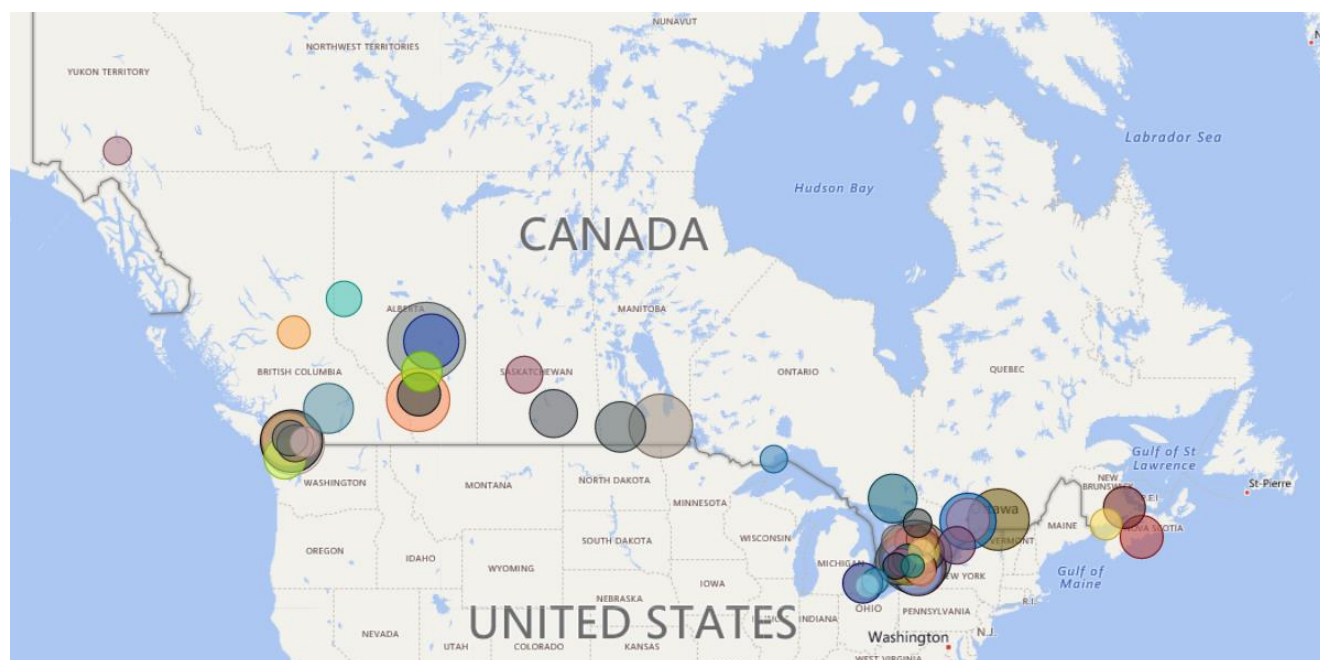# Canada's Top 20 Most Open Cities Announced for 2017

Open Cities Index Top 20 Cities

2017 Rank	Change in rank from 2016	Municipality	Overall		Readiness		Implementation		Impact	
			Score	%	Score	%	Score	%	Score	%
1	⇔	Edmonton	147.72	98%	25	100%	98.33	98%	24.39	98%
2	⇔	Toronto	135.08	90%	21.88	88%	91.25	91%	21.95	88%
3	7↑	Winnipeg	110.25	74%	16.41	66%	75.56	76%	18.29	73%
4	⇔	Calgary	109.02	73%	21.09	84%	69.03	69%	18.90	76%
5	⇔	Surrey	107.72	72%	14.84	59%	76.11	76%	16.77	67%
6	6↑	New Westminster	106.33	71%	21.09	84%	66.94	67%	18.29	73%
7	4↓	Montréal	105.46	70%	19.53	78%	64.58	65%	21.34	85%
8	10↑	Brampton	92.52	62%	17.97	72%	60.83	61%	13.72	55%
9	5↑	Niagara Region	91.10	61%	18.75	75%	53.75	54%	18.60	74%
10	2↓	Ottawa	90.35	60%	9.38	38%	68.47	68%	12.50	50%
11	5↓	Strathcona County	87.78	59%	19.53	78%	56.67	57%	11.59	46%
12	5↓	Vancouver	80.89	54%	7.03	28%	61.67	62%	12.20	49%
13	16↑	Brandon	75.02	50%	10.94	44%	49.44	49%	14.63	59%
14	22↑	York Region	74.11	49%	16.41	66%	40.56	41%	10.06	40%
15	-	Kamloops	73.73	49%	3.91	16%	60.14	60%	16.77	67%
16	1↓	Mississauga	72.42	48%	19.53	78%	39.17	39%	13.72	55%
17	6↓	Oakville	72.37	48%	14.06	56%	44.58	45%	13.72	55%
18	30↑	Burlington	71.00	47%	17.19	69%	42.22	42%	11.59	46%
19	-	Greater Sudbury	70.77	47%	17.19	69%	42.92	43%	10.67	43%
20	37↑	Welland	69.51	46%	6.25	25%	53.19	53%	10.06	40%
		National Average	**54.16**	**43%**	**10.73**	**43%**	**34.03**	**34%**	**9.40**	**38%**

Today, Public Sector Digest (PSD) in partnership with Canada's Open Data Exchange (ODX) announced the 2017 Open Cities Index results. Now in its third year, the Open Cities Index launched in 2015 as Canada's first study to benchmark municipal open data initiatives across the country. The 2015 edition of the Open Cities Index included 34 of Canada's largest municipalities, with the City of Edmonton securing the number one spot in the inaugural ranking. This year, the Open Cities Index includes 61 municipalities, with 9 brand new participating communities. For the third year in a row, the City of Edmonton has grabbed the top spot in the Open Cities Index ranking, claiming once again the title of "Canada's Most Open City."

Open Cities Index Participating Municipalities – 2017

THE 2017 OPEN CITIES INDEX TOP 20

For the third year in a row, the **City of Edmonton** has been named Canada's most open city, with the **City of Toronto** retaining its second place ranking. The **City of Winnipeg** has climbed seven positions from 10th in 2016 to third in 2017. The 2017 Top 20 list includes two municipalities brand new to the Index: **Kamloops** and **Greater Sudbury**, coming in 15th and 19th respectively. The **City of Welland**, Ontario, with a population of 52,293, earned the "Most Improved" accolade this year, climbing 37 spots in the ranking from 57th in 2016 to 20th in 2017. The 2017 Top 20 list includes 10 municipalities from Ontario, four from British Columbia, three from Alberta, two from Manitoba, and one from Quebec.

New this year, PSD recognized the top municipalities from four population categories: 0-50,000, 50,001-100,000, 100,001-250,000, 250,000+. With municipalities of different sizes having varying capacities to advance their open data initiatives, it is important to recognize the impressive work being done in the open data space, despite limited resources. The top ranking community in the large municipality category (250,000+) is of course the **City of Edmonton** with 932,546 residents. The top ranking municipality in the second population category (100,001-250,000) is the **Town of Oakville**, ON, with a population of 193,832 and an overall rank of 17th. In the third population category (50,001-100,000), the **City of New Westminster**, BC, with a population of 70,996, secured the top spot and an overall ranking of 6th. Finally, in the smallest population category (0-50,000), the City of Brandon, MB, with a population of 48,859 scored the highest ranking (13th overall). PSD also recognized the **Regional Municipality of Niagara** as the highest scoring upper-tier municipality in the 2017 ranking, rising from 14th to 9th this year. Upper-tier local governments (counties and regions) have differing responsibilities and often more limited access to certain data sets compared to lower-tier or single-tier municipalities.

Edmonton, as Canada's Most Open City, received a score of **98%** overall for its open data program. With an Open Data Committee that meets monthly, a strategic open data plan in place, and an open data policy to govern its activities, Edmonton has a strong foundation for its open data program. Edmonton has published online, up-to-date, freely available, machine-readable, automated datasets that are linked to APIs under all but three of the 36 categories of datasets included in the Open Cities Index. In 2017, four new datasets were added to the list of eligible scored datasets (HR data, safety data, street tree data, and culture data) – Edmonton includes all four in its open data portal.

Edmonton has also made advancements to better ascertain the impact of its open data initiative internally and across the community. City of Edmonton staff are encouraged to use the municipality's open data portal directly, reducing the time it takes to request information across business areas. As of June 2017, 4,235 City of Edmonton staff were using the portal, with 54,171 dataset and visualization views. Just one example of the positive external impact of Edmonton's open data program is the local start-up TruHome – a real estate firm that utilizes Edmonton's open data to allow private citizens to make better informed decisions about the cities and houses they choose to call home. The machine readable data downloaded from data.edmonton.ca feeds an interactive assessment tool allowing users to identify their ideal neighbourhood based on proximity to amenities, schools and other selection criteria. As the host of the 2017 Canadian Open Data Summit (CODS) in June, Edmonton continues to lead Canadian cities into uncharted open data waters, exploring new approaches to old problems and finding innovative ways to build community engagement in its open data program.

TruHome property search draws from Edmonton's open data portal to display nearby amenities

NATIONAL TRENDS

The overall average score for the 61 participating municipalities was **43%** for 2017, up from **27%** in 2016. In 2015, when the Public Sector Digest (PSD) first launched the Open Cities Index, Canadian municipalities were reluctant to talk about their open data initiatives. With little concept of how mature their open data programs were compared to one another, municipal open data leaders shied away from discussing their strategies, challenges and best practices. Today, there is a noticeable change in the attitude toward open data programs across local governments. No longer is open data simply a pet project of a single staff member seeking buy-in from his or her colleagues. For many local governments, open data is now a strategic priority, and project teams are being created to encourage cross-departmental participation.

Municipalities of all sizes continue the push to publish more, high quality, diverse datasets. In 2016, an average of **79 datasets** were published by our participating municipalities, rising to an average of **97 datasets** per municipality in 2017. The national average of **24 percent** in the Implementation category of the Index has risen to **34 percent** in 2017, with the average in the Readiness category climbing from **34 percent** to **43 percent**. In the Impact category, the average rose from **35 percent** to **38 percent** in 2017.

BACKGROUND

The Open Cities Index serves as a supplementary guide for cities looking to initiate or advance their open data programs. Until now, municipalities have lacked a reference point for what types of data to make available to the public, in what format, and at what frequency. The Open Cities Index measures the readiness, implementation, and impact of the participating cities' open data initiatives:

1) *Readiness:* To what extent is the municipality ready/capable of fostering positive outcomes through its open data initiative?
2) *Implementation*: To what extent has the city fulfilled its open data goals and ultimately, what data has it posted online?
3) *Impact*: To what extent has the posted data been used, what benefits has the city accrued as a result of its open data program, and to what extent is the city capable of measuring the impact?

The implementation section of the Index scores a municipality against the availability of 36 identified datasets, with 11 variables assessing the quality of the data, including whether the data is machine readable, available for free, and up to date. In establishing the Open Cities Index, PSD first reviewed all relevant open data literature including studies from across Europe and North America. A methodology for the Index was then developed by applying elements of the following initiatives to the local government context in Canada: The Open Data Barometer created by the World Wide Web Foundation, POPSIS (Pricing of Public Sector Information Study) conducted by the European Commission, McKinsey Global Institute's Open Data Study, and OKFN's Open Data Census.

The full 2017 Open Cities Index methodology can be found here.

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QUOTE

"The 2017 Top 20 Most Open Cities are raising the bar for municipal innovation, transparency, and accountability – not only in Canada, but around the world. Open data has the power to not only contribute to new ideas and tools, but it can increase government efficiency and strengthen community engagement efforts. Municipalities of all sizes in Canada are continuing to make open data a priority, putting limited resources to work for the benefit of their respective communities."

- Tyler Sutton, Editor-in-Chief, Public Sector Digest

ABOUT PUBLIC SECTOR DIGEST

The Public Sector Digest is a monthly digital and quarterly print publication written to advance the managerial capacity of Canada's public sector. PSD's research activities and content, including articles, case studies, webinars, and white papers, focus exclusively on topics pertinent to current and future executives across all government levels and disciplines. Its network of researchers and authors spans 20 countries, across six continents, and comprises highly accomplished specialists and academics from hundreds of world-class organizations and government agencies.

ABOUT CANADA'S OPEN DATA EXCHANGE – Founding partner of the Open Cities Index

ODX is a public-private-academic partnership based in Waterloo Region serving all of Canada. The initiative presents an opportunity for entrepreneurs to multi-national companies to be a global leader in the commercialization of open data. Founding partners include University of Waterloo, D2L (Desire2Learn), CDMN (Canadian Digital Media Network), OpenText and Communitech— with funds matched by the Government of Canada.