

Water, Rocks and Trees

BUILDING UPON OUR RICH RESOURCES:

The Creative Economy in Muskoka



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Local strategies for economic development

- Population-driven  (environmental degradation)
- Cost-driven  (low wages, poor working conditions)
- Commodity-driven  (boom/bust at mercy of global forces)
- Innovation-driven  (high value added, high quality of life)



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Regional Innovation Systems and Clusters

“the network of institutions in the public and private sectors whose interactions initiate, import, modify and diffuse new technologies” (Freeman)

“a system of innovation is constituted by elements and relationships which interact in the production, diffusion and use of new, and economically useful, knowledge” (Lundvall)

“a geographically proximate group of interconnected companies and associated institutions in a particular field, linked by commonalities and complementarities” (Porter)



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SSHRC Funded Major Collaborative Research Projects (ISRN)

Industrial clusters & economic development

- 2001-2005
- better our understanding of what makes for 'successful' clusters
- consider what (if any) impact clusters have on regional economic performance

Innovation & creativity in Canadian city-regions

- 2006-2010
- understand the relationship between economic and creativity performance, diversity and the strength of local and non-local linkages and knowledge flows
- explore the relationship between economic and creativity performance and quality of place



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Local IDEAs (Indicator Database for Economic Analysis)

- 2 year Canadian Foundation for Innovation (CFI) grant
 - Private sector partners:
 - Conference Board of Canada
 - Impact Group
- Construct database that allows for economic analysis of local jurisdictions across international borders
 - Beginning with Canada (year 1) then US, and EU (year 2)
- Share within research network (ISRN) and support ongoing research and local economic development projects
- Eventual hope is to develop web-based platform



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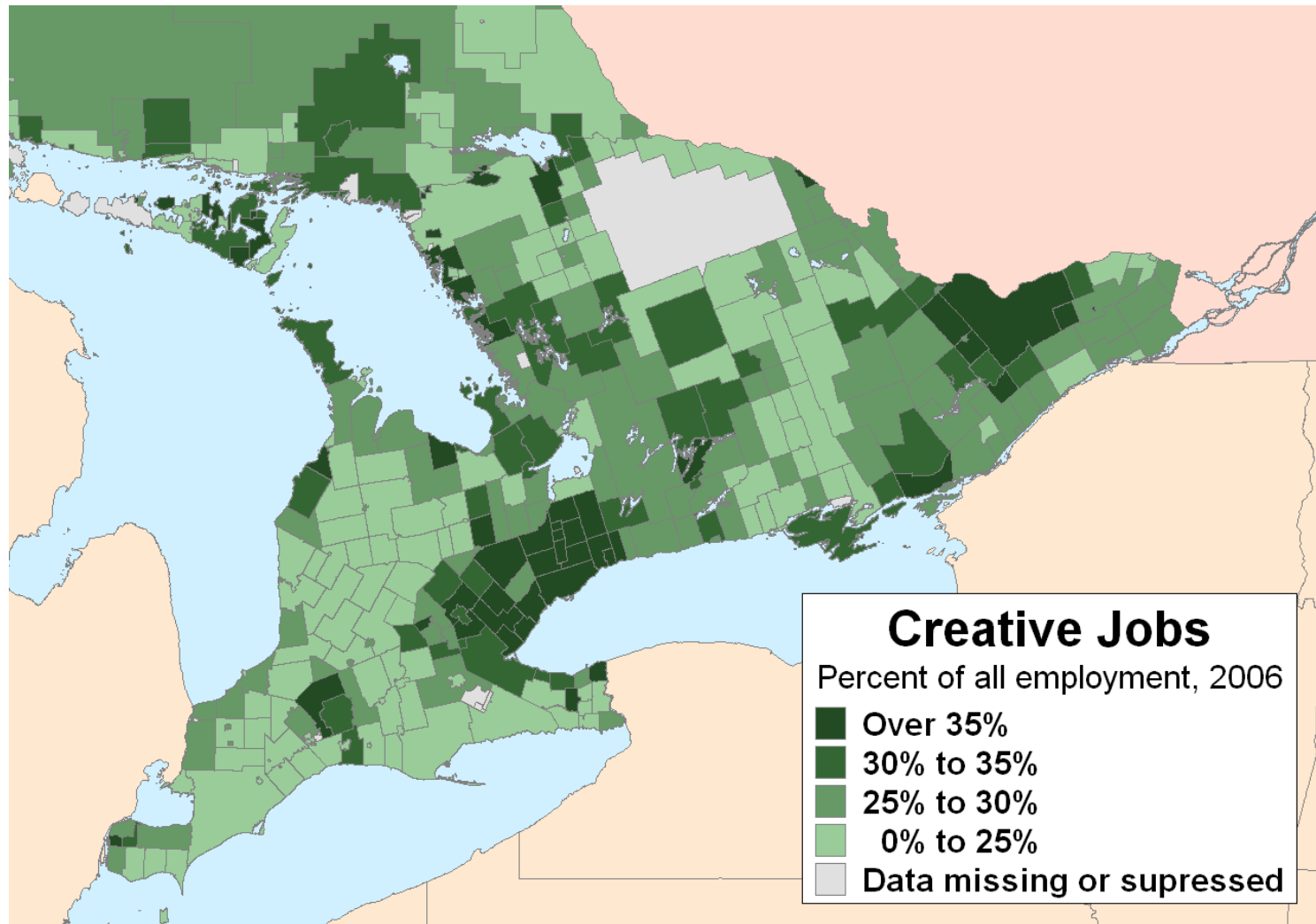
- **Rural case studies – Prince Edward County; Muskoka; Newfoundland**
- PEC – collaborative report prepared for PEC and rural Eastern Ontario
- Muskoka – UofT Master's project (Robyn Shyllit) supervised by Greg Spencer
- Newfoundland & Labrador – undertook parallel study of ISRN research into small towns and rural areas of the province



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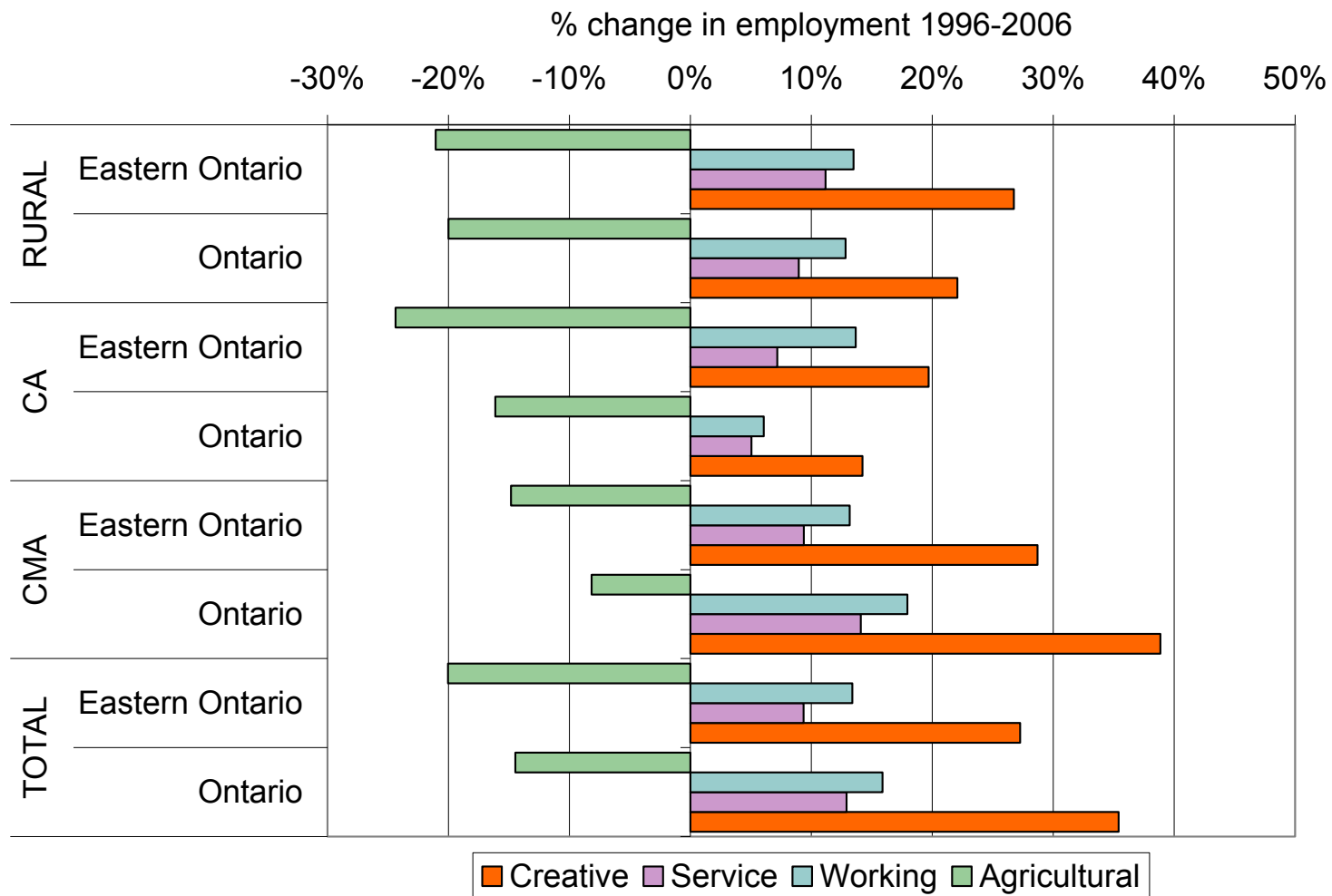




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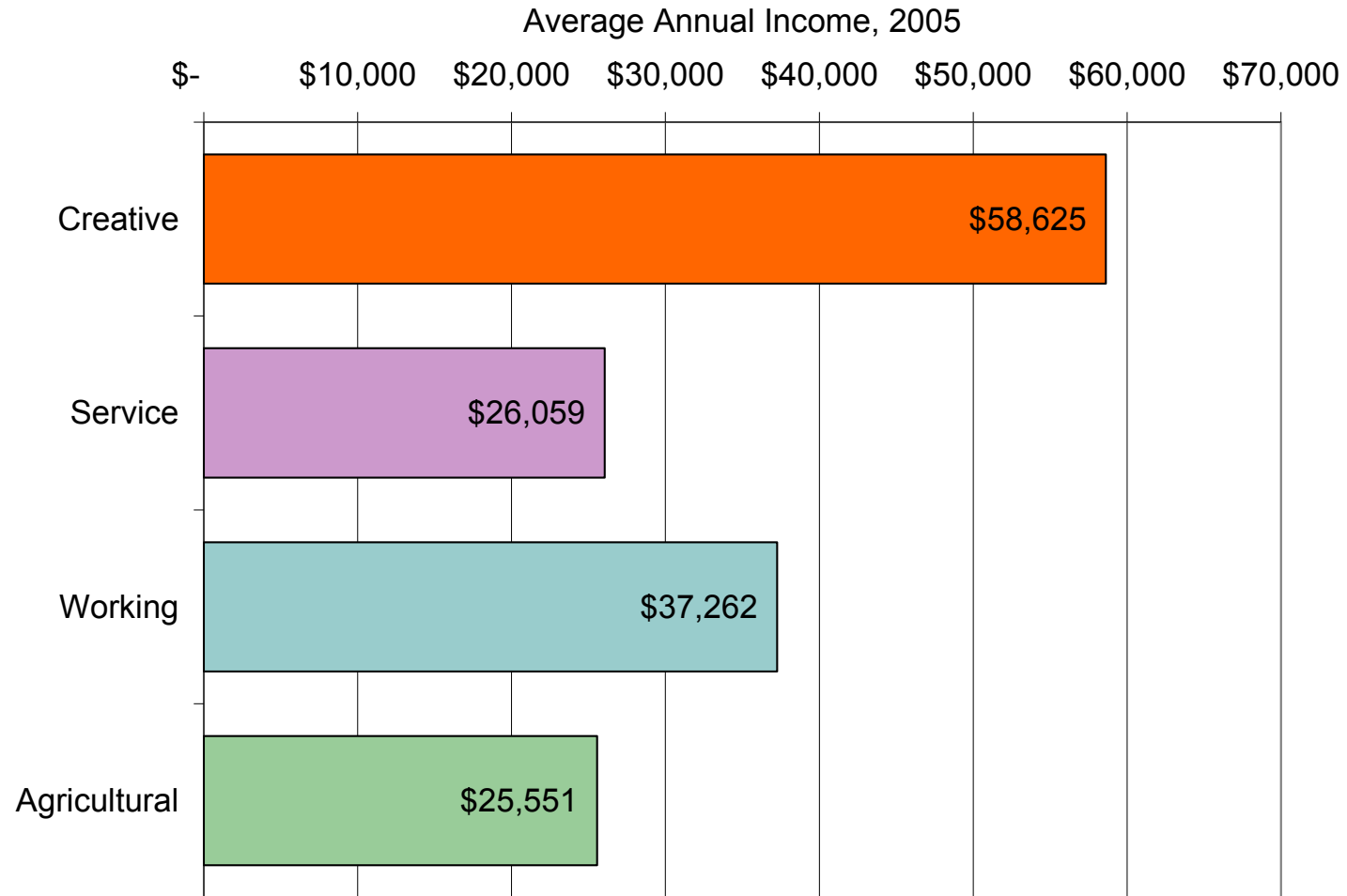




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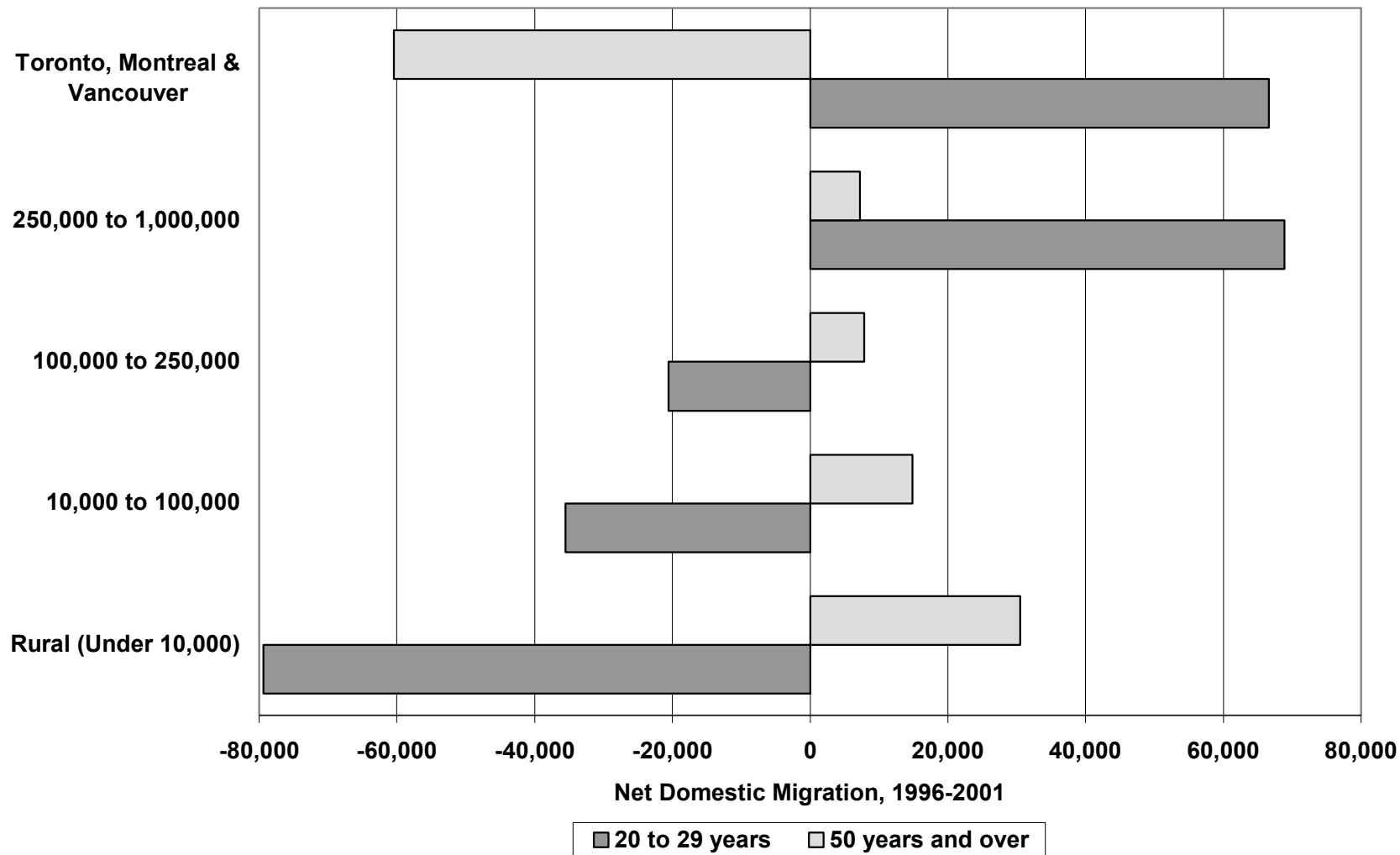




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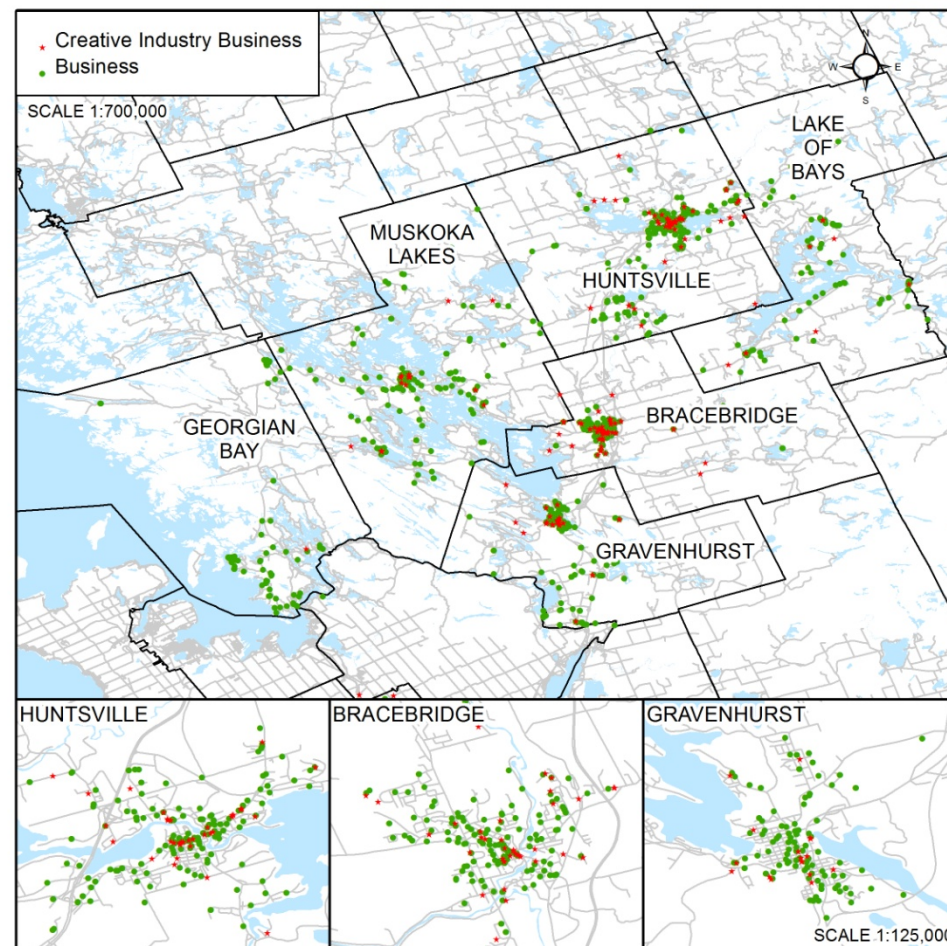


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Creative Occupations	Total '01	Total '06	% Change
AO - Senior management occupations	235	460	95.74
A1 - Specialist managers	400	585	46.25
A2 - Managers in retail trade, food & accommodation services	1,465	1,410	-3.75
A3 - Other managers	990	1,185	19.70
BO - Professional occupations in business & finance	290		17.24
B1 - Finance and insurance administration occupations	315	490	55.56
CO - Professional occupations in	335	400	19.40
C1 - Technical occupations related to natural & applied sciences	530	720	35.85
D0 - Professional occupations in health	230	325	41.30
D1 - Nurse supervisors and registered nurses	315	385	22.22
D2 - Technical and related occupations in health	385	420	9.09
E0 - Judges, lawyers, psychologists, social workers, ministers, policy & program officers	470	495	5.32
E1 - Teachers and professors	855	920	7.60
F0 - Professional occupations in art & culture	180	320	77.78
F1 - Technical occupations in art, culture, recreation & sport	440	395	-10.23



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programming, it validates so many things. The whole prospect of a creative economy cannot be looked at on its housing, transportation initiatives, recreation programming, it validates so many things. The whole prospect of a creative economy cannot be looked at on its own, it has to be an integrated approach by all levels of government, corporations, individuals – it's a collaboration.” (KI-19)

“On a per capita basis Muskoka is a little richer with the creative mindset. I think it has to do with geography and environment. The weather and the uniqueness of the natural setting are an automatic filter [for] the creative mind to want to be here...seek inspiration from it.” (KI-20)

“Employment in Muskoka tends to be cyclical, and the cycle has to be broken, we're wrestling with the ideas now. Are we going to be successful

“Employment in

Muskoka artists.” (KI-16) a breeding ground for artists.” (KI-16)



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Challenges

- **Skill deficiency:** lack of entry-level labour, training facilities, skilled trades people, customer service labour
- **High cost of living:** lack of affordable housing, public transit, child care
- **Seasonal and tourism dependent economy:** difficult for businesses to operate year-round; misconceptions between full and part-time residents; lack of cultural activities, shopping, dining, and nightlife during winter months

Challenges



Opportunities

- **Promote and support new and local business:** agricultural, entrepreneurs, start-ups, and youth; facilitate business succession; expand access to mobile and online communications
- **Utilize and support the seasonal population:** cottager skill set, provide services for cottage owners to convert seasonal to permanent dwellings; health care for aging population base
- **Create more year-round traffic:** additional festivals and events; improve walkability
- **Leverage local assets:** Muskoka Airport, CN Rail, post secondary Institutions; encourage additional post secondary



Recommendations

- 1) COMMUNICATION | Develop a common understanding regarding the role of Muskoka's creative economy, and promote and steward this (understanding) among all stakeholders and in the region as a whole.
- 2) ORGANIZATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE | Create a unified entity to connect municipalities, innovators, businesspersons, organizations, and firms that comprise the creative economy in Muskoka.
- 3) ENTREPRENEURSHIP | Support and connect local producers, small businesses, and entrepreneurs.



Recommendations (cont.)

4) ARTS, CULTURE & HERITAGE | Further support, promote, and recognize arts, culture, and heritage across Muskoka.

5) EDUCATION AND TRAINING | Foster talent and skill building by increasing and improving local training and education opportunities.

6) YOUTH OUTREACH | Encourage youth participation throughout Muskoka in the creative economy.

7) FURTHER STUDY | Establish specific goals, further study, and collect additional creative economy data and information.

