Sustainable mobility: Asian and European Cities lead the way

- Hong Kong takes first place, followed by Zurich and Paris in the 2017 Sustainable Cities Mobility Index
- European cities lead on sustainable transport, making up seven of the top ten
- North American cities show opportunity for progress, not appearing in the top 20
- Cities encouraged to see mobility as a strategic area of competitive advantage and make bold moves to improve quality of life

Amsterdam, Netherlands, October 30, 2017 – Hong Kong leads the world for sustainable transport according to the 2017 Sustainable Cities Mobility Index from Arcadis, the leading global Design & Consultancy for natural and built assets. European cities dominate the top of the overall Index, occupying seven of the leading ten spots.

Boosted by its innovative and well-connected metro network and a high share of trips taken by public transport, Hong Kong manages to achieve many of the aims of an effective urban transport system – enabling comprehensive mobility, creating economic opportunity and enriching the lives of citizens, business and tourists alike.

Cities benefiting from ‘money, mass or maturity’, namely high wealth, significant global cities, do not necessarily lead the ranking in sustainable urban mobility. Although these factors can help, we do see wealthy, large and/or older cities not automatically punching their ticket to sustainable urban mobility.

Although there is no magic recipe for the creation of successful and sustainable urban mobility, higher ranking cities have a better balance across the three pillars of sustainability – social (People), environmental (Planet) and economic (Profit). The Index was compiled for Arcadis by the Centre for Economic and Business Research (Cebr) and explores mobility through these three pillars of sustainability to develop an indicative ranking of 100 of the world’s cities.

Zurich, Paris and Prague are the highest placed European cities, ranking second, third and fourth respectively, with strong scores in the Planet and Profit sub-indices – due to established infrastructure, efficient metro systems and commitment to green technology.

Asian cities also rank highly, taking three of the top ten spots. Modern metro systems, large airports and low usage of private vehicles help boost the rankings of developed Asian cities such as Seoul and Singapore. Other Asian cities would score higher were it not for damaging levels of urban pollution and emissions.

North American cities are spread throughout the overall Index; while citizens of some American cities enjoy well-funded and comprehensive transport systems, many cities in the U.S. and Canada are undermined by a reliance on private vehicles and underdeveloped public transport options.
Overall the top ten cities in the 2017 Sustainable Cities Mobility Index are:

**Top ten**
1. Hong Kong
2. Zurich
3. Paris
4. Seoul
5. Prague
6. Vienna
7. London
8. Singapore
9. Stockholm
10. Frankfurt

The full findings can be found here: mobilityindex.arcadis.com

**John Batten, Global Cities Director at Arcadis said:**

“Cities are in part defined by their distinct urban mobility; installed to traverse their unique topographies and urban realities including density, demographics and design. Whether it’s London’s Tube, the Los Angeles freeways, Hong Kong’s MTR system, Sydney’s ferries or Amsterdam’s bicycles, the prevailing urban transport system of a city is a distinguishing feature that enables the mobility of residents, travelers, goods and services -- providing the foundation for economic growth.”

“Cities and their policymakers face enormous pressures as they seek to meet today’s mobility challenges. As rapid urbanization, aging infrastructure, population growth and climate change continue to challenge our world’s cities, those that choose to make bold moves in advancing and diversifying their urban transport systems will gain a competitive edge — we see that investing in improved and sustainable mobility will give cities enhanced productivity, attractiveness and overall quality of life.”

**Regional profiles:**

**North America:** No city in the U.S. or Canada makes it into the top twenty of the overall Index. New York City is the region’s best performing city, sitting in 23rd place overall and second in the People sub-index with an expansive and heavily used metro system operating around the clock. The lowest ranked North American city, Indianapolis, is weighed down by a high share of journeys made by private car, a common practice in many American cities.

**Latin America:** Brazil’s most populous city, São Paulo, is the only Latin American city in the Index to feature in the overall top 50. Yet, the capital cities of Lima and Mexico City are two of the highest performing globally when it comes to the share of trips taken by public transport.

**Asia:** It is a tale of two halves in Asia. Hong Kong leads the Index and Seoul and Singapore rank fourth and eighth respectively; while of the top ten in the People sub-index, half are within Asia. Meanwhile, other cities in the region, such as Hanoi and Kuala Lumpur, are some of the world’s least sustainable for mobility.

**Australia:** The share of total trips taken by public transport, the utilization of the systems, and the share of commuters cycling or walking to work is low across Australia’s cities: no city in the country appears in the top 50 on any of these fronts. Brisbane is the country’s only city to make it into the top half of the overall Index, while Perth lands last in the region’s Planet ranking.

**Africa:** The African cities in the Index all sit in the bottom 50. Cape Town is the continent’s best performing city, despite having some of the highest numbers of fatalities globally, and makes it into the top half of the Profit ranking. Cairo sits in the bottom ten cities globally, performing particularly poorly on the Planet ranking.

**Europe:** The top ten cities in the Planet sub-index are all European, with German cities making up the top three places. Developed cities in Europe, with the privilege of having industrialized early, have helped progress the low-emissions agenda with excellent bicycle infrastructure, commitment to green technology and electric vehicle uptake. European cities also dominate the Profit sub-index, making up seven of the top ten places. Many of these cities have invested generously in transport infrastructure and have widely-
utilized public transport systems helping to cut commuting times. In light of the UK’s vote to leave the European Union, other cities in Europe can compete with London on sustainable transport as the UK’s capital sits in the bottom three cities for both commuting times and congestion and delays. Milan and Dublin offer some of the world’s best rider connectivity, while Paris has one of the best-utilized transport systems globally. Most cities in Europe also beat London when it comes to active commuting, with Amsterdam and Stockholm leading the way.

Download the full report at mobilityindex.arcadis.com

Improving quality of life

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Notes to Editor:
The research examines 100 cities across 23 indicators to give an indicative ranking of each city’s mobility and how sustainable their system is. The cities included within this report were selected to provide an overview of the planet’s cities, providing not only a wide-ranging geographical coverage, but also a variety of levels of economic development, expectations of future growth and an assortment of sustainability and mobility challenges.

A detailed evidence-based metric is derived to quantify each city’s performance. The headline ranking is then divided into three sub-categories, or sub-indices: People, Planet and Profit. These correspond to the three dimensions of sustainability—social, environmental and economic and can be described as the triple bottom line.

The Sustainable Cities Mobility Index seeks to build off the Sustainable Cities Index, published by Arcadis in September of 2016 by taking a deeper dive into the topic of mobility. It reflects, by in large, the same set of 100 cities.

ABOUT ARCADIS

Arcadis is the leading global Design & Consultancy firm for natural and built assets. Applying our deep market sector insights and collective design, consultancy, engineering, project and management services we work in partnership with our clients to deliver exceptional and sustainable outcomes throughout the lifecycle of their natural and built assets. We are 27,000 people, active in over 70 countries that generate €3.3 billion in revenues. We support UN-Habitat with knowledge and expertise to improve the quality of life in rapidly growing cities around the world. www.arcadis.com