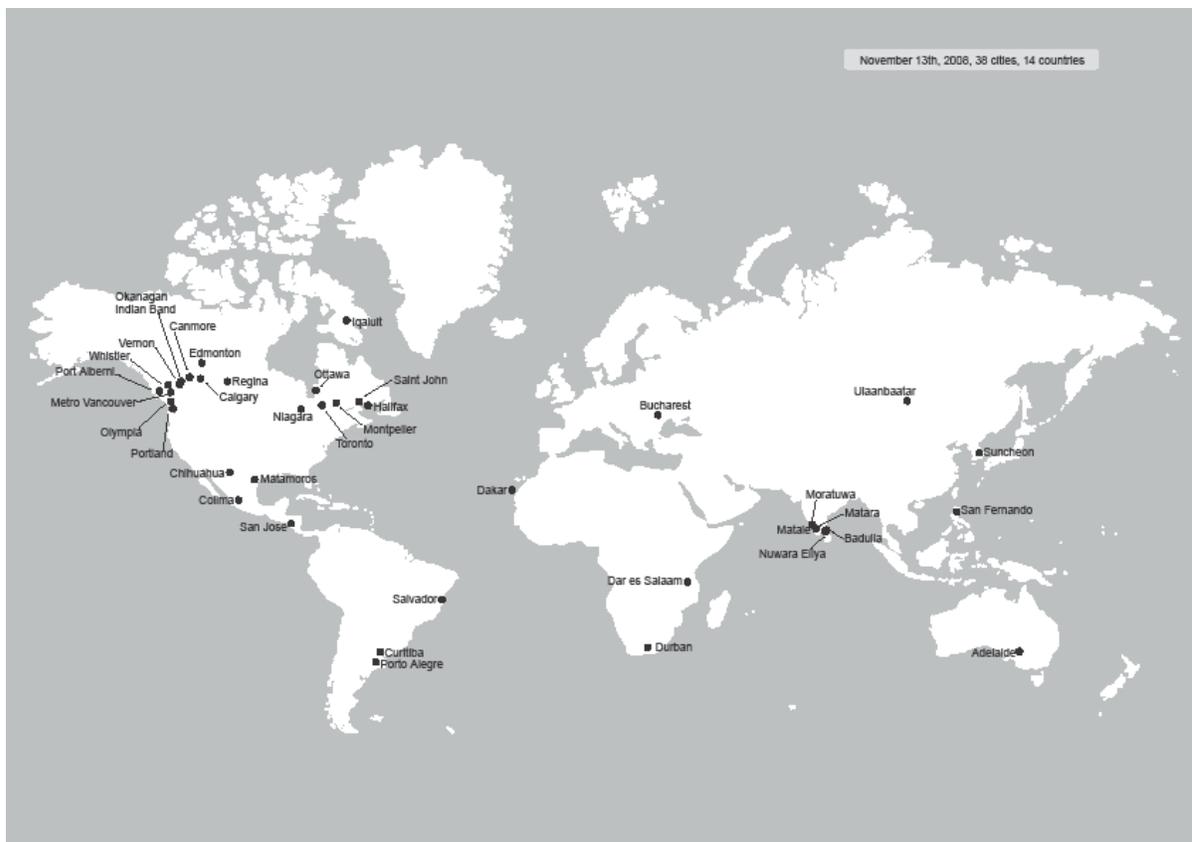


SUSTAINABLE CITIES : PLUS NETWORK Overview

The Sustainable Cities: PLUS Network is dedicated to accelerating the transfer of learning, best practices technologies and innovations from city to city.

CORE MEMBER CITIES



“Sustainability planning is not about management but about leadership on behalf of what is possible and vital; it requires vision, imagination and the ability to discern collective will and go beyond the current horizons.”

Bliss Browne, founder of *ImagineChicago*
(From keynote speech at 2006 PLUS Network Conference)

Introduction: Long-Term Planning for Sustainability

Long-term urban sustainability involves planning cities and regions to exist in harmony with the natural environment while sustaining their human populations and economic base for current and future generations. Long-term integrated planning looks out 50-100 years and treats the city as a complex system, addressing environmental, economic, social and cultural well-being, as well as governance and infrastructure.

The *Sustainable Cities: PLUS Network* helps cities think ahead and consider how today's decisions will affect current and future generations.

Currently, the core membership of the *Sustainable Cities: PLUS Network* includes 38 cities, communities or regions from low, middle and high income countries. The *Network* is small enough to allow for in-depth dialogues, diverse enough to be relevant at a global level, and flexible enough to encourage innovation. Lessons from this core group are shared with other cities through affiliations with ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability and other networks. An International Panel of Advisors provides advice and a Steering Committee of members guides the *Network*. The founder and Secretariat to the *PLUS Network* is Sustainable Cities located in Vancouver, Canada.

Participation in the *Sustainable Cities: PLUS Network*

When joining the *PLUS Network*, cities and regions commit to building on their existing planning process by applying a long-term lens and a systems approach. While each city is different, the process typically includes developing 50 to 100 year visions, then backcasting to develop 30 year strategies and shorter term implementation plans. In addition, each *Network* member identifies at least one immediate demonstration project that shows how it is implementing its vision or moving to become more sustainable. *PLUS Network* cities participate in regular peer exchanges involving four or five members, which give them opportunities to share their work and learn from one another's experiences and innovations about particular issues.

The *Sustainable Cities: PLUS Network*

- Generates knowledge through sharing experiences and innovations among diverse member cities and communities;
- Uses a long-term lens to help cities prioritise short term projects and goals;
- Develops and applies a variety of practical long-term planning models, tools and technologies;
- Shares experiences with benchmarks, measurable indicators and action plans;
- Provides a forum for dialogue through a web-based network;
- In addition to peer exchanges and workshops, the full *Network* membership meets face-to-face every two years in a Biennial Conference. The 2nd Biennial Conference was held in September, 2008 in Durban, South Africa.

The collaborative experience of the *Sustainable Cities: PLUS Network* helps cities to be resilient in the face of economic, ecological and social shocks and stresses.

Benefits of Participation in the *Sustainable Cities: PLUS Network*

- Improved understanding of long-term urban sustainability
Participating cities and communities gain access to an international pool of experts, frameworks and tools related to sustainability. Ultimately, cities and communities contribute their findings to the *PLUS Network*, creating new knowledge and sharing innovative solutions. Conferences, workshops and peer exchanges permit *PLUS Network* members to increase their capacity to plan and act on urban sustainability.
- Improved investor confidence and better risk management
Today, when considering short and long-term risks, foreign investors, governments and donors ask to see how their investment aligns with the city's longer term development plans. The longer term context helps cities prioritize their projects. Long-term planning eases short-term decision making and renders municipalities more attractive to investors, multilateral lenders, donors and other levels of government.

- Reduced costs related to planning processes and methodologies
PLUS Network cities can reduce the costs associated with planning and implementation by reducing expensive investments in consultants, or some of the development costs of tools, technologies and frameworks. Practical, efficient and inexpensive sharing of experiences allows *PLUS Network* members to assess what works and what doesn't and avoid mistakes made by others.
- Set the example at international events
PLUS Network members showcase their city or community at high profile events, such as the World Urban Forum and the ICLEI World Congress. The *PLUS Network* asks cities to report on their projects, and lessons are shared throughout the *Network* and around the world. Often, these international events mobilise support and resources for cities and countries.
- Knowledge transfer and international exchanges
Integrated long-term planning, with a focus on sustainability, provides a neutral entry point to build a dialogue across the divides of income, culture and geography. Cities copy one another's best ideas and big cities learn from smaller cities where innovations may be easier to introduce. Peer exchanges, newsletters and web based dialogues facilitate knowledge transfer from city to city.
- Benefits that spread to the private sector
Multi-stakeholder processes, which are encouraged by the *PLUS Network*, ensure that city officials and staff address the needs of the private sector and community groups. Through the *Network*, consultants and suppliers of professional services, technologies and planning tools used by *PLUS Network* member cities gain access to a larger international market.

The Structure and Functioning of the Network

Members

The *Sustainable Cities: PLUS Network* will include from 35-45 cities and regions, from low, middle and high income countries. Visit our website to find out more about the *PLUS Network* cities (www.sustainablecities.net). In 2008 it was agreed to open membership to relevant associations as well as municipal councils. This will be considered on an individual case basis.

Secretariat

The Sustainable Cities Foundation is the Secretariat for the *Network*. The Sustainable Cities Foundation is a not-for-profit organization with charitable status headquartered in Vancouver, Canada and is governed by an independent Board of Directors. The Secretariat provides leadership, receives and administers funds, issues charitable tax receipts, enters into contracts on behalf of the *Network*, and has fiduciary responsibility. Visit our website to find out more about Sustainable Cities (www.sustainablecities.net).

Steering Committee

The *Sustainable Cities: PLUS Network* Steering Committee collaborates with the Secretariat to support the engagement and shared learning amongst *Network* members. The Steering Committee works continuously to strengthen the objectives and operations of the *PLUS Network* and promote team building amongst members. The Steering Committee is currently made up of nine city representatives who meet by conference call on a regular basis.

International Panel of Advisors (IPA)

An IPA exists to serve the *Sustainable Cities: PLUS Network* by contributing subject matter expertise and promoting the *Network* and its results. This 'virtual panel' is co-chaired by The Honourable Michael Harcourt, former Mayor of Vancouver and Premier of British Columbia, and Elizabeth Dowdeswell, former Under-Secretary General and Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Program. The Honorary Patron is the Honourable Lloyd Axworthy, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada.

Financing of the Network

The *PLUS Network* is supported by contributions from the public and private sectors, membership fees, foundations and consulting or administrative fees. The Government of Canada is an important supporter of the *Sustainable Cities: PLUS Network*.

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