

America's 25 Greenest Cities

Earth Day was celebrated Friday, but how does your city fare the other 364 days of the year? The Daily Beast crunches the numbers to determine the 25 cities with the greenest citizens.

The country went green this past weekend, on the heels of Earth Day on Friday. Sacramento held a concert in Southside Park supported by dozens of local groups, organizers in San Francisco, among other things, held a cleanup in Dolores Park, while in New York City an expo of cultural and technological innovations related to the environment was held in Grand Central Terminal.

Beyond these weekend-long events, Earth Day also coincided with a flurry of green-friendly, long-term initiatives. CityBus in Lafayette, Indiana, broke ground on a wind-power project that will provide electricity through wind turbines to city bus facilities, while in Seattle the King County Department of Transportation announced it would add 25 electric vehicles to its fleet in 2011.

Given all the environmental focus, The Daily Beast wanted to find out where cities stand on their green record the rest of the year, beyond Earth Day. To find the greenest cities with 100,000 or more people, we looked at citizen behavior across five categories, each weighted equally, with the final ranking determined by a comparison of each city's performance compared to the average for each category:

Do citizens not just think green, but also behave green in their day-to-day lives? Using current behavioral survey data measuring the percent of people in each city that put their green beliefs into action, from market research firm Experian Simmons, we took a look at:

Average trips taken on public transport each weekday, with fourth-quarter 2010 data from the American Public Transportation Association, a nonprofit that advocates on behalf of 343 transit systems.

The percent of homes that use solar energy for heating, with data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

The percent of people who make a conscious effort to recycle.

Finally, in the antithesis of the first category, cities were brought down in the rankings based on the percentage of people who are willing to admit to no concern or consciousness of environmental issues, with current survey data from Experian Simmons.

"America's 25 Greenest Cities," The Daily Beast (April 24, 2011) www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2011/04/24/americas-greenest-cities-new-york-las-vegas-san-francisco-and-more.print.html. Accessed 15 Mar. 2012.

1. New York, NY
2. Las Vegas, NV
3. San Francisco, CA
4. Washington, DC
5. Albuquerque, NM
6. Boston, MA

7. GAINESVILLE, FL

Residents that think and act eco-consciously: 34%
Residents that are not eco-conscious: 15%
Residents that recycle: 63%
Average weekday trips on public transportation: 45,000
Homes with solar heating: 0.06%

8. Chicago, IL
9. Philadelphia, PA
10. Baltimore, MD
11. San Diego, CA
12. Santa Barbara, CA
13. Los Angeles, CA
14. Tucson, AZ
15. Portland, OR
16. Lafayette, IN
17. Casper, WY
18. Colorado Springs, CO
19. Seattle, WA
20. Denver, CO
21. Grand Junction, CO
22. Medford, OR
23. Madison, WI
24. Reno, NV
25. Missoula, MT

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