

Part of the  **canada.com** Network [Log in](#) [Register today](#)

[local classifieds](#) [working](#) [driving](#) [obituaries](#) [celebrating](#) [shopping](#) [renting](#) [dating](#)

- See today's Digital Edition
- Subscribe to email newsletter
- Subscriber Services

The Gazette

[The Gazette Home](#) Search for in the The Gazette

We're pedalling along quite nicely, but haven't caught up to Victoria

Montreal ranked fourth in green transportation, but we've passed Toronto, annual survey finds

Canwest News Service

Published: 8 hours ago

Victoria has once again beat out cities many times its size and been ranked the greenest city to get around in Canada.

The B.C. city of 330,000 is followed by Vancouver, Ottawa-Gatineau, Montreal and Toronto in the second annual national ranking of environmentally friendly transportation.

And Montreal has the highest proportion of residents who get around without cars, the survey found.

"As a whole, the country is slowly starting to improve," said Barry Appleton, director of the Appleton Charitable Foundation, which sponsors the survey. "Victoria shows everybody that a smaller city can be a leader in sustainable transportation."

In an effort to foster competition and inspire improvements, the report grades 27 cities on 17 criteria such as the number of vehicles on their roads, the percentage of people who walk, bike or ride transit to work and how many buses and taxis use hybrid power or alternative fuel.

The cities included are home to two-thirds of the Canadian population; the report groups all municipalities included in each metropolitan area.

No city earned an A, although Victoria improved on its B grade from the first report by landing a B-plus this year. Many of the city's municipal and transit vehicles use alternative fuels, and it has excellent air quality and high housing density, which makes transit planning and getting around without a car easier.

Once again, St. John's, N.L., Moncton, N.B., Sudbury, Ont. and Barrie, Ont., came in last with grades of "F" on the survey, conducted by researchers at the University of British Columbia's Sauder School of Business.

"We don't measure what you've announced, we measure what you've done," Appleton said. "You can't just talk the talk, you have to walk the walk to score here."

Montreal knocked Toronto down one position this year by reducing its carbon monoxide levels and introducing alternative-fuel vehicles to its municipal fleet.

Calgary slipped three spots this year, to 19th, and has the highest per-capita level of vehicle ownership in the country, while Edmonton ranks 18th overall. Kelowna, B.C., climbed to 10th place from 14th due in large part to the fact that all of its transit bus fleet now uses alternative fuel.

St. Catharines, Ont., moved up from last year's failing grade to a D largely on the strength of new anti-idling bylaws. Regina, Saskatoon and Windsor, Ont., all earned D grades and rank in the lower middle of the pack.

"We think it's great when cities can compete on best practices for urban transportation," Appleton said, adding that cities are more invested in their ranking now that the report is in its second year.

"Getting rid of gridlock, finding ways to help the environment and help our pocketbooks all fit together."

But even cities that fared poorly on the rankings have inspiration to offer, he says, citing the free transit service in Calgary's downtown. Winnipeg boasts the same service and also offers affordable transit passes and a taxi fleet with 44 per cent hybrid cars, propelling it into sixth place.

The largest proportion of resident who get to work without driving can be found in Montreal (29 per cent), Ottawa and Toronto (both 28 per cent) - all cities that experience chilly winters, points out James Tansey, an associate professor of business ethics at UBC who helped design the survey.

"It sort of defies the rule that it's about the weather," he said. "A lot of it comes to the quality of the transit system and how much money they spend on it." Despite what Appleton calls the "riveting" rise in gas prices over the last year, average emissions from transportation increased by two per cent in Canadian cities over the last 12 months. People will sacrifice all kinds of other things before they sacrifice expenditures on gasoline, basically," Tansey said.

The Montreal Gazette
Thursday, NOVEMBER 13, 2008