



Attention: News/National/Business Reporters and Assignment Editors

Corporate Knights Magazine announces Canada's most sustainable cities

(Toronto, Canada, January 29, 2009) Today, Corporate Knights Magazine unveiled the third-annual *Corporate Knights Most Sustainable Cities in Canada* list. The comprehensive ranking identifies Canadian cities whose practices leave the smallest environmental footprint possible and create a healthy, thriving population.

The top cities in the 2009 *Corporate Knights Sustainable Cities Ranking* are as follows:

Large city category: Edmonton, AB

Medium city category: Halifax, NS

Small city category: Yellowknife, NT

With the lowest unemployment rate of all cities and the second-lowest unemployment rate of immigrants, **Edmonton** wants to be an “innovation centre for value-added and green technologies and products,” and is measuring progress by the percentage of green collar jobs created. Edmonton is also the only city in our consideration set to have *inclining* block pricing on water to encourage conservation.

The **Halifax Regional Municipality** (HRM) is one of the few municipalities that have insecticide and pesticide bans throughout the city. HRM is integrating sustainability into its decision-making through its corporate-wide Sustainability Transition Team. But while Halifax has the largest proportion of Canadian-born visible minorities in the country, no visible minorities sit on its city council.

Yellowknife is the only small city with a LEED-certified building, and the city has integrated energy efficiency into its building bylaws and has also conducted an energy audit on all of its facilities. It also supports creativity with an annual arts competition for local artists. The City of Yellowknife Downtown Enhancement Committee also provides annual funding for building murals that are painted by local artists.

The cities at the bottom of the ranking struggled with poor air quality, lack of systematic waste diversion programs or greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets, and lack of sustainability programs like green business incentives or retrofit programs.

Corporate Knights examined 17 cities, including Canada's top ten cities by population and the largest city in each province and territory.* This year's ranking was strengthened by a three-member national advisory board, composed of lead advisor The Natural Step Canada (TNS) and advisors Greening Greater Toronto (GGT) and Smart Growth BC (SGBC).

“Sustainability presents enormous opportunities for Canadians in the most important task there is: creating safe, healthy and vibrant communities for this and future generations,” says Chris Lindberg, Director of Partnerships and eLearning, TNS. “The Natural Step Canada is pleased to work with Canadian communities and progressive organizations such as Corporate Knights to make real change happen for the benefit of all.”

The advisory board helped Corporate Knights to identify areas where the magazine could make its methodology more robust by suggesting new and improved metrics that better encompass a city's strengths and weaknesses.

“Sustainable cities are created by good government policies and programs, and by the actions taken by those who work and live in those cities,” says Peter Johnson, Chair, Measurement and Performance Working Group, GGT and director with the Sustainable Business Solutions practice of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP. “The indicators selected are intended to provide a snapshot into how cities are evolving.”

Cities were assessed based on five categories: Ecological Integrity, Economic Security, Governance and Empowerment, Infrastructure and Built Environment, and Social Well-Being. Publicly available information, including Statistics Canada data, and a city survey conducted by Corporate Knights were used to determine city scores.

Corporate Knights found that several cities had strong affordable housing programs, with smaller cities excelling in this area. Waste diversion targets were also set in most cities surveyed.

Overall, cities are doing a good job of self-regulating: setting GHG emission reduction targets for the city corporation, banning pesticide on city-owned property and mandating environmentally friendly design for new city buildings. But Corporate Knights hopes that there is room to grow.

“We challenge councils to extend these programs to the whole city, and fully integrate what are often seen as side initiatives,” says Melissa Shin, Managing Editor.

The full results of the Ranking, including the surveys completed by each city, are available on www.corporateknights.ca and are summarized in the Responsible Investing issue (Vol. 7.3) of Corporate Knights, distributed in the Globe and Mail today.

**Note: Due to lack of data, Iqaluit was omitted from this year's ranking.*

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To schedule interviews with Melissa Shin, Managing Editor, contact: Don Huff, 416-972-7404, huffd@huffstrategy.com

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

Sources

The Anielski Institute

Canada Green Building Council

CK survey

Environment Canada

The Frontier Centre for Public Policy – Local Government Performance Index 2008

HIFIS National Database, Homelessness Partnering Secretariat – HRSDC

Life Satisfaction and Trust in Neighbours study - by Barrington-Leigh and Helliwell

MoneySense 2008 “The Best Places to do Business in Canada”

Municipalities' websites

Municipalities' tourism bureaus

Statistics Canada

University of Alberta study authored by Prof. Sean Cash, Prof. Ellen Goddard, and Ryan Lacanilao

All data is the most recent available and must not be older than five years.

Individual City Information: all scores out of 10

With the lowest unemployment rate of all cities and the second-lowest unemployment rate of immigrants, **Edmonton (7.31)** had our highest Economic Security score. The city wants to be an “innovation centre for value-added and green technologies and products”, and is measuring progress by the percentage of green collar jobs created. Edmonton is also the only city in our consideration set to have *inclining* block pricing on water (cost/L increases as more water is consumed) to encourage conservation.

Opportunity to improve: Edmonton annually inventories its GHG emissions for the community and the city corporation, and it is finding that its annual emissions continue to increase.

The **Halifax Regional Municipality (6.94)** (HRM) had the highest Governance and Empowerment score of all cities. One of the few municipalities to have insecticide and pesticide bans throughout the city, HRM is integrating sustainability into its decision-making through its corporate-wide Sustainability Transition Team. The municipality also requires bike lanes on certain types of new roads.

Opportunity to improve: Halifax has the largest proportion of Canadian-born visible minorities in the country, but no visible minorities sit on its city council.

Yellowknife (6.14) is the only small city with a LEED-certified building, and the city has integrated energy efficiency into its building bylaws and has also conducted an energy audit on all of its facilities. Along with a high population density, these factors came together to give Yellowknife the top Infrastructure and Built Environment score. It also supports creativity with an annual arts competition for local artists. The City of Yellowknife Downtown Enhancement Committee also provides annual funding for building murals that are painted by local artists.

Opportunity to improve: Yellowknife should consider a ban on insecticides and pesticides.

Calgary's (6.96) light-rail transit is powered entirely by wind-generated electricity. The city is also planning to implement an anti-pesticide by-law by 2010. Calgary also offers rebates in building permit fees for builders constructing to Built Green, LEED standards, or the Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA) Go Green program. These factors contributed to a high Infrastructure and Built Environment score.

Opportunity to improve: Calgary has bulk water pricing, which encourages increased water consumption.

Charlottetown's (5.28) building code bylaw asks for Energy Star appliances in buildings. The city is a Partner for Climate Protection and has created a GHG emission inventory and forecast. The city no longer provides bottled water during its meetings.

Opportunity to improve: The city has not yet set GHG emission reduction targets and has bulk water pricing.

Strict waste management regulations and a long-term, community-based sustainability plan boosted **Hamilton's (5.95)** governance and empowerment score. The city's vehicle fleet is one of the greenest in Canada, and a landfill gas-to-energy project and a new efficient district cooling system should help to improve its ranking in coming years. Its citizens have the highest reported life satisfaction rates in the country – perhaps aided by a hearty number of city-held public arts events last year.

Opportunity to improve: The city is still lacking GHG reduction targets for the community as a whole.

Led by its mayor of 30 years, Hazel McCallion, **Mississauga (6.26)** excels in gender representation in government: 8 of its 11 councillors are women. An impressive waste diversion rate of 50% and a large

proportion of the budget allocated to conservation resulted in a high ecological integrity score. The city was one of the few in Ontario to offer an affordable home ownership program.

Opportunity to improve: The city could consider financial incentives to attract green businesses.

Montreal's (5.96) ambitious GHG reduction target is complemented by the city's innovative "Bixi" bike share program and a plan to double its network of bike paths by 2014. Montreal's 2009 budget allocated a record \$322 million to accessible, energy-efficient public transit. Host to over 32 public arts events last year, the largest community garden network in the country, and the fewest fast food stores per capita of all cities, Montreal's top score was in the Social Well-being category.

Opportunity to improve: Montreal struggled in the Ecological Integrity category with high rates of water use and poor air quality. High unemployment rates aided to a poor showing in Economic Security.

Ottawa (7.03) offers various retrofit rebate, incentive, and affordable home ownership programs, leading to the highest score in the Governance and Empowerment category. The city exceeded its target of 20% reductions by 2007 from 1990, and has a green building policy for city buildings.

Opportunity to improve: Ottawa does not yet have an organic waste collection service, contributing to a poor waste diversion rate, and has one of the shortest bike path networks relative to city size of all cities.

Quebec City (6.69) is currently undergoing a GHG inventory. The city also holds several sustainability-themed days and weeks, such as Culture Days, Open Library Days, Car-Free Days, Environment Week, and Public Transportation Week. The city's high Governance and Empowerment score was partly due to its strong gender diversity on its city council (almost one-third are female) and its ban on pesticides and insecticides.

Opportunity to improve: The city could consider retrofit programs and financial incentives for green businesses.

Saint John (5.60) provided an extensive report on its sustainability initiatives. The city has held over 25 public meetings in the past six months aimed at addressing the community concerns relating to sustainable development, and about one in 20 citizens actively participated in their community visioning process. Saint John has recently begun work on its \$88 million harbour cleanup, and the use of grey water has been included in its new water strategy. Of all the cities studied, Saint John's citizens have the most trust in their neighbors.

Opportunity to improve: Saint John's Social Well-Being score was brought down by high obesity rates and a low percentage of the population with university degrees.

Saskatoon (6.12) is a leader in affordable home-ownership initiatives and its best showing was in the Governance and Empowerment category. The city has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country, as well as the lowest rate of long term debt per household, suggesting a healthy economy. The city has recently become a member of Carpool.ca, earning all of its citizens access to the service.

Opportunity to improve: High rates of domestic water-use and lax GHG targets (a 6% reduction of 1993 levels by 2013) contributed to poor ecological integrity. The city suffers from a high rate of crime, and has only one farmers' market.

St. John's (5.10) has completed a Cycling Master Plan to provide 226 km of cycling and multiuse paths around the city. It has also recently completed an Affordable Housing Study and is ending its practice of providing hourly water rates to ships in June 2009. St. John's is also part of the Partners for Climate Protection Program.

Opportunity to improve: The city currently has no waste diversion program, but will begin curbside recycling in May 2010. With all the studies the city has just completed, we look forward to seeing how St. John's fares in future years.

Toronto (7.28) excelled in all areas and had the highest Ecological Integrity score of all cities. The city offers an impressive range of retrofit and development incentive programs, including the new Eco-Roof incentive program and Green Condo loans which encourage developers to consider sustainable design. Toronto does a GHG inventory for its own operation and has long-term city-wide goals – including an innovative smog reduction target. It is one of the only cities to have a municipal ban on pesticides. *Opportunity to improve:* Toronto is one of the least dense cities, signaling urban sprawl that can threaten biodiversity and increase commuting distance.

Whitehorse (5.16) has created a Strategic Sustainability Plan and has partnered with the Energy Solutions Centre and Yukon Government to conduct a feasibility study in implementing a district-heating project. The “Wheel 2 Work Whitehorse” program encourages citizens to cycle to and from work or for work related errands as often as possible between May 1 and September 30, and the city has over 850 km of cycling paths. The city also has an ambitious waste diversion target of zero waste. *Opportunity to improve:* The city could consider financial incentives to attract green businesses up north.

Winnipeg (5.74) has already met its GHG reduction target of reducing levels by 20% from 1998. It had average scores in all five categories, and was set apart as having the smallest ecological footprint of all those measured. The city has recently made significant investments in improving public transit infrastructure, and is one of the few to offer tax incentives for retrofitting older homes. *Opportunity to improve:* Currently, Winnipeg has a declining block water rate (thus encouraging mass consumption) and no limits on the number of garbage bags allowed per household. The city’s ecological integrity was compromised by no measure of waste diversion and a lack of budget allocation to conservation.

Vancouver (6.60) has 14 LEED-certified buildings, second only to Toronto. The city also has a low obesity rate and low unemployment. With four female and three visible minority city councillors out of 10, Vancouver has the best combined diversity score of all cities. Its relatively low crime rate and high number of farmers’ markets led to the highest Social Well-Being score of all cities. *Opportunity to improve:* Vancouverites spend a relatively high percent of their income on housing, and it is one of the most expensive places in Canada to live.