning in 1982, survey participants were asked to evaluate the importance of culture and the arts in New Brunswick's growth (Figure 17). Since this time, about 9-in-10 residents consistently see arts and culture as important elements in the revitalization of the city.

From 1982 to 1988, about half of the city's residents considered culture to be "very important to revitalization." During this time, city organizations instituted a number of street festivals, the Zimmerli museum opened, and the George Street Playhouse moved into its new home on Livingston Avenue.

Figure 17: ROLE OF CULTURE IN NEW BRUNSWICK REVITALIZATION



Culture and Recreation Timeline

- 1976 – First George Street Festival in October
- 1977 - Rutgers School of the Arts moves into PJ Young building
- 1977 – “More Street for People” concerts in the new Joyce Kilmer Park (to 1980)
- 1978 – “Finding a Unique Cultural Concept for New Brunswick” study released
- 1978 – “Music in the Parks” series (continues to 1991)
- 1979 – Devco re-opens State Theatre
- 1980 – Deiner Park constructed
- 1981 – First Raritan River Festival
- 1981 – Buccleuch Park renovation
- 1982 – New Brunswick Cultural Center formed
- 1982 – Memorial Stadium
- 1983 – Zimmerli Museum at Rutgers opens
- 1984 – George Street Playhouse moves into new home
- 1986 – American Repertory Ballet starts its “Dance Power” program to provide cost-free training for city children
- 1988 – State Theatre renovated
- 1989 – Hungarian Heritage Center opens
- 1989 – New Brunswick Cultural Center awarded \$6 million state grant
- 1991 – Crossroads Theatre moves into new home
- 1991 to 1998 – Boyd Park renovation
- 1992 – George Street Book Fair / Food and Music Fest
- 1993 – RU Film Coop brings movies back to the State Theatre
- 1994 – J&J funds summer recreation program
- 1995 – Civic Square building, housing Mason Gross School of the Arts opens
- 1995 – Hub City Teen center opens
- 1996 – A.J. Archibald Park opens
- 2000 – Crossroads Theatre cancels season due to financial issues

In 1988 the State Theatre was renovated. In 1991, the Crossroads Theatre moved from the King Block to Monument Square, joining the State and George Street in New Brunswick's "Theater Row." By 1995, the Civic Square building was erected, housing the Bloustein School and the Rutgers University Mason Gross School of the Arts visual arts program, thus completing a unified arts block across from Monument Square.

During this same period (from 1990 to 1996), a growing number of residents (up to 65% in 2000) considered arts and culture "very" important to the future of the city. There are no significant differences in this opinion among residents of various racial/ethnic groups, although upper income residents have been somewhat more likely than lower income residents to consider the arts very important to revitalization.

New Brunswick Voices:

"Everything is right here. It exposes people to things they've never been exposed to before."

*-- 20 year resident, Central area
African-American female, age 42*

Shopping and Retail

A major part of the revitalization effort has been the changing retail environment. The Hiram Square area had been the historic market center of the city through the nineteenth century and still retained some businesses into the 1970s. George Street had become the main shopping street, but by 1975 the last department store had closed.

In the early 1980s, George Street was transformed from a four-lane road with narrow sidewalks to a two-lane street with wide brick-lined sidewalks. Albany Street was redesigned as a boulevard and the Ferren Mall was built.

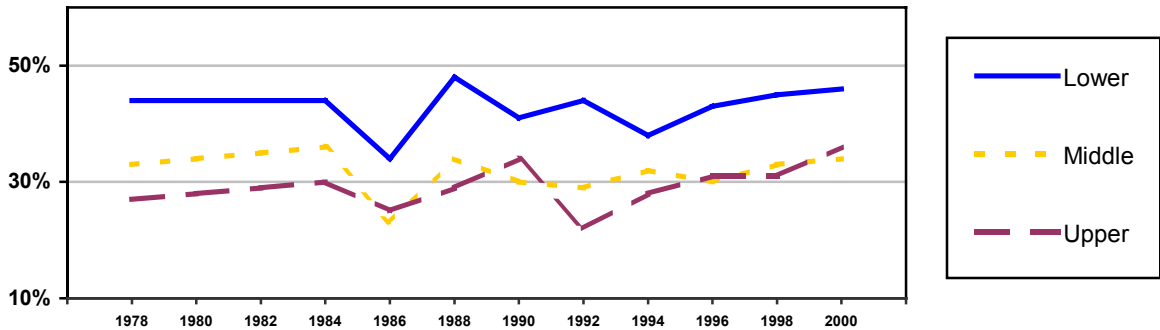
New Brunswick Voices:

"Downtown is safer, nicer, cleaner. And there are more things to do."

*-- life-long resident, East area
African-American male, age 35*

During this time, the frequency of resident patronage of downtown businesses remained stable. Throughout the past 25 years, lower income residents have been more likely than upper and middle income residents to be frequent shoppers in downtown New Brunswick (Figure 18). Much of this has to do with the fact that lower income residents tend to live in neighborhoods closer to downtown.

**Figure 18: FREQUENT DOWNTOWN SHOPPER
by Income**



Moreover, the type of purchases made by different groups of residents varies. Lower income residents are more likely to shop for clothing in downtown New Brunswick (Figure 19). However, this type of shopping has been on the decline since the mid 1980s for all groups of residents. There is some evidence of a potential increase in downtown clothing shopping in starting 2000.

New Brunswick Voices:

*"I like the place that has \$25 coats. They have good quality clothes for good prices."
-- life-long resident, Central area
Hispanic female, age 29*

In 1978, few residents shopped downtown for food and groceries, regardless of income. There has been an increase since 1988 when C-Town opened in a supermarket site that had been shuttered for nine years. There has also been growth in this area as produce markets have opened on French Street.

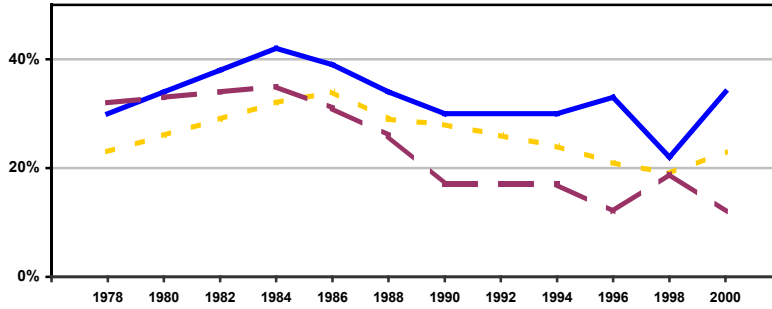
In the late 1970s, few residents dined out at restaurants in downtown New Brunswick. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, this number increased dramatically. This increase has been largely among upper income residents.

New Brunswick Voices:

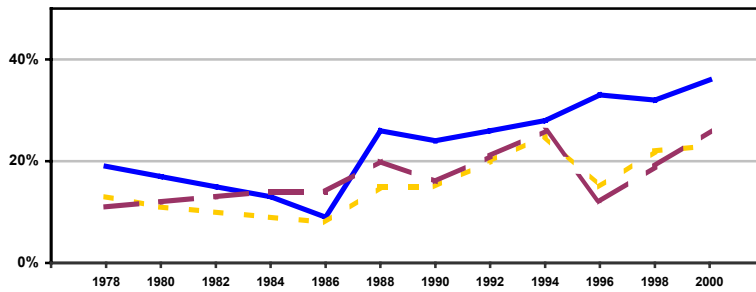
*"The downtown area is lacking in parts, but some of the shops and restaurants are very strong attractions."
-- 2 year resident, French Street area
white male, age 27*

**Figure 19: TYPES OF DOWNTOWN PURCHASES
by Income**

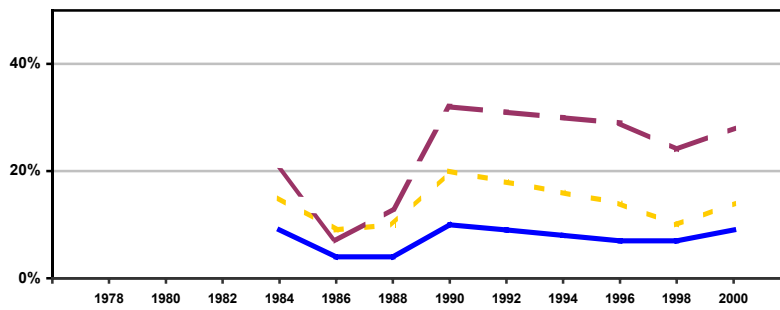
CLOTHING



FOOD & GROCERIES



RESTAURANTS

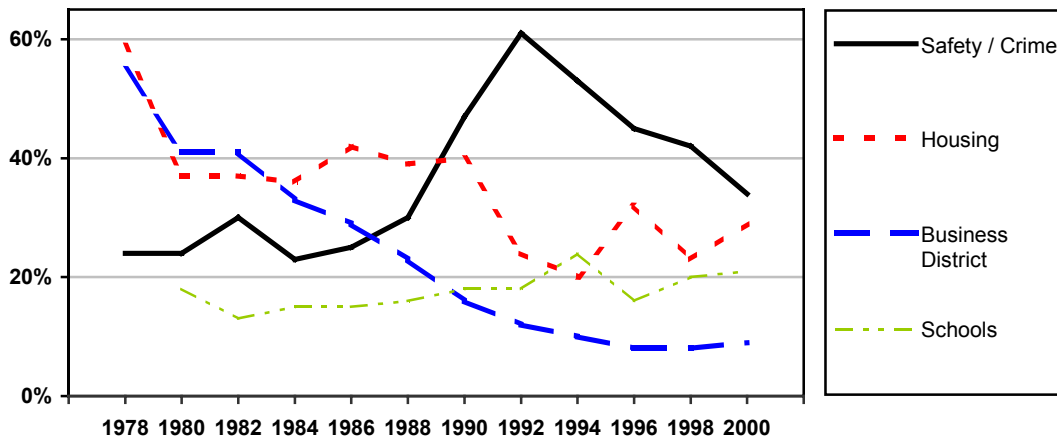


RESIDENTS' VIEWS ON 25 YEARS OF REVITALIZATION IN NEW BRUNSWICK

CHANGING NEEDS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Every biennial survey asked residents to name their top priorities for things to improve in New Brunswick (Figure 20). During the early period of revitalization residents focused on the downtown area and housing concerns. As the downtown area was rebuilt, resident emphasis shifted to other areas.

Figure 20: THINGS TO IMPROVE IN NEW BRUNSWICK



Crime and safety concerns grew in importance throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s, but have been on the decline since. Emphasis on improving the schools has grown slightly over the past 25 years. Transportation, jobs, and youth activities have also continued to be on the list of residents' priorities for improvement. Youth activities are of particular concern to African-American residents, especially during the past ten years.

New Brunswick Voices:

"New Brunswick is built up and it's clean. There are more jobs now."

-- 2 year resident, East area

African-American female, age 70

Housing

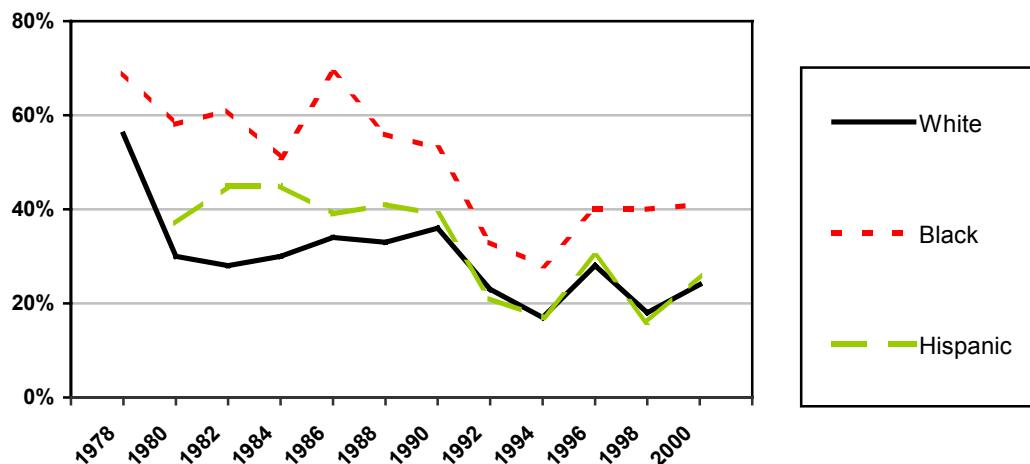
Although this issue has decreased in importance since 1978, housing is still an important concern for residents in all neighborhoods of New Brunswick and it continues to be a somewhat higher priority for African-American residents than it is for non-Hispanic white and Hispanic residents (Figure 21).

New Brunswick Voices:

“There’s some good and some bad. Buildings change management too often and needed repairs aren’t done.”

*-- life-long residents, Central area
African-American female, age 37*

**Figure 21: THINGS TO IMPROVE IN NEW BRUNSWICK
* HOUSING *
by Race**



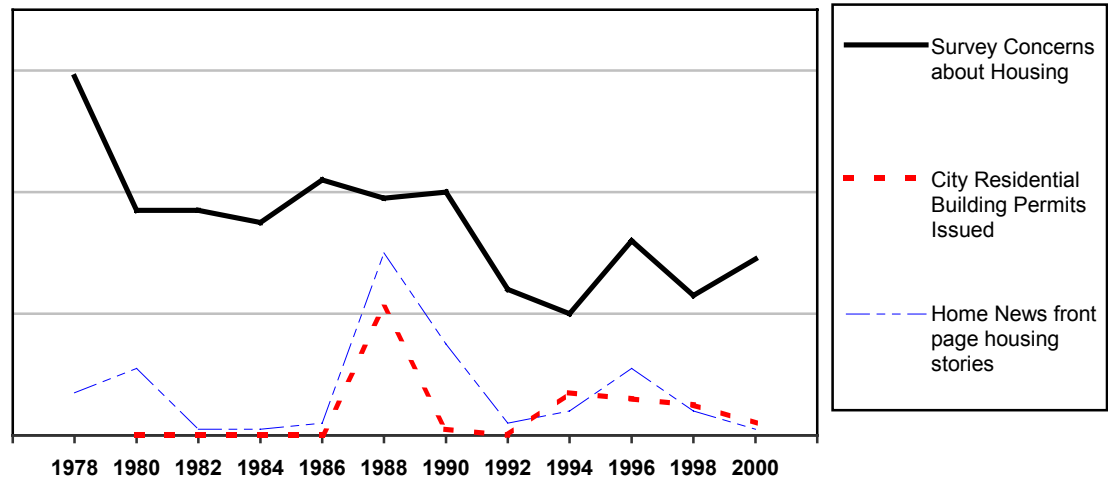
The survey results demonstrate that resident opinion has responded to the affordable housing programs of the late 1980s. As more low income and affordable housing was constructed, resident concerns about housing diminished (Figure 22). This was first noted among African-American residents in the 1988 survey. However, housing concerns started to rise again as the focus on housing development moved into the upper income levels in the late 1990s.

New Brunswick Voices:

“It’s good that new housing is going to be built for the people. If people want to stay in New Brunswick, they should be able to.”

*-- life-long resident, Central area
Hispanic female, age 29*

Figure 22: HOUSING CONCERNS AND BUILDING ACTIVITY



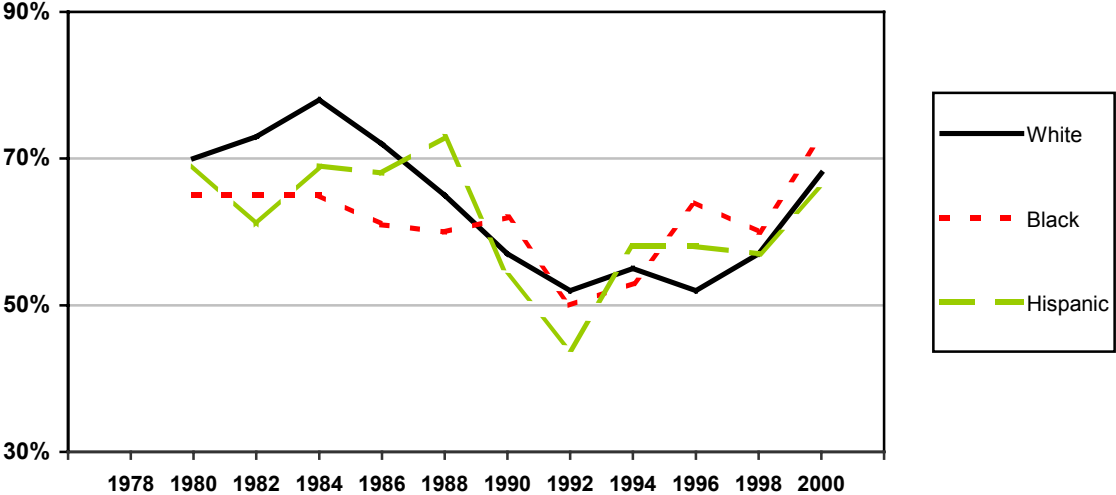
Housing Timeline

- 1939-51 – Schwartz-Robeson public housing (293 units)
- 1958 – New Brunswick Homes (a.k.a. Memorial Homes) public housing (246 units)
- 1961 – Bishop Towers – last major housing construction until revitalization program
- 1975 – American City Corporation report emphasizes housing shortage
- 1976 – Civic League of Greater New Brunswick study “A Place to Live” on revitalizing Ward 2
- 1980 – explosion and maintenance problems at Memorial Homes
- 1980 – Devco erects 4 townhomes at Commercial & Seaman Sts.
- 1983 – United Auto Workers, builds senior high rise (214) units
- 1983 – Bond Factory converted to St. Mary Apartments for seniors (133 units)
- 1983 – YMCA closes in the same year Catholic Charities opens men’s shelter on Memorial Parkway – city closes shelter in 1984, but it re-opens in 1986
- (1984 to 1989 – focus on building low income housing)
- 1984 to 1986 – Civic League institutes “renters equity” program (14 units on Throop, 62 on Remsen, and 10 on Oxford.
- 1986 – “Tent City” to protest Hiram Square redevelopment
- 1988 – Program for evictions of illegal aliens, and public housing residents with drug convictions
- 1989 – Delavan Court (44 units) Hampton Club (600 units), and Renaissance Station (141 units) open as low-income purchase properties.
- 1991 – Comstock Court opens (19 units)
- 1992 – HARP (Homeowners Rehabilitation Authority) initiated to assist current home upkeep
- (1994 to 1999 – focus on upper income housing)
- 1994 – After a number of years in planning, first 18 units of new Hiram Square luxury housing open
- 1994 – Providence Square (98 units) senior housing opens in renovated cigar factory
- 1994 – University Center opens (168 units) to house Rutgers students
- 1996 – Livingston Manor senior housing opens in renovated apartment building
- 1996 – NB Housing Authority travel funds scandal
- 1997 – Riverwatch luxury housing opens (33 townhomes and 197 apartments)
- 1999 – Richmond Court phase of Hiram Square development opens (15 townhomes and 82 apartments)
- 2000 – After many years in the works, plans take shape to replace Memorial Homes site with low density mixed income housing

Tomorrow's New Brunswick

During the course of revitalization, the majority of New Brunswick residents have remained positive about the future of the city (Figure 23). While this optimism diminished somewhat during the late 1980s and early 1990s, higher levels of optimism have returned with an interesting transformation.

**Figure 23: NEW BRUNSWICK WILL IMPROVE
by Race**



Throughout the history of these biennial surveys, the results have shown racial differences in attitudes, with African-American residents feeling less positive about the changes they have experienced in New Brunswick, compared to non-Hispanic white and Hispanic residents.

However, since 1996, African-American residents have become the most optimistic with regard to the future of New Brunswick. This may indicate a heightened sense of expectation in sharing the benefits of revitalization over the next few years. Future survey efforts will tell.

New Brunswick Voices:
"It's close to everything. It's called the Hub City for a reason. If you want to look to buy a home and settle down permanently, New Brunswick is a good bet."
*-- 5 year resident, French Street area
white male, age 25*

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APPENDIX

New Brunswick Biennial Survey Interview Dates

1976	September 20-25
1978	February 21-March 12
1980	March 2-8
1982	March 22-April 5
1984	March 21-April 1
1986	April 4-14
1988	April 4-17
1990	May 11-21
1992	April 9-May 21
1994	May 11-June 13
1996	May 2-16
1998	May 12-27
2000	May 15-26