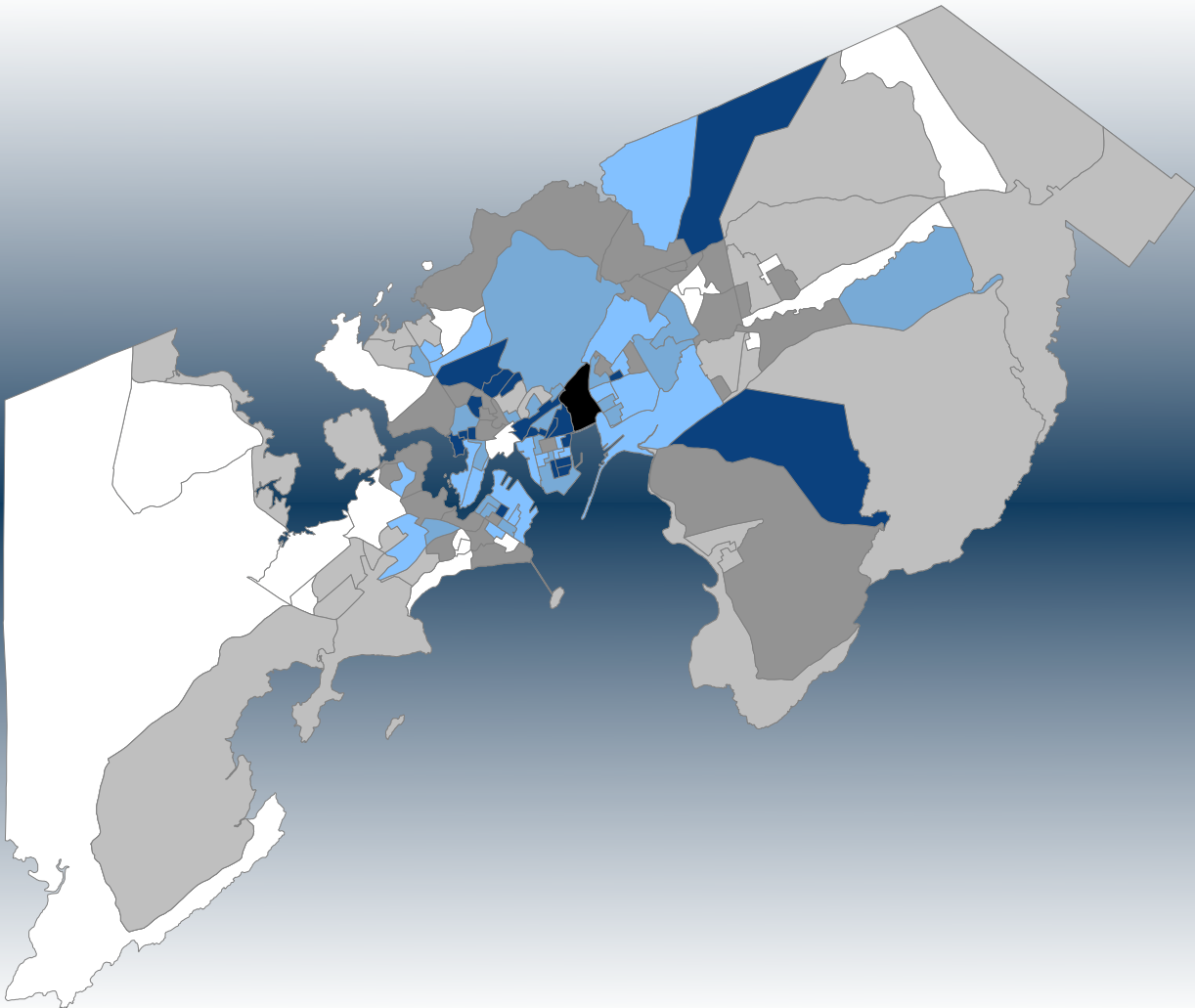


Poverty and Plenty II

A Statistical Snapshot of the Quality of Life in Saint John • November 2008

Summary



Poverty and Plenty II

- A Statistical Snapshot of the Quality of Life in Saint John •

Prepared under the direction of the Research and Evaluation Committee of Vibrant Communities Saint John. The report was authored by Kathryn Asher (Human Development Council) with research assistance from Alexander MacKinnon (Vibrant Communities Saint John) and mapping by Matthew Perry (Discovery Geomatics).

Saint John is one of twelve cities working together through Vibrant Communities Canada to significantly reduce poverty. Through its partnerships, Vibrant Communities Saint John provides leadership and coordination to revitalize our priority neighbourhoods.

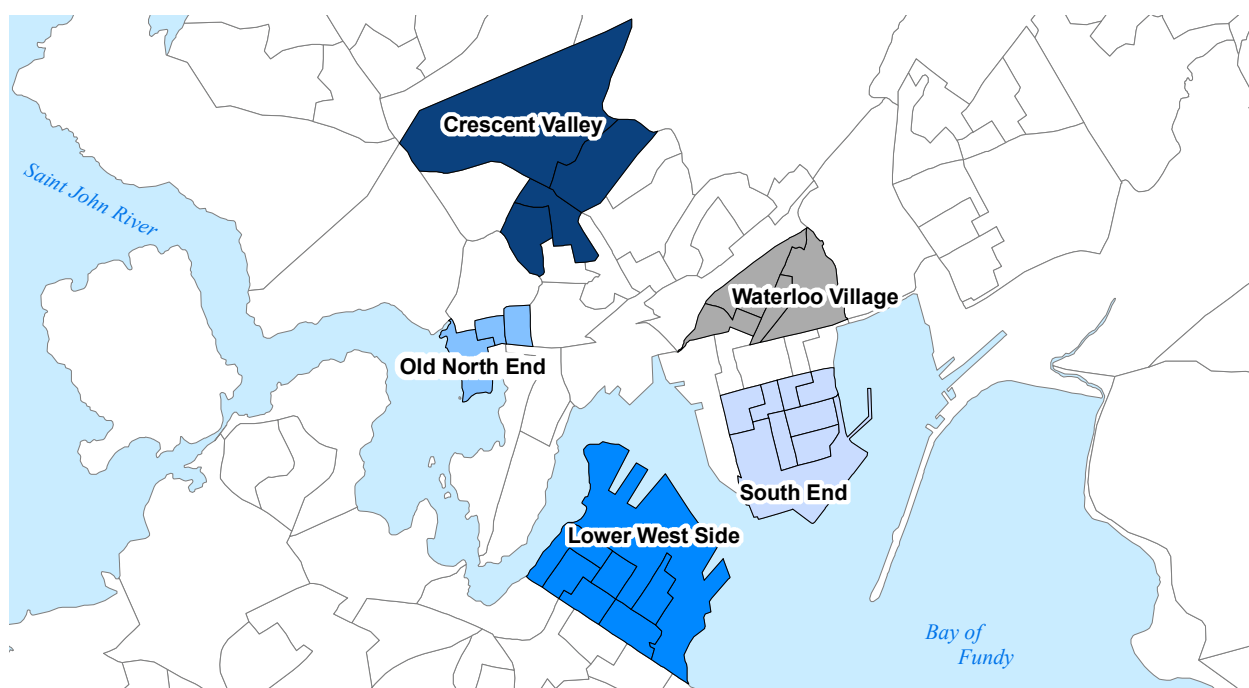
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As Vibrant Communities Saint John and partners step up the pace to reduce poverty in Saint John, we arm ourselves again with the most recent census data—from Statistics Canada’s 2006 census—in a follow up to our first *Poverty and Plenty* report published in 2005.

Poverty and Plenty II is organized around five chapters: demographics, poverty and plenty, housing, education and employment, and the priority neighbourhoods. The centerpiece is the statistical profile of 27 indicators organized into the first four chapters and examined through a priority neighbourhood, city, Census Metropolitan Area, provincial and national lens. The demographics chapter looks at population change, age and family type. The poverty and plenty chapter looks at the poverty rate before and after tax as well as the rate for children, seniors, and several family types. This chapter also looks at median household income and offers an analysis of households with very high and very low incomes. The housing chapter looks at rental housing, the age of housing stock, the affordability of rental housing, and mobility rates. The chapter on education and employment looks at high school and post-secondary education completion as well as labour force participation. The priority neighbourhoods chapter looks at the city’s five priority neighbourhoods in detail. Data from this census and last (when available) is offered to show how we are faring this census and what changes occurred, or did not occur, since the last.

Poverty is not evenly distributed across Saint John, rather, people who live in poverty are more likely to be concentrated in specific neighbourhoods. Saint John’s neighbourhood poverty was highest in our five priority neighbourhoods shown in the map below. These neighbourhoods include Crescent Valley, the Lower West Side, the Old North End, the South End, and the Waterloo Village. We consider them to be a priority because of their high poverty rates and percentage of single parents, and their low levels of education and labour force participation.



In the 2006 census there were close to 12,000 city residents who lived in these five priority neighbourhoods, almost 5,000 of which lived below the poverty line. While these neighbourhoods accounted for a bit over a sixth of the city's population they housed over a third of the city's residents who lived below the poverty line. Our analysis shows that there is significant variation within the priority neighbourhoods themselves both in the 2006 data as well as in changes over time—there is a lot to learn from the areas within the neighbourhoods that are improving at an accelerated rate. Crescent Valley provides one example of this variation where one area had a 18% poverty rate (down 26% since 2001), another had a 82% poverty rate, and yet another area saw an increase of 14% since the last census.

Although the data in this report is largely open to interpretation some trends are evident, and expected. While the priority neighbourhoods generally fared worse than the city, the city in general fared worse than the Saint John Census Metropolitan Area (due in large part to the affluent suburbs), quite often fell below the provincial and national averages, and along with Campbellton often fared worse than the other New Brunswick cities. And as a general rule the more vulnerable areas in Saint John—those with higher rates of poverty and single parents and older housing stock and lower labour force participation rates—were concentrated centrally in the city, for the most part in or around the five priority neighbourhoods.

The data presented in *Poverty and Plenty II* is intended to be used to guide planning, policy and programs. This compendium of data serves as a companion piece to the Greater Saint John Poverty Reduction Strategy. There is something in this document for everyone. The neighbourhood volunteer can use the information to plan where they dedicate their volunteer hours while the regional manager of a government department can use this report to strategize about where they invest their funds. And most importantly this document arms neighbourhoods with detailed data about themselves.

Highlights from the report follow with data from the 2006 census with comparisons to the 2001 census when possible.

Demographics

Single Mothers

- In the city of Saint John slightly more than a fifth of families (21%) were headed by a single mother, a rate higher than the provincial and national averages.
- The rate of single mother families was higher in the priority neighbourhoods than in the city, and highest in Crescent Valley where more than half of families (54%) were headed by a single mother.

Single Fathers

- In the city of Saint John 3.7% of families were headed by a single father, a rate higher than the provincial and national averages.
- The rate of single mother families was higher in all but one of the priority neighbourhoods (Crescent Valley) than in the city, and highest in the Old North End where more than one in 10 families (11%) were headed by a single father.

Poverty and Plenty

Poverty Rates

- In the city of Saint John slightly more than one in five of us (20.8% or 13,743 individuals) lived in poverty.
- Saint John had a higher poverty rate (20.8%) than the province (13.5%) and the country (15.3%). After tax, 15.5% of our city's residents (or 10,241 individuals) lived in poverty.
- Although this census showed that the city of Saint John's poverty rate dropped 3.7% from the 2001 rate of 24.5%—which was a bigger drop than the province's (down 2.2%) or the country's (down 0.9%)—we still had an unacceptably high rate of poverty.
- The poverty rates in the priority neighbourhoods were:
 - Crescent Valley: 61.6% (1,128 individuals)
 - Waterloo Village: 56.1% (870 individuals)
 - Old North End: 46.8% (683 individuals)
 - South End: 37.5% (1,416 individuals)
 - Lower West Side: 31.5% (854 individuals)
- Since the last census the poverty rate in the priority neighbourhoods changed as follows:
 - Waterloo Village: up 5.4%
 - Old North End: down 5.5%
 - Lower West Side: down 6.5%
 - South End: down 6.6%
 - Crescent Valley: down 7.3%
- Poverty in our city remained concentrated in our priority neighbourhoods. Close to 5,000 of the almost 14,000 individuals who lived in poverty in the city lived in one of the five priority neighbourhoods.
- In this census Crescent Valley, the Old North End, and the Waterloo Village were all classified as very high poverty neighbourhoods because more than 40%* of their residents lived below the poverty line, while the South End and the Lower West Side were classified as high poverty neighbourhoods where between 30% and 39.9% lived in poverty. In the 2001 census all these neighbourhoods had the same classification except the South End which improved from a very high to a high poverty neighbourhood.

* A rate 40% or more is the threshold at which sociologists warn that the entire area is under stress.

- Almost two-thirds of residents in Crescent Valley (61.6%) lived in poverty. Although Crescent Valley had the biggest drop in its poverty rate among the priority neighbourhoods since the last census it still had the highest rate in this census.
- The poverty rate dropped in four of the priority neighbourhoods—Crescent Valley, the Lower West Side, the Old North End, and the South End—by more than 5% each, all greater than the city, province, and country’s rate of change.
- The Waterloo Village was the only priority neighbourhood that had an increase in its poverty rate since the last census (up 5.4%).

Poverty Rates for Children (Under 6 Years)

- In the city of Saint John more than one in three children under 6 years (34% or 1,285 children) lived in poverty, a rate much higher than the provincial rate (18%) and the national average (19%).
- The rate of child poverty in the priority neighbourhoods was highest in Crescent Valley where 77% (or 135 children) lived below the poverty line.

Poverty Rates for Seniors

- In the city of Saint John 16% of seniors (those 65 years of age and over) lived in poverty (representing 1,578 seniors), a rate higher than the provincial rate (11%) and the national average (14%).
- The rate of senior poverty in the priority neighbourhoods was highest in Crescent Valley where 44% (or 124 seniors) lived below the poverty line.

Poverty Rates by Family Types

- Crescent Valley had the highest proportion of couple families who lived in poverty among the priority neighbourhoods (41% or 87 families) compared to 9.3% in the city.
- Crescent Valley also had the highest poverty rate for singles among the priority neighbourhoods where almost two-thirds (66% or 240 individuals) lived in poverty compared to 40% in the city.
- Crescent Valley also had the highest poverty rate for single mother families among the priority neighbourhoods where close to three-quarters (71% or 185 families) lived in poverty compared to 42% in the city.
- On the whole, single mother families had higher poverty rates than singles who had higher rates than couple families.

Median Household Income

- Although the city’s median household income (\$41,459) was more than \$3,500 lower than the province’s and more than \$12,000 lower than the national average it had a bigger increase (up 17%) than either since the last census.

- The priority neighbourhoods' median household income was lower than the city's, and lowest in the Waterloo Village (\$21,072). The Waterloo Village also had smallest increase in its median household income among the priority neighbourhoods since the last census (up 13%). With the exception of the Waterloo Village the priority neighbourhoods saw far more impressive gains in their median household income than the city, province or country, a trend not often seen elsewhere in the report.

Income Ranges

- In the city of Saint John 6.5% of households lived on less than \$10,000, a rate higher than the provincial and national averages. In contrast 10% of city households enjoyed an income six digits or higher, a rate lower than the provincial and national averages.
- While close to a sixth of Crescent Valley households (16%) lived on less than \$10,000 (the highest percentage among the priority neighbourhoods) no households in Crescent Valley or the Old North End enjoyed an income six digits or higher.

Housing

Rented Dwellings

- In the city of Saint John close to half (44%) of dwellings were rented, a rate higher than the provincial and national averages.
- The rate of rented dwellings was higher in the priority neighbourhoods than in the city where the percent of rented dwellings was more than 80% in four of the five priority neighbourhoods. It was the highest in the Waterloo Village where 94% of dwellings were rented as opposed to owned and so a smaller proportion of Waterloo Village households were building equity through their homes.

Age of Rental Housing Stock

- In the city of Saint John almost one in every two dwellings (46%) were built during 1960 or before, a rate higher than the provincial and national averages and higher than the rate in the other New Brunswick cities. Not surprisingly then, the city's rate of newer construction—those dwellings built between 1986-2006—accounted for only 14% of the city's total, a lower proportion than the provincial and national averages.
- The rate of older dwellings built during 1960 or before was higher in the priority neighbourhoods than in the city, and highest in the Old North End where over three-quarters (78%) were built during 1960 or before. Not surprisingly then, the rate of newer dwellings built 1986-2006 was lower in the priority neighbourhoods than in the city, and lowest in the Old North End where only 1.6% were built 1986-2006.

It is important to note that this housing data comes from the 2006 census and so the trends in Saint John now are much different.

Affordability of Rental Housing

- In the city of Saint John over one in three tenant households (37%) spent 30% or more of their income on rent (the point at which housing is no longer considered affordable), a rate lower than the provincial and national averages.
- The rate of households that spent 30% or more of their income on rent was higher in two of the priority neighbourhoods (Waterloo Village and the Old North End) than in the city, and highest in the Waterloo Village where close to half of households (47%) had non-affordable housing.

Education and Employment

High School & Post-Secondary Education

- In the city of Saint John close to a quarter of those 25 years and over (23%) had not completed high school, a rate below the provincial average but above the national one. Almost half of those 25 years and over in the city of Saint John had a post-secondary education (49%), which was the same as the province's rate and below the national average.
- The rate of high school non-completion was higher in the priority neighbourhoods than in the city, and highest in Crescent Valley where 43% of those 25 years and over were without a high school education. Not surprisingly then, the rate of post-secondary education was lower in the priority neighbourhoods than in the city, and lowest in Crescent Valley where only 28% of those 25 years and over completed post-secondary studies.

Labour Force Participation

- In the city of Saint John almost two-thirds of residents (62%) were in the labour force, a rate lower than the provincial and national averages.
- The labour force participation rate was lower in all but one of the priority neighbourhoods (the South End) than in the city, and lowest in Crescent Valley where only 34% of its residents were in the labour force.