

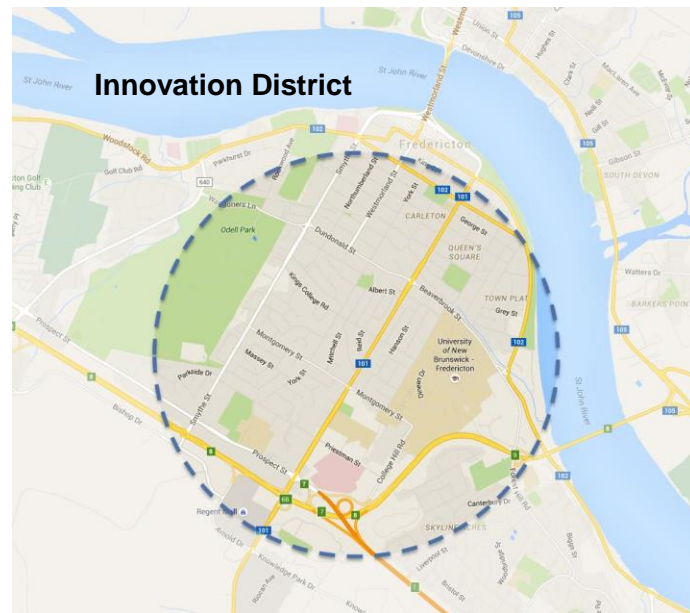
## FREDERICTON'S CULTURE OF INNOVATION

### Chronicle 2 – Innovation District

In Chronicle 1, we explored the City's journey of diversifying from a government/university town to a thriving knowledge-based economy, investing in digital infrastructure, and earning global brand equity as a 'smart city'.

In this chronicle, you will learn about what's happening in our Innovation District. The concept of innovation district evolved from another key deliverable of the city's first economic development strategy, Vision 2000. It was to develop a 'knowledge corridor' by creating a technology and research park, and leveraging assets like the universities and research and development organizations.

Having started my career in economic development in 1992 with the launch of Vision 2000, I had the privilege to be involved and at the forefront of the conceptualization of Knowledge Park. It was Mr. J.W. Bud Bird, former Chairman of the Greater Fredericton Economic Development Corporation (GFEDC), who envisioned the park, and who approached the former UNB President, Dr. Robin Armstrong, to lease UNB lands to enable the park construction. Mr. Bird understood that it was communities like Silicon Valley and the Research Triangle who were churning out innovative companies, creating high value jobs, and fostering a clustering environment to spur continuous growth through tech transfer from the universities. The type of growth, which snowballs to support other sectors like retail, restaurants, arts & culture, and professional services.



After a large-scale effort to engage the City of Fredericton, the Province of New Brunswick, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and the University of New Brunswick (UNB), GFEDC spearheaded the design and construction of the first building. With a can-do attitude of "if you build it – they will come", a makeshift floor was poured of asphalt and a billowing white tent erected to officially kick-off Knowledge Park. With several hundred people in attendance and even a jack rabbit bouncing through the tent, Knowledge Park was soon to become a reality in 1995.

Today, Knowledge Park has grown to six buildings on its 35-acre campus, recently adding Cyber Centre to accommodate the burgeoning growth of the cybersecurity sector. The park is home to 40+ companies with the likes of Salesforce.com (formerly Radian6), CGI, Deloitte (formerly Blue Spurs), and Skillsolft.

Knowledge Park and UNB are the anchors of the Innovation District, which is a two kilometre radius between the park, UNB and the downtown - encompassing academic institutions and over 60 research and development organizations.

In Fredericton, there is close access to rich and varied research expertise and support organizations like NBCC's Mobile & Ubiquitous Computing Lab, the Maritime College of Forest Technology, the Research & Productivity Council, BioNB, New Brunswick Innovation Foundation, Agriculture Canada's Potato Research Centre, etc.

With UNB producing over 75% of the province's university related research, 25 research chairs, 20 research centers and 65 laboratories - there are some incredible things happening from biomedical engineering to cyber security to planetary science on the campus! Take a moment to watch this UNB video: <https://www.facebook.com/uofnb/videos/10156259959895393/?fref=nf>

So why did we create Knowledge Park, and package this unique combination of assets into the Innovation District? First, it was to enable tech transfer from the universities to a clustering and commercialization environment for knowledge-based companies. Second, it was to foster a 'Living Lab' environment to attract companies looking to outsource their product development. The best example of this is Siemens, who established in the park because of access to the university and college talent pipeline, R&D network, and digital infrastructure with low cost connectivity.

In Fredericton, you have a scalable model for product development, and we want to attract more global companies like Siemens! Home to such a high density of knowledge-based companies, the knowledge industry is our oil sands. It is where we have seen continuous, positive growth, and it's where there will be good paying jobs tomorrow.

**Laurie Guthrie, EcD, BIS**

Civic Innovation & Smart City Strategist - City of Fredericton