Munich/Aspen, June 30, 2011

San Francisco leads the U.S. in environmental sustainability

U.S. and Canada Green City Index analyzes the environmental sustainability of 27 major metropolitan areas in both countries.

San Francisco grabbed the mantle of "greenest" major city in the U.S. and Canada Green City Index, with New York, Seattle, Denver and Boston rounding out the top five U.S. cities. The unique study conducted by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), and commissioned by Siemens, assesses and compares 27 major U.S. and Canadian cities on environmental performance and policies across nine categories – CO_2 emissions, energy, land use, buildings, transport, water, waste, air quality and environmental governance.

"The Green Cities Index demonstrates that America's cities are the driving force behind the nation's sustainability efforts," said Eric Spiegel, president and CEO, Siemens Corp. "Despite the fact that we do not have a federal climate policy in the United States—and no federal carbon standard—21 of the 27 cities in the index have already set their own carbon reduction targets. Cities are creating comprehensive sustainability plans, utilizing current technology and proving everyday that we don't have to wait to create a more sustainable future."

The study of U.S. and Canadian cities provided some important key findings. Notably, cities that performed best in the rankings are the ones that have comprehensive sustainability plans that encompass every aspect of creating a greener future including transportation, land use, energy use, carbon dioxide emissions, and water. And while there is a correlation between wealth and environmental performance, it is weaker in the U.S. and Canada than in Europe and Asia.

"City budgets are as tight as they have ever been, but mayors are leading the charge around making their cities more sustainable because they know they can't afford to push these decisions off until tomorrow," said Alison Taylor, Chief Sustainability Officer for the Americas, Siemens Corp. "Our goal with the Green City Index is to identify best practices, advance good ideas and provide a baseline for cities to help them set targets for themselves so that they can serve as role models for others with their innovative policies."

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The scope of the U.S. and Canada Green City Index is unique. The nine categories are based on 31 individual indicators — 16 of which are quantitative (e.g. consumption of water and electricity per capita, recycling rate, and use of public transportation) and 15 qualitative (e.g. CO_2 reduction targets, efficiency standards and incentives for buildings, and environmental governance). A key element of the study is the comparability of the results from each city — within the individual categories and in the overall evaluation. The study also includes in-depth city portraits that reveal the strengths and weaknesses of each urban center, while also highlighting initiatives and projects from which other cities can learn.

“Generally speaking, American cities fared well as compared to other global regions in the areas of air and waste policies as well as recycling and water infrastructure,” said Tony Nash of the Economist Intelligence Unit. “While public transportation was well-supported and incentivized in a number of cities, it was clear that take up is limited outside of the most densely populated cities. CO_2 emissions and electricity use are also notably higher in the U.S., but the evolving policy environment at local, state and national levels are opening up significant areas for improvement.”

The ranking results of the U.S. and Canada Green City Index:

Overall

	City	Score
1	San Francisco	83.8
2	Vancouver	81.3
3	New York City	79.2
4	Seattle	79.1
5	Denver	73.5
6	Boston	72.6
7	Los Angeles	72.5
8	Washington DC	71.4
9	Toronto	68.4
10	Minneapolis	67.7
11	Chicago	66.9
12	Ottawa	66.8
13	Philadelphia	66.7
14	Calgary	64.8
15	Sacramento	63.7
16	Houston	62.6
17	Dallas	62.3
18	Orlando	61.1
19	Montreal	59.8
20	Charlotte	59.0
21	Atlanta	57.8
22	Miami	57.3
23	Pittsburgh	56.6
24	Phoenix	55.4
25	Cleveland	39.7
26	St Louis	35.1
27	Detroit	28.4

CO_2

	City	Score
1	Vancouver	91.4
2	Miami	90.1
3	New York City	89.4
4	Los Angeles	86.5
5	Ottawa	86.0
6	Seattle	84.7
7	Toronto	81.6
8	San Francisco	81.1
9	Washington DC	80.8
10	Montreal	80.1

Energy

	City	Score
1	Denver	86.0
2	Boston	82.4
3	San Francisco	81.1
4	Vancouver	80.1
=5	Los Angeles	77.8
=5	Toronto	77.8
7	Minneapolis	76.5
8	Chicago	75.9
9	Phoenix	72.9
10	Philadelphia	72.5

Land use

	City	Score
1	New York City	93.0
2	Minneapolis	80.1
3	Ottawa	75.0
4	Boston	74.9
5	Vancouver	74.1
6	Washington DC	69.9
7	Philadelphia	67.7
8	San Francisco	66.6
9	Charlotte	64.6
10	Miami	59.2

Buildings

	City	Score
1	Seattle	98.2
2	San Francisco	85.6
3	Washington DC	79.3
4	Pittsburgh	78.5
5	Vancouver	77.2
6	Denver	68.8
7	New York City	68.7
8	Atlanta	66.7
9	Houston	66.4
10	Boston	62.1

Transport

	City	Score
1	New York City	76.6
2	San Francisco	67.0
3	Vancouver	66.6
4	Montreal	65.3
5	Ottawa	65.1
6	Chicago	64.7
7	Minneapolis	63.9
8	Denver	60.7
9	Seattle	59.8
10	Sacramento	56.0

Water

	City	Score
1	Calgary	94.1
2	Boston	91.8
3	New York City	88.8
4	Minneapolis	88.2
5	San Francisco	87.4
6	Vancouver	86.6
7	Denver	85.6
8	Ottawa	84.9
9	Charlotte	84.8
10	Toronto	83.5

Waste

	City	Score
1	San Francisco	100.0
2	Seattle	83.1
3	Los Angeles	81.9
4	Toronto	78.6
5	Minneapolis	72.6
6	Sacramento	72.2
7	Vancouver	69.0
8	Ottawa	66.2
9	Montreal	63.7
10	Houston	59.5

Air

	City	Score
1	Vancouver	95.1
2	San Francisco	91.9
3	New York City	89.2
4	Sacramento	89.1
5	Los Angeles	88.7
6	Philadelphia	82.9
7	Seattle	80.5
8	Montreal	79.5
9	Toronto	79.2
10	Denver	79.0

Environmental governance

	City	Score
=1	Denver	100.0
=1	New York City	100.0
=1	Washington DC	100.0
4	Seattle	96.7
=5	Houston	94.4
=5	Los Angeles	94.4
=5	Philadelphia	94.4
=8	Minneapolis	93.3
=8	San Francisco	93.3
10	Vancouver	91.1

A panel of global experts in urban environmental sustainability advised the Economist Intelligence Unit in developing the methodology for the study. The 27 cities selected were chosen to represent

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a number of the most populous metropolitan areas in the United States and Canada. The list includes the top 20 U.S. combined statistical areas, and the top 5 Canadian census metropolitan areas. Expert panelists suggested the addition of Miami and Phoenix due to population and growth rates. Portland did not make the list based on the ranking criteria, but is highlighted in the report.

Announced at the 2011 Aspen Ideas Festival, the U.S. and Canada Green City Index is the fifth study in the Green City Index series. Other indices in the series cover Europe, Latin America, Asia, and Germany.

More information on the U.S. and Canada Green City Index:
www.siemens.com/press/greencityindex

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