



BUILDING YUKON'S CREATIVE ECONOMY

A 4T Benchmarking and Occupational
Analysis for Whitehorse and Yukon



Aerial image of Whitehorse

Photo credit: Fritz Mueller Photography

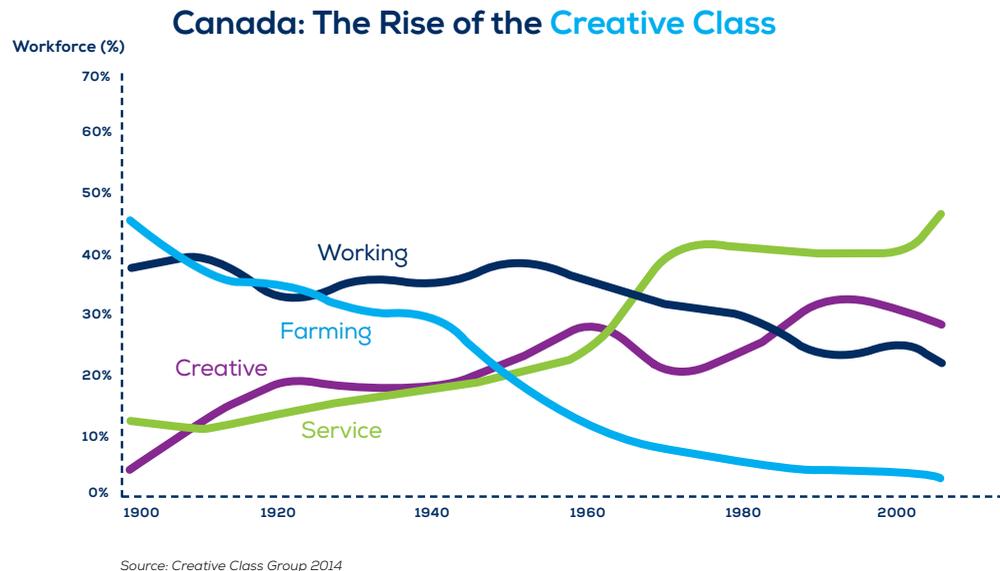
I. Introduction

An Economic Revolution Half a century ago, if someone predicted that almost 7,000 of the 37,000 people who live in Yukon today would have jobs that turn on ideas rather than physical skills, few would have believed it. Most people would have taken it for granted that as remote a region as Yukon would make its livelihood from mining, timber, and furs—from extraction, as a transportation nexus, or a military base. And yet Yukon not only has a significant creative class presence, it is larger in proportion to its population and growing faster than the creative class in Canada as a whole.

We are in the midst of an epochal economic transformation, comparable in scope to the shift from agrarianism to industrialism that upended the West two centuries ago. If land, natural resources, and labor were the great inputs of agriculture and industry, our emergent new economic order is driven by knowledge and skills, and above all, by human creativity.

The extent and magnitude of these structural changes can be seen in this chart, which tracks Canadian employment patterns from 1900 to 2011.

Canada's industrial economy matured around the turn of the twentieth century when its share of agricultural jobs, which once accounted for more than half of its



Introduction//continued

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workforce, began its long decline. The blue-collar working class, which comprised roughly 40 percent of Canada's workforce for the first half of the twentieth century, began to slip in the 1950s and now accounts for just one in four or five workers.

The largest and fastest growing of Canada's four great socio-economic classes is the service class, whose members prepare and serve food, carry out clerical and administrative tasks, provide home and personal health assistance, perform janitorial functions, and the like. From just over 10 percent of Canadian workers in 1900, the service class has risen to nearly 8 million today, roughly half of the national workforce.

Full-time service class workers average \$46,129 per year (2011), but its members are disproportionately concentrated among recent immigrants, high school dropouts,

aboriginals, and single parents, who earn much less. Single parents, for example, take home just three quarters of the average service class wage; recent immigrants just two thirds.

Finally there is the creative class - workers in science and technology, arts, culture and entertainment, and professional knowledge workers in health care, law and management. These are the people who work with ideas, create new technologies, systems, or content, or engage in complex problem solving. Back in 1900, they comprised about the same percentage of the Canadian workforce that farm workers do today.

The creative class grew steadily until about 1960, and surged again in the 1980s. Today, it numbers 5.5 million, roughly 33 percent of the Canadian workforce. Creative class workers earn an average annual income of \$75,199 (2011), though many of course make much more. They account for 50 percent of Canada's total wages and income and 70 percent of its discretionary spending. About 52 percent of the creative class are women.

Who Belongs to The Creative Class?

We define the creative class according to its members' skills and occupations. While most highly educated people are members, only about 6 in 10 creative workers have BA degrees or higher. We find that people's jobs—what they actually do—is a much better predictor of their income than their education. It is important when discussing the creative class to realize that we are talking about workers' skills and occupations and not who their employers are. A computer programmer could work for a technology firm or a museum and we would still identify him or her as a programmer and hence a tech worker.

Generally speaking, the creative class breaks down into two large categories.

- **The Creative Core** work in management, business and financial operations, law, and as health care practitioners.
- **Super Creatives** work with computers and mathematics; in architecture and engineering; life sciences; education; and arts, design, entertainment, and media.



Kluane to Chilkat Bike Relay on the Haines



Fireweed Market, Shipyards Park, Whitehorse

A New Economic Geography

The creative economy is spiky; in many ways it can be winner-take-all. Creative class workers earn good salaries, and many have challenging and fulfilling jobs. Service workers and blue collar workers generally fare much worse. The creative economy's spikiness expresses itself geographically too. Wealth and talent concentrate in some cities and regions much more than they do in others.

The key to understanding the new economic geography of creativity and its effects on economic outcomes are what we call the 4Ts of Economic Development: Technology (the presence of high tech industry, biotechnology, robotics, etc.); Talent (the level of human capital); Tolerance (openness to racial, sexual, and cultural diversity); and Territory Assets (a place's quality of life).

A community's, city's or region's success in the creative economy depends upon its ability to attract and retain creative Talent. To do so, it must have an environment that is rich in each of the other three Ts. The Ts are

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interdependent; each is necessary but by itself, an insufficient condition for prosperity.

A community with a world-class research university might fail to retain the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) talent that passes through it because its culture is insufficiently welcoming to immigrants, gays, working women, or people with unconventional social styles, or because it is lacking in nightlife or natural amenities like mild weather, coastlines, or mountain views. An outdoors-person's paradise that lacks a first-class university might also find itself unable to compete. Ideally a place must be able to put all 4Ts together – and the ones that do this the most successfully are larger cities like Seattle, Austin, San Jose, Denver, Boston, Toronto, New York, Berlin, and London; smaller university towns like Ann Arbor, Michigan; and Rochester, Minnesota, which is the site of a great teaching hospital.

Introduction//continued

But if the creative class's thickest clusters are found in large metros, creativity and creative industries can lift the prospects of all places, including rural regions like Yukon and small cities like its capital Whitehorse. These places must leverage the strengths that they have, and as will be seen, Yukon and Whitehorse's creative strengths are considerable.

The Creative Class and Rural Regions

"The Rural Growth Trifecta: Outdoor Amenities, Creative Class and Entrepreneurial Context," a 2010 study in the *Journal of Economic Geography* by economists David McGranahan and Timothy Wojan of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Dayton Lambert of the University of Tennessee, examines the negative economic forces that are acting on rural areas and the local assets those places can use to respond to those forces most effectively.

Though manufacturing branch plants are no longer a reliable source of jobs and growth for rural regions, outdoor amenities are highly attractive to the creative class. Tests confirm that higher shares of creative class go along with growth in the number of new businesses

and overall employment—particularly in rural areas that have significant natural amenities. Yukon is endowed with both creative class and natural amenities—assets that complement each other and that can be strongly leveraged.

The Critical Role of Place in Economic Development

Place matters, both socially and economically. If great firms were the principle organizing units of the industrial age, that role is increasingly filled today by locations—the cities, metros, and regions where creative people live and work.

In the old industrial order, jobs and companies came first. If a city or region could offer sufficient inducements, a company would locate a branch plant or build a new high-rise for its headquarters within its borders, knowing that workers would follow the jobs. In a creative economy, that formula is reversed. Companies are drawn to places where critical masses of creative people are already clustered—because of existing jobs, of course, but also because of the natural and built amenities that are found there,

and especially because of each other. Nothing attracts talent to a place like talent. It is a feedback loop; a virtuous circle.

Members of the creative class seek out places where they can interact spontaneously with their peers, which is why tolerance is such an important value. Too much sprawl isolates people, as does too much density (high rises can easily become vertical gated communities). Street life, public transportation, shared green spaces, cafes, restaurants, clubs, and a variety of social and cultural scenes that expose people to new ideas and opportunities are all talent magnets. So are unspoiled nature, mountain trails, and ski slopes.

A small city like Whitehorse can provide the same opportunities for spontaneous interaction that downtown business districts do—with shorter commutes, less crowds, and easier access to the outdoors. Whitehorse and Yukon might not have research universities or giant cultural institutions, but they have all the ingredients necessary to build a viable creative ecosystem.

II. Yukon and The Creative Class Group

Seeking a clearer understanding of Yukon and Whitehorse's places in the creative economy, the Government of Yukon engaged the Creative Class Group to examine and assess the Territory's creative assets.

Methods and Scope

The CCG conducted a 4T benchmarking analysis and a talent assessment, for both Yukon as a whole and the city of Whitehorse in particular. The 4T framework described briefly above (and outlined in greater detail in Richard Florida's *The Rise of the Creative Class*) provides useful insights into Whitehorse's and the Territory's economic position – its comparative strengths and weaknesses, its creative assets and deficits, and its marketing strengths and challenges.

For the benchmarking analysis, we compared Yukon as a whole to the Northwest Territories. We also compared 15 Canadian cities to Whitehorse.

Each of these cities was selected in partnership with Yukon Department of Economic Development officials. These cities reflect an

- Edmonton, AB
- Fredericton, NB
- Grande Prairie, AB
- Halifax, NS
- Kelowna, BC
- Kingston, ON
- Nanaimo, BC
- Ottawa, ON
- Red Deer, AB
- Saskatoon, SK
- St. John's, NL
- Vernon, BC
- Victoria, BC
- Winnipeg, MB
- Yellowknife, NT

array of communities that share similarities with Whitehorse in terms of population, demographic makeup, and industries.

While the Yukon Government has a collection of more [recent economic and demographic data](#), we used data from the [2011 Census of Population](#) and the [2011 National Household Survey](#) to ensure consistency between all of the jurisdictions we compared. This information was released in 2012 and 2013, with the final variables available in September of 2013.

Whitehorse and Yukon's Economies

The following are some of the key takeaways from CCG's analysis of Whitehorse's regional assets. The full data presentations and data profiles have been provided to the Yukon Government Department of Economic Development:

The population of Yukon was almost 34,000 in 2011, up 11.6 percent from 2006. The population of the Northwest Territories was 41,500 in 2011, unchanged from 2006. Yukon's median household income (2011) was \$75,944 (as compared to \$99,127 for the Northwest Territories). Yukon's median home value was \$348,429 (as opposed to \$280,566 for the Northwest Territories).

Most Yukoners reside in Whitehorse, which had 26,000 residents (2011) and grew at a rate of 14 percent over the past five

Yukon and The Creative Class Group //continued

On the Creative Index, Whitehorse ranks 14th among all Canadian communities.

years, eleventh among all Canadian regions and third among our benchmark communities. Its growth rate is roughly on par with Edmonton, Saskatoon, and Kelowna.

Whitehorse's median household income (2011) is about \$83,345 – 32 percent above the average for all of Canada. It ranks 12th on this measure for all Canadian cities and third among the benchmarks, just behind Yellowknife and Grand Prairie. Whitehorse's average housing value is \$350,074, 25 percent above the national average. It ranks 17th among Canada's 147 cities on this metric, and is comparable to Edmonton and Nanaimo.

In brief, Yukon and Whitehorse perform just above the national average on most income metrics—and they are growing slightly faster than the national average as well.

Whitehorse and Yukon's Creative Economy

The Creative Index is a summary index of the key technology, talent, and tolerance metrics for a place. Whitehorse ranks 14th among all Canadian communities and sixth among the benchmarks (behind Ottawa, Victoria, Yellowknife, Edmonton, and Winnipeg).

In the following sections, we will examine each of the 4Ts in some detail.

Technology

From new inventions like software, robotics, and biotechnology to improvements in manufacturing systems and processes, technology makes economies and societies more efficient and productive. Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Robert Solow won a Nobel Prize for the work he did that isolated technology as the driving force of economic growth.

We collected a wide array of technology measures for Yukon and Whitehorse.

With just 1,380 high-tech employees (19 percent below the national average) Yukon ranks 38th in Canada for its high tech employment

concentration. Whitehorse ranks 65th on the Tech Pole Index, a measure of Canadian high-tech assets including employment and firms, and 15th among the benchmark communities. The only benchmark with a lower rank is Yellowknife.

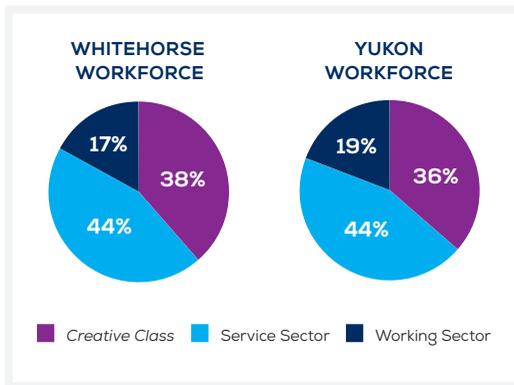
With virtually no high-tech manufacturing (computer and electronic component production), most of the high-tech employment in the region is in professional, scientific, and technical services. The major employers are the Federal Government, the Territorial Government, the Municipal Government, and various First Nation offices, many of which have facilities in downtown Whitehorse. The lack of private sector technology jobs is a challenge for Yukon. Another challenge is insufficient broadband speed and capacity, as noted in the study, [Yukon Telecommunications Development](#).

Clearly, the 2011 survey indicated that technology is a relative weakness in the region. Investments should be made in infrastructure, and in incubator and business support programs that can leverage the region's relative strengths in information and technical services and perhaps grow new industries.

Talent

Economists are unanimous on the importance of skilled, ambitious, educated, and entrepreneurial people (whom they refer to as human capital) to economic growth. Robert Lucas famously noted the “external effects of human capital” on productivity and earnings.

The median age in Yukon is 39.1 (it is 38.1 in Whitehorse). This is a little lower than Canada’s median age of 40.6. In the next sections, we will look at the class breakdown and educational attainments for Yukon as a whole and Whitehorse in particular.



Source: Statistics Canada National Household Survey 2011. Creative Class Group 2014 • Note: Agriculture and natural resources is approximately 1% of the workforce

Creative Class

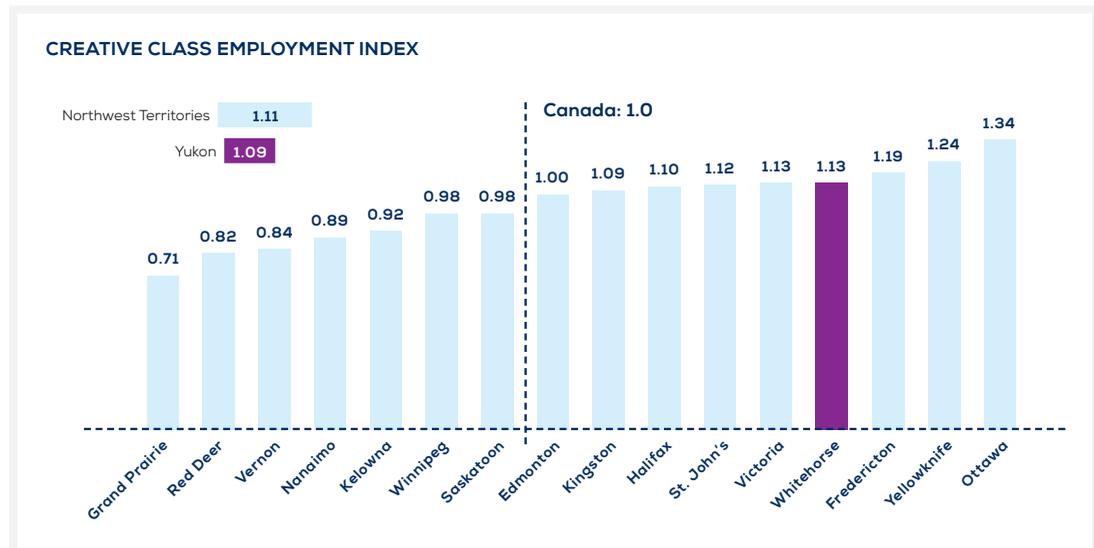
With nearly 5,713 members of the creative class (37.6 percent of its workforce, 13 percent above the national average, and growing at a rate of almost 15 percent over the past five years), Whitehorse ranks 12th in Canada for its share of creative talent and sixth among the benchmark communities. This puts it on a par with Halifax, Kingston, Edmonton, Victoria, and St. John’s.

For Yukon as a whole, the creative class numbers 6,938, 36.2 percent of the workforce, on par with the Northwest Territories and growing at a rate of 14.1 percent (2011-2006),

more than three times the growth rate of the Northwest Territories.

There are nearly 3,000 super creatives in Whitehorse, or 19.7 percent of the workforce (about 21 percent above the national average for comparable-sized communities and sixth in Canada). This is on a par with Ottawa and Fredericton.

There are 3,705 super creatives (19.3 percent of the workforce) in all of Yukon, which is 19 percent larger than the Canadian average. These are strong numbers, and likely a tribute to the region and city’s abundant amenities.



Source: Statistics Canada National Household Survey 2011. Creative Class Group 2014

Yukon and The Creative Class Group //continued

Service Sector

Whitehorse has 6,753 service workers, about 4 percent below the Canadian average and the second smallest share of all the benchmark communities (only Yellowknife's is lower). Whitehorse's service sector has declined 2.1 percent since 2006, which is roughly comparable to places like Winnipeg, Fredericton, Red Deer, and Kingston. Canada's overall rate of decline was 1.6 percent. Much of the decline in the service sector can be attributed to the recent recession across Canada.

There are nearly 8,500 service sector workers in Yukon as a whole, compared to 9,400 in the Northwest Territories. Like Whitehorse, Yukon's overall share of service sector workers is 4 percent below the national average.

Working Sector

With approximately 2,600 workers (17.1 percent of the workforce), Whitehorse's working class sector is 11 percent smaller than the Canadian average. That said, it has grown nearly 11 percent from 2006 to 2011, the fastest rate in all of the benchmark regions

(Saskatoon was second at 6.5 percent and St. John's third at 6.4 percent). Across Yukon as a whole, there are 3,525 members of the working class, or 18.4 percent of the workforce. Many of these people work in the mining industry or are involved in logistics (a lot of goods pass through Yukon on their way in and out of Canada).

Educational Attainment

Not surprisingly, considering the size of its creative class, Whitehorse's educational attainments are better than the national average and sixth among the benchmarks. In Whitehorse, 29.2 percent of the workforce hold Bachelor degrees or higher (13 percent higher than the Canadian average for a comparable-sized city). 10 percent hold graduate degrees (compared to 9.4 percent for Canada as a whole). These rates are comparable to Fredericton, Halifax, and St. John's.

Across Yukon as a whole, 25.8 percent of residents hold a BA or higher and 8.7 percent hold graduate degrees (compared to 6.6 percent for the Northwest Territories and 9.4 percent for Canada as a whole).

Nearly 2,000 of Whitehorse's workers (11.8 percent of its workforce) and 2,500 of Yukon's workers (11.5 percent) are self-employed. This compares to just 10.7 percent for all of Canada.

Tolerance

New ideas are generated most efficiently in places where a wide variety of cognitive styles are tolerated—and different cognitive styles are linked to demographic diversity, as the University of Michigan economist Scott Page documented in his book *The Difference: How the Power of Diversity Creates Better Groups, Firms, Schools, and Societies* (Princeton University Press, 2007). The fact that some places are better than others at generating, attracting, and holding onto talent has everything to do with how open, diverse, and tolerant they are.

There are strong statistical correlations between places that are welcoming to immigrants, artists, gays, bohemians, and minorities and places that experience high-quality economic growth. Just as low barriers to entry are important to trade, they are vital where talent is concerned. This is even more

Quality of place – its esthetic features and the friendliness of its culture – matters to the creative class.

the case in places like Yukon, which are relatively remote and low density. Quality of life is a growth factor that jurisdictions can exert some control over.

Whitehorse ranks fifth among the benchmark communities on our overall Tolerance Index (a composite measure of key tolerance metrics, including Gay, Lesbian, and Bohemian Indexes) and 16th in Canada overall.¹ This puts it behind metros like Ottawa, Victoria, Winnipeg, and Fredericton. Whitehorse's bohemian community (performing artists, writers, artists, designers and the like) is 12 percent greater than the Canadian average, ranking 11th nationally and fourth among the benchmarks. Yukon as a whole is 11 percent above the Canadian average (the Northwest Territories, in contrast, are 26 percent below the Canadian average).

Though Yukon and Whitehorse have a Gay Index that is 41 percent lower than the

average for Canada as a whole, the Territory and city's Lesbian index is 200 percent above the national average. This drives the overall Gay and Lesbian Index to 1.20, which is 20 percent higher than the national average.

However, the immigrant count for Whitehorse had a location quotient of 0.58, compared to 1.0 for Canada overall. This is 42% lower than the national average and ranks just 36th nationally and seventh among benchmarks. The immigrant community location quotient for Yukon as a whole is 0.55, 45 percent lower than the national average (1.0).

The visible minority count for Whitehorse and Yukon (7.2 and 6.1 percent respectively) are well below the national average of 19.1 percent. There are two reasons for this: 1) Visible minorities tend to be concentrated in Canada's larger urban areas; 2) The count does not include Yukon's aboriginal communities, which have the potential to contribute to Yukon's creative economy.² The qualifier "visible" is important in the Canadian context as its sharpest political divisions have traditionally been determined by language, religion, and race.

Territory Assets

Territory assets or quality of place cut across three key dimensions:

- **What's there.** The combination of the built environment and the natural environment;
- **Who's there.** The more or less diverse varieties of people that live there, signaling that anyone can make a life in that community (or not);
- **What's going on.** The vibrancy of street life, cultural life, opportunities to meet and mate.

As we have learned from extensive surveying that we carried out with the Gallup Organization, the five key attributes of a place that drive its residents' satisfaction the most are the **basic services** it provides, its **economic opportunities**, its **values**, and its **leadership**. Above all and first and foremost, however, is its **quality of place**—its esthetic features and the friendliness of its culture. This is even more important for rural communities, which do not have the advantages of scale and diversity that come naturally to dense urban settings. In addition to Whitehorse and Yukon's ample outdoor amenities, it has a number of other positive features.

¹ Another version of the tolerance index, which includes the percentage of aboriginal people and visual minorities in a region, was developed for this study. Whitehorse's ranking improved from 5th among the benchmarks and 16th in the country to 4th and 10th respectively in the version that accounts for Aboriginal peoples. Yukon's ranking increased from 4th to 3rd among the provinces and territories.

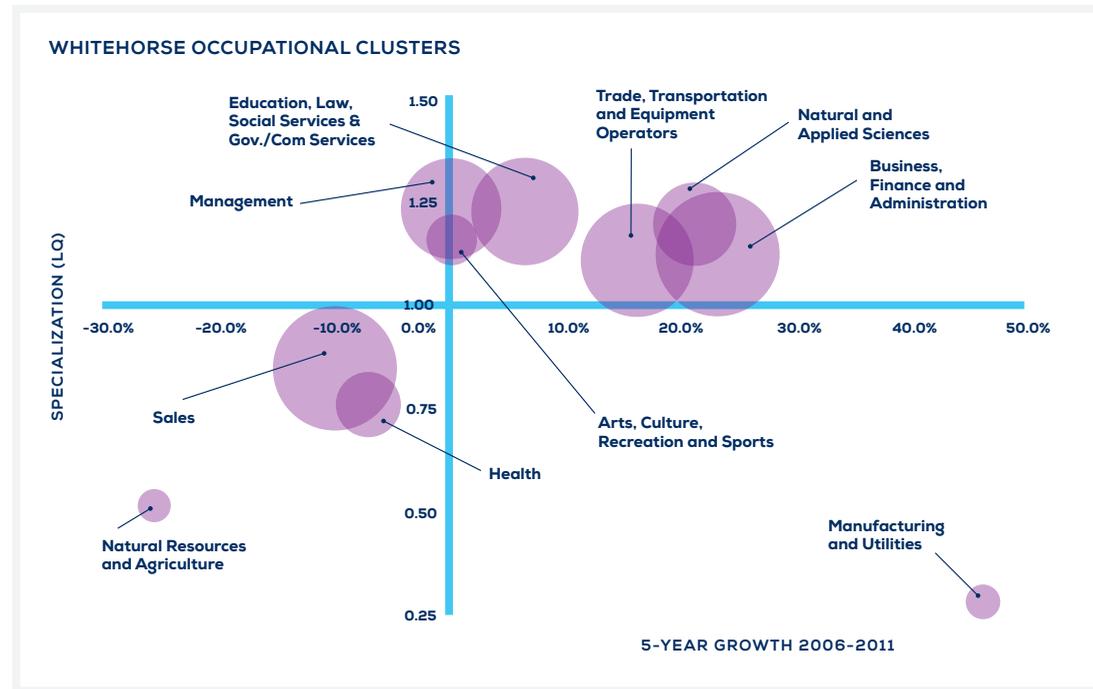
² The aboriginal population shares for Whitehorse and Yukon are 17.1 percent and 24.2 percent, respectively.

Yukon and The Creative Class Group //continued

When Nobel Laureate Daniel Kahneman and Alan Krueger surveyed Texas women on their most and least favorite activities, commuting came in dead last. Whitehorse's workers generally enjoy a commute that is nearly half as long as the Canadian average (13 minutes compared to 20.5), and that is shorter than any of the benchmark communities except Yellowknife. In the territory as a whole, commuting time is only 10.9 minutes (similar to the Northwest Territories).

Whitehorse ranks 29th in Canada for its share of workers who bike to work. At nearly 10 percent of the workforce (compared to 7 percent for Canada as a whole), it ranks fifth among the benchmark communities, behind Yellowknife, Victoria, Kingston, and Halifax. For Yukon, 12.1 percent of the workforce in Yukon bike to work.

Despite its higher than average housing values, Whitehorse's own-to-rent ratio (2.32) is consistent with that of Canada as a whole (2.25). The own-to-rent ratio for Yukon as a whole is 2.27, almost exactly the national average.



Source: Statistics Canada National Household Survey 2011. Creative Class Group 2014

Note: The occupational cluster chart above provides a visual insight into Whitehorse's occupational clusters. The x-axis demonstrates the employment growth from 2006-2011. The y-axis shows the specialization of the cluster in relation to the national average, as measured by a location quotient (LQ). The Canadian LQ average is 1.0; a number above 1.0 represents a strength and a number below 1.0 is a weakness. The size of the bubble represents total employment for the cluster.

Occupational Analysis

In addition to the 4T analysis, we undertook an occupational analysis of Yukon and Whitehorse. This is a skills analysis—the statistics

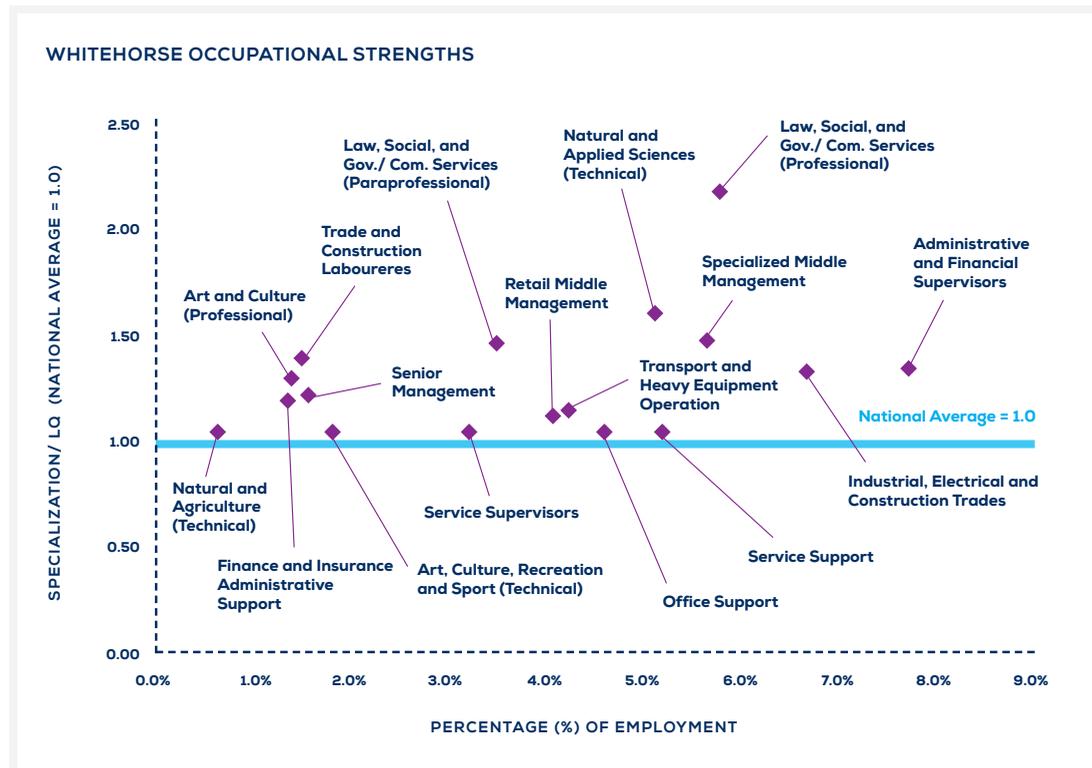
reflect the work that people do, rather than what kinds of employers they work for. The insights it provides allow us to hone in on the region's skill base, which provides

a better measure of its potential than its educational attainments.

Whitehorse and Yukon registered several strengths and weaknesses. First the strengths:

Management. With nearly 2,000 workers, Whitehorse’s management skills cluster is 23 percent larger than the Canadian average, but it is not growing. As in many capital cities, a large proportion of the workers in the segment are employed by the government. The cluster is 23 percent larger than the national average in Whitehorse and 12 percent larger across all of Yukon. (The cluster in the Northwest Territories is 20 percent above the national average.)

Science Expertise. Whitehorse’s science cluster is 18 percent larger than the national average, accounting for nearly 1,300 workers and experiencing strong 5-year growth (21 percent). Most of these jobs are in natural and applied sciences. Whitehorse is fifth among the benchmarks for this measure and on a par with larger metros like Edmonton, Halifax, and Winnipeg. The science cluster for Yukon had a location quotient of 1.10, compared to 1.0 for the Canadian average. This is a 10% higher than the country as a whole compared to 8% for the Northwest Territories.



Source: Statistics Canada National Household Survey 2011. Creative Class Group 2014

Note: The y-axis shows the specialization of the cluster in relation to the national average, as measured by a location quotient (LQ). The Canadian LQ average is 1.0; a number above 1.0 represents a strength and a number below 1.0 is a weakness.

Government and Education. As the seat of the Territorial government and with the presence of the Government of Canada, Whitehorse has a government and education skills cluster of 2,200, 22 percent above the Canadian average for a comparable-sized metro. The cluster has grown at a rate

of 7 percent, which is consistent with other territorial and provincial capitals. The cluster numbers 2,900 for Yukon as a whole, which is 25 percent larger than the Canadian average. By way of comparison, the cluster in the Northwest Territories is 42 percent larger than the national average.

Yukon and The Creative Class Group //continued

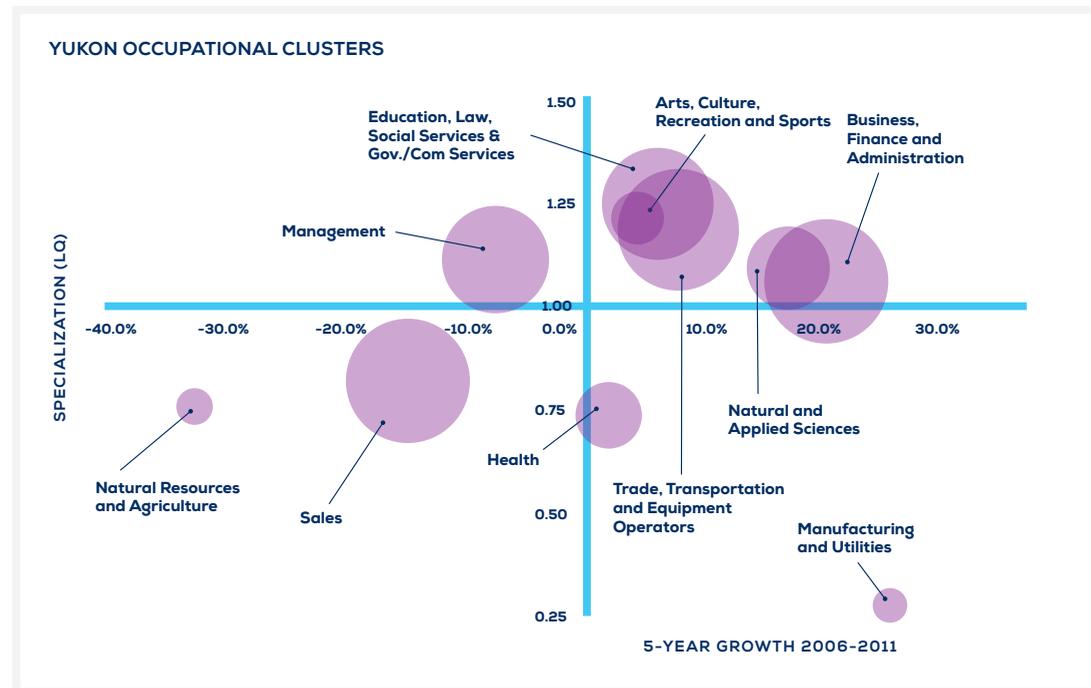
Trade and Transportation. Trade and transportation skills are an asset for Yukon, where they are 19 percent more concentrated than they are in Canada as a whole. The cluster has grown nearly 8 percent from 2006 to 2011. This is likely attributable to the presence of minerals and other exports shipping in and out of Yukon.

This cluster in the Northwest Territories is just 9 percent larger than the Canadian average.

Arts and Culture. The nearly 500 Whitehorse residents with arts and culture skills – 16 percent above the Canadian average – are significant assets for the city. Whitehorse’s cluster ranks third among the benchmark cities and is higher than the ones in metros like Victoria, Ottawa and Halifax.

The following clusters register significant weaknesses, which are a matter of concern:

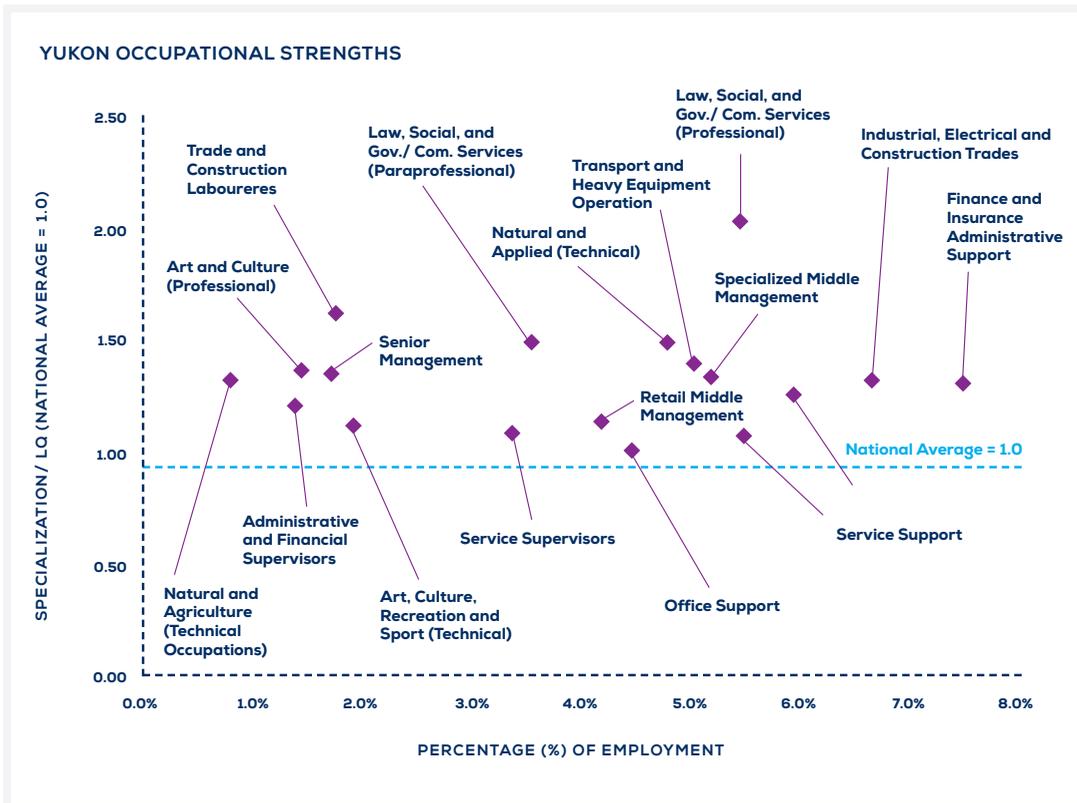
Health. An estimated 750 Whitehorse residents have skills related to health care, which is 24 percent below the national average for a metro of Whitehorse’s size. The cluster has declined 7 percent in the last five years. Whitehorse has the smallest health skill



Source: Statistics Canada National Household Survey 2011. Creative Class Group 2014

Note: The occupational cluster chart above provides a visual insight into Whitehorse’s occupational clusters. The x-axis demonstrates the employment growth from 2006-2011. The y-axis shows the specialization of the cluster in relation to the national average, as measured by a location quotient (LO). The Canadian LO average is 1.0; a number above 1.0 represents a strength and a number below 1.0 is a weakness. The size of the bubble represents total employment for the cluster.

¹The lower percentage of residents that have skills related to health care does not necessarily speak to a lower quality of health care for residents. Specialists are brought into Whitehorse on a regular basis and residents have access to medical services in southern Canada with the cost of travel and daily expenses covered by Yukon Health.



Source: Statistics Canada National Household Survey 2011. Creative Class Group 2014

Note: The y-axis shows the specialization of the cluster in relation to the national average, as measured by a location quotient (LQ). The Canadian LQ average is 1.0; a number above 1.0 represents a strength and a number below 1.0 is a weakness.

cluster of all the benchmark communities. Looking at Yukon as a whole, its health skills cluster is also much smaller (26 percent less) than the national average. From 2006 to 2011, the cluster grew 1.7 percent.¹ The Northwest Territories face the same challenges.

Sales. Employing approximately 3,000 residents in Whitehorse and 3,600 in Yukon as a whole (20 percent and 19 percent of their respective workforces), the sales cluster is 16 percent below the national average and it declined 10 percent in Whitehorse and 15 percent region-wide between 2006 and 2011. Though it is Whitehorse’s largest occupational cluster, it ranks near the bottom of the benchmark comparisons. The sales cluster in the Northwest Territories, by way of comparison, is 26 percent below the national average.

Manufacturing. Usually regions with strong trade/transportation skill clusters have a strong manufacturing base as well. That is not the case in Yukon, where the manufacturing skills cluster is half the national average.

III. Insights and Recommendations

Retaining and expanding its creative class share is a critically important challenge for Yukon and Whitehorse. While it doesn't have a significant research university or a dense cluster of technology work, it does have quality of place and abundant outdoor amenities, features which it can leverage more aggressively than it has.

As the capital of Yukon, Whitehorse has a significant cluster of government jobs, which both anchors its economy and attracts creative workers, much as a university does in a small university town. This is a net plus. Whitehorse's government workers have similar skills as those in Washington, D.C. or Ottawa. More can be done to leverage Whitehorse's supercreative talent in the arts, a key sector for the region.

Yukon and Whitehorse are both strong in Tol-erance indicators. Their strong lesbian and boho presence are potential talent magnets that can be marketed more aggressively to people outside the region than they have been. A key part of economic development is simply telling the right story.

In the challenge column, is Yukon's and Whitehorse's weakness in the number of health care jobs. While residents still have

access to high-quality health care through visiting specialists and medical services in southern Canada (with the cost of travel and daily expenses covered by Yukon Department of Health and Social Services), we recommend that a health care training program be devised in area schools to educate and grow a local, homegrown talent pool.

Whitehorse and Yukon also need to build up their private sector technology base. An entrepreneurial support system – for example, an incubator or an entrepreneur-in-residence program on the model of artist in residence programs – would provide significant value. As noted above, significant infrastructure investments are needed as well, to bring the region's broadband speed and capacity up to date.

Yukon and Whitehorse's service sector is surprisingly small, especially considering the amount of tourism it attracts.

A key part of economic development is simply telling the right story.

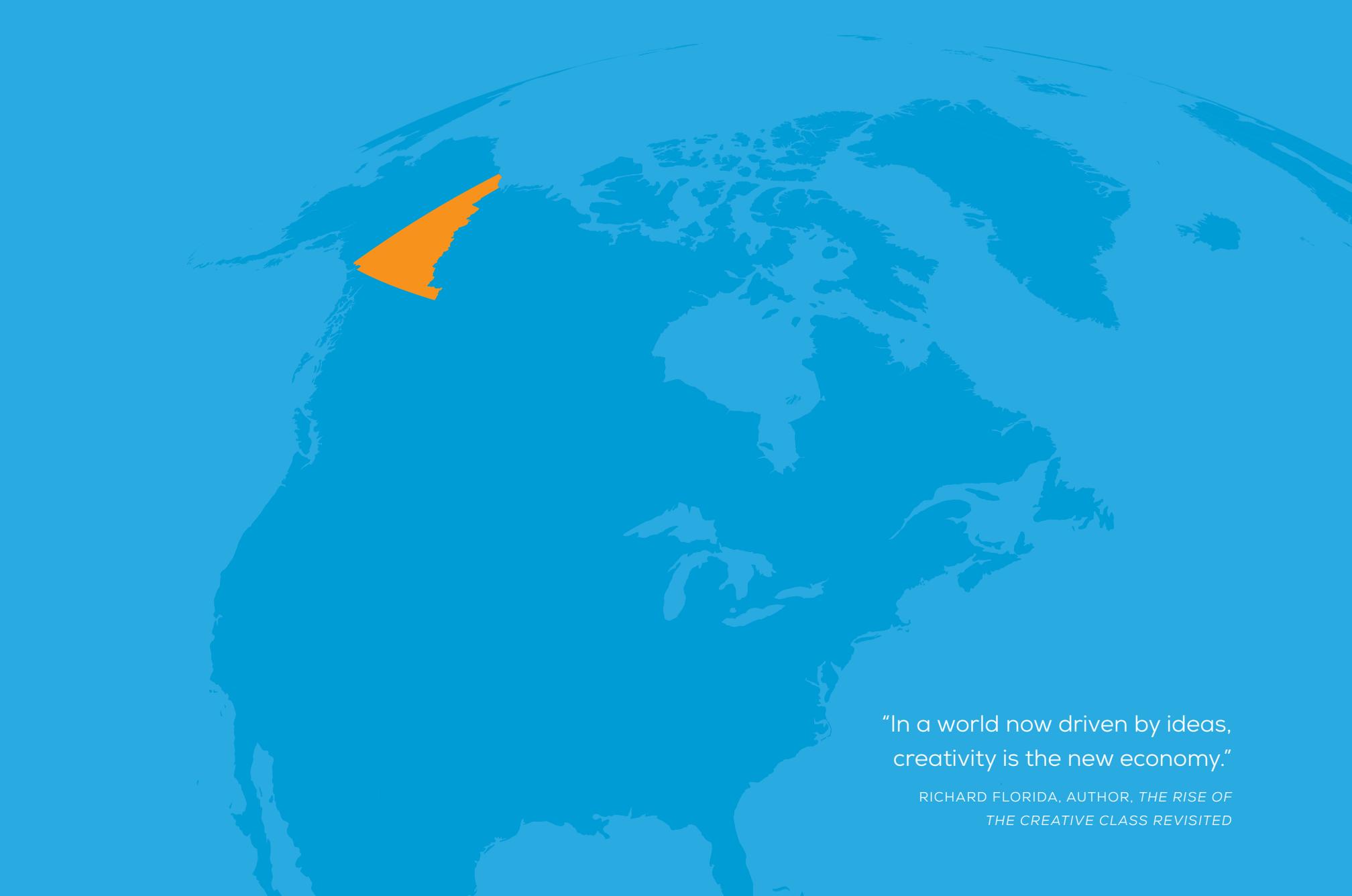
One way of invigorating it is to cross-pollinate sectors (the so-called Brooklyn Effect), for example artisanal manufacturing; farm-to-table dining; etc. One way to build the service sector tied to tourism is to add a higher experiential component to it. Instead of outdoor sports and camping, wilderness adventures can be curated in a variety of ways.

We recommend that the government of Yukon should look to see what Victoria, Edmonton, St. John's, and Fredericton are doing to grow their creative economies. All of those metros score similarly on the creative metrics and they may well provide some models for best practices.



Street festival on Main Street in Whitehorse

Photo credit: Government of Yukon



“In a world now driven by ideas,
creativity is the new economy.”

RICHARD FLORIDA, AUTHOR, *THE RISE OF
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