

## Vancouver tops list of Canada's most sustainable cities

*Toronto and Yellowknife take top spots in large and small city categories*

(Toronto ON, Feb. 3, 2010) Vancouver, BC gets a gold medal for its leadership in urban sustainability.

The fourth annual *Corporate Knights Most Sustainable Cities Ranking* recognizes **Toronto, ON** as first in the Big City category, **Vancouver, BC** as first in the Medium City category and overall ranking, and **Yellowknife, NT** as first in the Small City category.

A key factor that helped **Toronto** surpass last year's winner, Edmonton, was the city's strong record on corporate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, which are currently 40 per cent below 1990 levels. The city reaps the benefits of its density, with more citizens choosing green commuting options and consuming less residential energy.

**Vancouver** displaced the two-time Medium City winner Halifax with stricter GHG reduction goals, more bike paths and green space, and better access to local food. New multi-family condominiums must have 20 per cent of parking stalls wired for electric vehicle charging—a new gold standard.

Best Small City for three consecutive years, **Yellowknife** benefits from high rates of employment and the city's strong green infrastructure policies. In spite of cold weather, Yellowknife boasts a high "active commuter" rate. Thanks to investment in the city's extensive trail network, 24 per cent of residents use their own two feet to get to work.

"Canadian cities are incubators for sustainable solutions," says Hilary Best, Researcher at Corporate Knights Magazine. "With the appropriate social, financial and governance tools to leverage these solutions, urban spaces become powerful launch pads for the sustainability transition."

Cities were assessed on over 60 indicators spanning five categories of sustainability: Ecological Integrity, Economic Security, Governance and Empowerment, Infrastructure and Built Environment, and Social Well-Being. The supporting research included a survey completed by all ranked cities and publicly available statistics at the city level. Weakest performance was evident in measures of Ecological Integrity where insufficient monitoring prevents cities from recognizing and preventing ecosystem decline.

The full results of the ranking are available online at [www.corporateknights.ca/cities](http://www.corporateknights.ca/cities) and are summarized below, as well as in the Sustainable Cities issue (Vol. 8.3) of Corporate Knights Magazine, distributed in the Globe and Mail today in the east (Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Quebec), and tomorrow in the west (Calgary, Vancouver).

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**About Corporate Knights:** *Founded in 2002, Corporate Knights Inc. is an independent Canadian-based media company focused on promoting and reinforcing sustainable development.*

Individual City Information: all scores out of 100

Big city winner **Toronto (69.3)** showed strength across the board, excelling in indicators of Governance and Infrastructure. The city has integrated sustainability principles into the decision making processes, set ambitious GHG reduction targets (80% reductions from 1990 levels by 2050), and provided strong incentives for green building and retrofits.

*Key Sustainability Opportunity:* addressing poor air quality and community greenhouse gas emissions as an integrated environmental, economic and health issue.

Medium city winner **Vancouver (76.1)** leads Canadian cities on the journey towards sustainability. The overall winner performed well in all categories of evaluation and demonstrates that environmental integrity and economic progress are mutually supportive goals. Since 1990, the city's population has increased by 27% and employment by 18%, while GHG emissions are on track to reach the Kyoto target of 6% below 1990 levels by 2012. Renewable energy, waste-to-fuel projects and a green building code have made the impossible possible.

*Key Sustainability Opportunity:* improving water consumption with increasing block pricing structures and marketing the city's solutions to other locales

Small city winner **Yellowknife (60.7)** has shown a consistent effort to integrate sustainability into civic life. The city shows particular strength in economic indicators and claims the "most aggressive energy efficiency building by-law in the country". Yellowknife's admirable 24% active commuter rate is the envy of cities across the country.

*Key Sustainability Opportunity:* addressing waste diversion and GHG emissions with waste-to-energy solutions.

**Calgary's (65.5)** strong performance in economic indicators such as economic diversity, percentage of citizens living in poverty and unemployment suggest the city is on firm financial ground. With the opening of a Sustainability Office, the city will hopefully capitalize on these resources to tackle other elements of urban sustainability.

*Key Sustainability Opportunity:* protect natural and human health with a stronger ban on the cosmetic use of pesticide and genuine progress on waste diversion.

**Charlottetown (59.4)** has the highest voter turn out in municipal elections and the lowest residential energy consumption. Future improvements are likely as city officials are currently ironing out the details of their integrated community sustainability plan.

*Key Sustainability Opportunity:* meaningful GHG targets and strategies to achieve these goals.

**Edmonton (68.3)** is helping to redefine sustainable progress in this country. A strong sustainability policy filter, an increasing block water pricing structure and a highly representative

city council support Edmonton's exemplary performance in economic, ecological and governance measures.

*Key Sustainability Opportunity:* increasing population density to facilitate sustainable infrastructure improvements.

**Halifax (63.3)** has the best waste diversion levels but the most sprawl, the lowest population density and the least green space of the considered set. Halifax leads a growing trend towards municipal utilities as service providers. The housing of Water, Wastewater, Engineering, Environmental and Customer Services within the Halifax Water utility helps to integrate water management decisions.

*Key Sustainability Opportunity:* more bike paths to encourage citizens to green their commute.

**Hamilton (60.2)**, our lowest-scoring medium size city, suffers from the poorest air quality of any city under consideration. Hamilton has reduced waste with a strict garbage bag limit but missed incentive opportunities such as additional bike paths and retrofit bonuses.

*Key Sustainability Opportunity:* increase the density of built-up areas to facilitate green commutes and reduce GHGs.

**Mississauga (62.9)** residents may have too much faith in their future: only 24.7 per cent showed up at the last municipal election – the lowest of any of the considered cities. Nonetheless, the city has the best representation of women on council and the lowest long-term debt per household of our considered set.

*Key Sustainability Opportunity:* a plan to address poor GHG reductions by increasing green space.

**Montreal (58.8)** is the only major city without an organic waste program. Montrealers also suffer from high long-term household debt and have the highest water consumption of our considered set.

*Key Sustainability Opportunity:* an increasing volume-based water-pricing structure to reduce consumption.

**Ottawa (64.0)** is advancing the waste management agenda: this year, the city will add organic waste collection to its comprehensive recycling program. Ottawa's highly educated and financially sound citizens benefit from extensive cultural opportunities.

*Key Sustainability Opportunity:* increasing population density and investing in green retrofit incentives.

**Quebec (61.8)** has the most ethnically representative council of the considered set. The city plans to double its existing bike path network by 2018.

*Key Sustainability Opportunity:* green businesses incentives and retrofit programs to achieve GHG reductions.

**Saint John (52.0)** has the poorest overall score, the worst waste diversion rates and the least women on council. The city can boost its results considerably in the coming years by taking advantage of the low hanging fruit identified by other cities.

*Key Sustainability Opportunity:* a ban on the cosmetic use of pesticide.

**Saskatoon's (60.3)** prioritization of commerce and education has paid off in some respects: 79 per cent of residents have completed high school and the city's employment base is diverse. But Saskatoon would do well to expand the breadth of its sustainability priorities to enhance ecological, infrastructural and governance outcomes.

*Key Sustainability Opportunity:* giving teeth to the city's ambitious zero-waste target and increasing green economic incentives.

**St. John's (53.1)** continues to move forward on the road to sustainability. St. John's has the lowest water consumption of our cities but the highest obesity and unemployment rates.

*Key Sustainability Opportunity:* combine economic initiatives with green infrastructure improvements.

**Whitehorse's (60.5)** focus on its citizens has paid off. The city boasts a plethora of public arts events, low obesity rates, and an abundance of family physicians – a rarity in northern communities.

*Key Sustainability Opportunities:* adapting water pricing structures to improve inordinate water consumption.

**Winnipeg's (61.9)** active transportation stimulus plan and community GHG and waste reduction strategies set the stage for future improvements. The city boasts great farmer's markets and cultural events which anchor its strength in social well-being.

*Key Sustainability Opportunity:* a ban on the cosmetic use of pesticides and additional effort to support regional economic development.

## ***2010 Corporate Knights Most Sustainable Cities Ranking***

### Big Cities

1.	Toronto	69.3
2.	Edmonton	68.3
3.	Calgary	65.5
4.	Ottawa	64.0
5.	Montreal	58.8

### Medium Cities

1.	Vancouver	76.1
2.	Halifax	63.3
3.	Mississauga	62.9
4.	Winnipeg	61.9
5.	Quebec	61.8
6.	Hamilton	60.2

### Small Cities

1.	Yellowknife	60.7
2.	Whitehorse	60.5
3.	Saskatoon	60.3
4.	Charlottetown	59.4
5.	St. John's	53.1
6.	Saint John	52.0