

Focus on the East Region and Brockville

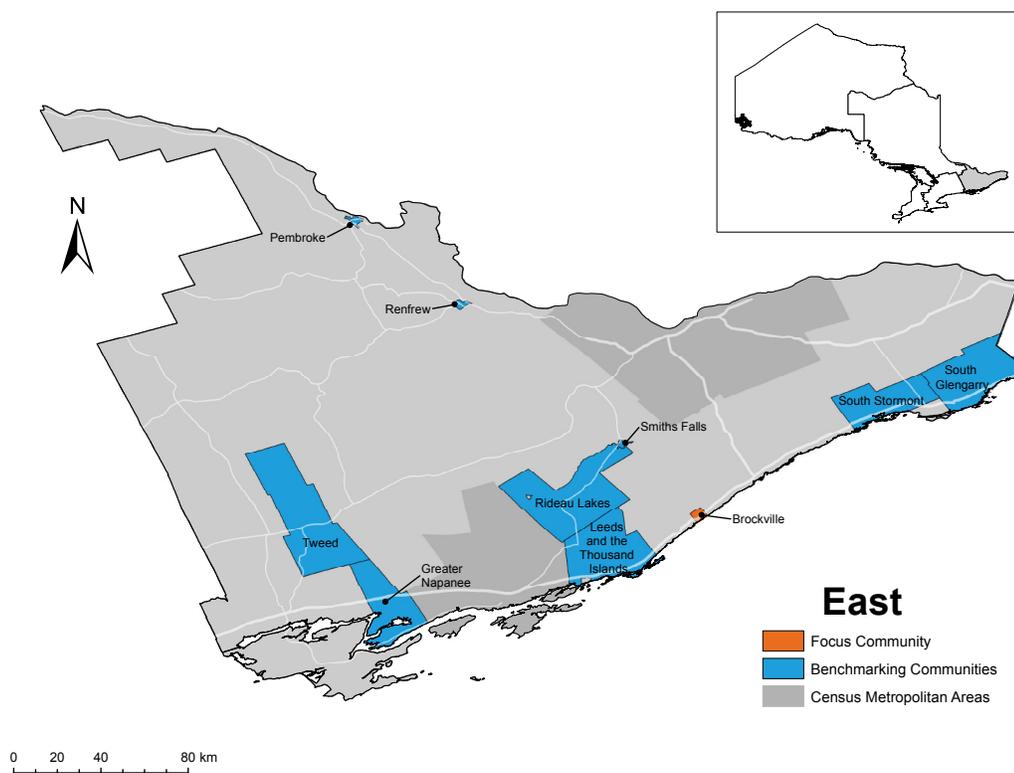
The Martin Prosperity Institute recently completed a large scale research project for the Economic Developers Council of Ontario, funded in part by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, which provided benchmarking and analysis of Ontario's rural Creative Economy. The project divided the province into five regions, within which one focus community was selected and compared to nine benchmarking communities. Each community was compared across a host of indicators from Creative Class share to population density, to the number of arts and entertainment facilities. This is the fifth insight in a series of six, which have examined each region one by one, and will discuss the overall findings of the report, with the full report available online at <http://martinprosperity.org/research-and-publications/publication/benchmarking-the-creative-economy-in-rural-ontario>. This week, we will take a look at the Eastern Region and the benchmarking community of Brockville, Ontario.

Overview

Brockville, the Focus Community for this region, is the midpoint between Toronto and Montreal, and has a population of 21,957. Brockville is a deep sea diving destination located adjacent to the St. Lawrence River and the Thousand Islands. With key industries including pharmaceuticals,

East region

Exhibit 1



food processing and logistics, the major employers in Brockville are: Proctor & Gamble, Shorewood Packaging, 3M Canada, Burnbrae Farms, Trillium Health Care, Abbott Laboratories, Brockville Mental Health Centre, Brockville General Hospital, Black & Decker, Canarm, Shell, Invista and the Upper Canada District School Board. As will be examined, these employers benefit from a large Creative Class concentration of workers in this town. St. Lawrence College serves as the sole postsecondary school in Brockville, which focuses on theatre and creative arts studies. The residents of Brockville also benefit from a close proximity to a number of Universities, as Queens is about 1 hour away, along with the University of Ottawa and Carleton and within 2–3 hours are all of the Montreal and Toronto Universities.

The City of Brockville was compared to the following nine benchmarking communities in the East Region: Greater Napanee, Pembroke, South Glengarry, South Stormont, Rideau Lakes, Leeds and the Thousand Islands, Smiths Falls, Renfrew and Tweed. With a population of 1,723,135, this region borders Quebec and includes the metropolitan areas of Ottawa and Kingston, which make up 59.9% of the regions total population. Brockville has a lively tourist and recreation sector, as it benefits from proximity to Leeds and the 1000 Islands. Brockville is also a very dense community, with 1,058.8 people per square km, a trait not evident in many of the rural communities under examination. As a result, Brockville has a distinctive advantage within the East region in that it has the benefits of a larger and dense population, while keeping a small-town feel.

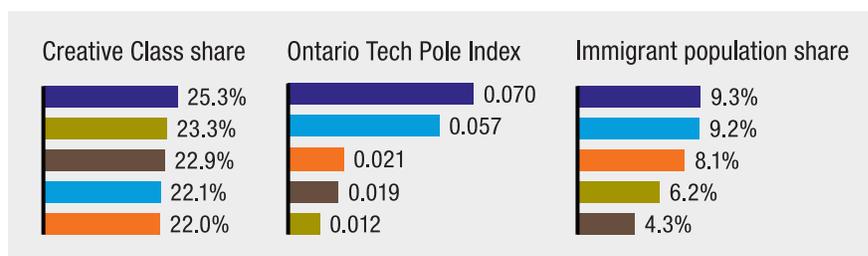
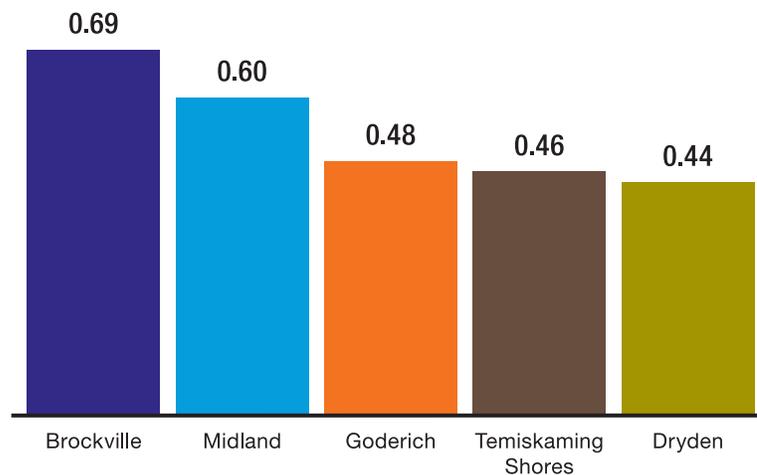
The 'Three T's' in a Rural Context: Creative Class Central

Of the five rural focus communities examined in this report, Brockville is well positioned to emerge as a regional leader in the Creative Economy. In addition to being well connected to the surrounding regions with multiple transit routes, Brockville leads its benchmarking peers on talent, tolerance and technology. Moreover, of the communities in the Eastern region, Brockville

Focus on Brockville's Creativity Index

Exhibit 2

Creativity Index for benchmark regions



not only has the highest Creative Class share, but also ranks first on the Creativity Index in this region. Brockville's Creativity Index, which combines Technology, Tolerance and Talent (Creative Class Share) scores, was found to be 0.69. Brockville's Creativity index is not only the highest in the East region, but the third highest of all 50 rural communities studied and much higher than the average of all 50 communities, which is 0.42.

One reason for Brockville's high score on Creative Index is the large occupational share of Creative Class jobs within the town. Brockville's Creative Class share is 25.3%, which is the highest of the benchmarking regions and is close to the Ontario average. Brockville, through its strong Creative Class share, has the opportunity to become a financial hub of the East region, and it also benefits from having an economy that does not rely upon manufacturing and working class occupations. However, Brockville does have a smaller share of the population holding a bachelor's degree and above. Combined with a large contingent of low-paying service class jobs in this City, there is a clear need to develop and increase the skills and educational attainment of many in Brockville's workforce.

In addition, technology comprises one-third of the measurement for the Creativity Index and once again, Brockville scored very well. Brockville's High-Tech establishment share, High Tech Location Quotient and their Ontario Tech Pole Index are the highest of any community in the East region. These three scores were also much higher than most communities studied in every region. As a result, Brockville has an advantage over its surrounding rural communities, in that it is attractive to industries that require individuals with expertise in technological occupations.

Finally, we can examine the third 'T' of tolerance in Brockville. As has been described in previous Insights, a common characteristic of many rural communities is a low share of visible minorities and immigrants. Brockville does well in comparison to its peer communities, which may be attributed to the close proximity to the GTA and two other large metropolitan areas. As a result, Brockville could use its larger share of Creative occupations and local amenities to attract more immigrants and visible minorities to create a more diverse rural community.

Recommendations

Despite the considerable strengths of Brockville, there are still challenges facing this City. A key recommendation for Brockville would be to continually develop different aspects of its already strong Creative Class occupational share. Like most rural communities, Brockville has a high percentage of its Creative Class share within "Meds and Eds," and it would be advantageous to diversify across other weak sectors such as arts and culture, management occupations and professional occupations within science. With a large number of Universities within a short distance, Brockville should seek to attain higher levels of education within in the community, which could in turn attract higher paying firms. Overall, Brockville is a community well positioned within the Creative Economy to continue and further its success.

The Martin Prosperity Institute at the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management is the world's leading think-tank on the role of sub-national factors—location, place and city-regions—in global economic prosperity. We take an integrated view of prosperity, looking beyond economic measures to include the importance of quality of place and the development of people's creative potential.