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Siemens study shows Vancouver leads Canada in environmental sustainability

Toronto, ON, September 8, 2011

"US and Canada Green City Index" suggests wealth not always a factor in environmental sustainability



Based on per capita GDP, Vancouver has outperformed many of its wealthier US counterparts and garners the mantle of "greenest" Canadian city in the "US and Canada Green City Index," released in a report today. The Index is a research project commissioned by Siemens, which measures and assesses the environmental performance of 27 major North American cities across a range of criteria -- CO₂ emissions,

energy, land use, buildings, transport, water, waste, air quality and environmental governance.

The study was conducted by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), the world's leading independent resource for economic and business research, forecasting and analysis. The other Canadian cities included are Montreal, Ottawa, Calgary and Toronto. Toronto places ninth overall in the Index and second in Canada, behind Vancouver. The city's strongest category performance is in waste management, where it ranks fourth. It also places in the top half of the Index in CO₂, energy, buildings, water and air. Toronto fares well when compared to other large cities in the study, placing second among this group in the energy, waste and water categories. Given Toronto's climate, the city places first among other cities in the Index with similar lower average temperatures.

The study provides other important key findings. Notably, cities that perform best in the rankings are the ones that have comprehensive sustainability plans encompassing every aspect of creating a greener future. And while there is a correlation between wealth and environmental performance, it is weaker in Canada and the US than it is in Europe and Asia. This report follows on the heels of last year's Siemens' study, entitled "The Sustainable Cities Challenge in Canada" that also named Vancouver the top performer in environmental sustainability initiatives.

"The Green City Index demonstrates that Canadian cities are a driving force behind the nation's sustainability efforts. The performance of Canadian cities is extremely good when compared to their US counterparts, especially when relative GDP/person is taken into consideration," said Roland Aurich, president and CEO of Siemens Canada. "Our major cities, for the most part, are creating comprehensive, innovative sustainability plans, utilizing current technology because a more sustainable future is a very high priority."

In the combined Canada/US results in the Overall Category—behind Vancouver and Toronto—are Ottawa in 12th place, Calgary in 14th and Montreal in 19th spot. Vancouver also garners the number one spot in the combined results in CO₂ Emissions and Air categories and was top Canadian performer in Energy, Buildings, Transport and Environmental Governance. Ottawa was the high Canadian score for Land Use in third spot, Calgary for Water at number one and Toronto for Waste coming in at fourth place.



"City budgets are as tight as they have ever been, but Canadian mayors by and large, are leading the charge to make their cities more sustainable because they know they can't afford to push these decisions off until tomorrow," said Aurich. "Siemens' 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."

"Generally speaking, Canadian cities fare well as compared to other global regions in the areas of air and waste policies as well as recycling and water infrastructure," said Richard M. Stein, senior analyst, Custom Research, Economist Intelligence Unit. "While public transportation is well-supported and incentivized in a number of cities, it is clear that take up is limited outside of the most densely populated cities. Canada compares favourably with its European counterparts in the areas of environment and does better than the US on that score."

The scope of the Index is extensive. 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. CO₂ 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 challenges of each urban centre, while also highlighting initiatives and projects from which other cities can learn.

A panel of global experts in urban environmental sustainability, whose views reflect the combined experiences of government, the private sector, academia, and non-governmental organizations, advised the EIU in developing the methodology for the study. The 27 cities selected were chosen to represent a number of the most populous metropolitan areas in the United States and Canada. Announced at the Green Cities Challenge, held in Toronto, the "US and Canada Green City Index" is the fourth study in the Green City Index series. Other indices in the series cover Europe, Latin America, and Asia.

For more information and to download a copy of the US and Canada Green City Index, please visit: www.siemens.com/press/greencityindex

Download a PDF version and/or a fact sheet of this release:

Siemens study shows Vancouver leads Canada in Environmental Sustainability
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