The Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize is named after Singapore’s first Prime Minister, Mr Lee was instrumental in developing Singapore into a distinctive, clean and green garden city in a short span of a few decades. Under his leadership, the adoption of strategic land use, transport and environmental policies and programmes have helped Singapore to develop into a liveable city with a high quality living environment, in tandem with rapid economic growth.

The Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize is co-organised by the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Singapore (URA) and the Centre for Liveable Cities (CLC).

To facilitate the sharing of best practices in urban solutions that are easily replicable across cities, the Prize will place an emphasis on practical and cost effective solutions and ideas, for the benefit of cities around the world. Through this prize, Singapore hopes to promote exemplary thought-leadership and exchange of ideas among cities, so as to spur further innovation in the area of sustainable urban development.

The Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize Laureate will be presented with an award certificate, a gold medallion and a cash prize of S$300,000, sponsored by Keppel Corporation.
The city recognised that its relentless pursuit of economic success over a relatively short period of time was at the expense of quality of life, which could make the city lose its appeal quickly. Seoul overcame this through its election of successive visionary leaders in the 2000s who demonstrated strong political will to take on these challenges, and displayed foresight to implement a series of catalytic projects – such as Dongdaemun Area Regeneration to shift Seoul’s focus from traditional manufacturing to design – that would bring about benefits for the entire city.

The city leaders understood that proper communication under the new circumstances was the way forward to achieve buy-in from both the people and stakeholders. Through rigorous engagement and negotiation with conflicting parties representing various interests including traffic disturbance, business losses, and historic restoration, the city formulated a set of conflict management strategies, which eventually led to a dedicated team of negotiators within the Seoul Metropolitan Government today and became the city’s “modus operandi” in urban development projects. These strategies help the city achieve impactful and effective results, and in turn win over even the most reluctant citizens over time, and align their aspirations with the city’s vision.

The Seoul Master Plan 2030 is a highly remarkable turning point in the city’s planning processes. Under the inspiring leadership of Mayor Park Won-soon, the city made the bold move to make citizen participation the norm of all plans, and bottom-up processes its primary focus. Ground-up processes are incorporated in day-to-day operations under the Community Governance Project where residents are given a say over local issues that affect their communities directly. Citizens can also decide the use of up to 5% of the entire city budget (or 55.5 million KRW) under the Public Participatory Budget System. Through regular monitoring and publishing of results in the press, and its exemplary use of big data in its decision-making to focus even on minute details, the city has ensured utmost transparency to its citizenry; no one is left out. The city not only managed to build trust with the citizens, but also assured them that engagement is not merely a token gesture, but one that will truly shape and reshape the future of the city.

Seoul, particularly in its urban core areas, demonstrates boldness in shifting away from car-oriented transportation to people-centric spaces, a challenge that many cities are struggling with today. Seoul recognises that the transition from private cars to mass transit is not an overnight task and tackles this through a comprehensive set of measures and the use of big data, to make public transport as seamless and convenient as possible.

Most notably, through the reclamation of public spaces for people from cars, such as the removal of an elevated highway to restore the former stream at Cheonggyecheon, the pedestrianisation of Yonsei-ro, and the conversion of the Seoul Station Overpass into Seoullo 7017 – a 1 kilometre-long lushly planted elevated walkway with pockets of activities along the way, the city sends a strong signal that the future of the city is one where people come first, not cars.

As megacities continue to mature and age, deterioration of its urban infrastructure is inevitable. Seoul is highly innovative in its approach to rejuvenate its modern heritage and is constantly seeking creative ways to inject vibrancy and a breath of fresh air into its urban environment, which the city termed as “development without demolition”. The projects Makercity Sewoon – a rehabilitation of seven commercial superblocks built in the 1970s through the sensitive insertion of new interventions and uses, and Mapo Culture Depot – a conversion of disused oil tanks into a cultural venue and public space, offer new perspectives in repurposing infrastructure while preserving collective memories of the people.

As cities become larger and more difficult to manage, achieving social sustainability may be a much bigger challenge than extending economic and environmental sustainability. Should Seoul not have taken the bold and unusual step to make its citizens the creators of their own city plan, it could have further aggravated the already built-up tensions between the people and the government, and orchestrated its own decline. By turning the people into active participants of the city’s development, Seoul demonstrated that a truly bottom-up city is possible, where the citizens own their shared city.
MEDELLÍN tells the compelling story of a city which has transformed itself from a notoriously violent city to one that is being held up as a model for urban innovation within a span of just two decades. Today, Medellín is a city that celebrates life – resolute in its commitment to create a more just, more human, freer and happier home for its inhabitants.

Uncontrolled urban expansion had resulted in large expanses of informal settlements occupying the hills along the periphery of the urbanised zone. This is not a problem unique to Medellín; UN-Habitat estimates that by 2030, about 3 billion people, or 40% of the world’s population, will need proper housing and access to basic infrastructure such as water and sanitation systems. Medellín is thus representative of the global challenge facing many cities, especially in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The fact that the situation in Medellín was exacerbated by the drug-fuelled battles fought on the rooftops of its comunas only makes its transformation all the more exceptional.

Over a sustained period, a succession of leaders has demonstrated the willingness to recognise and take on deep-rooted problems – the wealth division, lack of equity and opportunities for its citizens that had allowed crime to overwhelm the city in the past – providing the much needed continuity for efforts to rehabilitate neighbourhoods and improve living conditions in the informal settlements. Working with limited resources, Medellín has devised alternative means of generating funds – the publicly-owned utilities company Empresas Públicas de Medellín (EPM) is a profitable entity that has successfully expanded operations beyond Colombian soil and channels about 30% of its annual profits to social investment projects – and implemented catalytic projects in strategic areas to bring about the greatest impact.

The creative and non-conventional solutions that include the world’s first cable car mass transport system, library parks that double as social nodes and urban escalators that improved mobility in hilly neighbourhoods earned Medellín a Special Mention in 2014. Since then, the city has continued its relentless pursuit for social equity, competitiveness and sustainability, introducing several other long-term projects that further demonstrate its commitment to improving living conditions for its inhabitants, especially for the disadvantaged segments of society.

The Circumvent Garden along the urban-rural edge of the mountain ridges seeks to simultaneously address several ecological, social and economic issues: control urban expansion and mitigate risks of landslides; improve the conditions of settlements; generate new public spaces; and connect the hillside and the city through multi-modal transport infrastructure, thereby improving accessibility to jobs and education. Local residents are equipped with skills that enable the community to be self-sufficient. The city goes on to take the unusual step to assess and legalise most of the informal housing units that were found to be structurally sound, removing the uncertainty that accompanies displacement without the need for heavy investments on relocation programmes, and giving residents a sense of dignity. The Unidades de Vida Articulada (UVA - Life Articulated Units) programme actively involved citizens in the building of sports, recreational and cultural venues, many of which are adapted from existing utility water tanks that occupied large plots of previously inaccessible land. These venues are translated into communal spaces hosting activities that are decided by the communities themselves, giving them ownership of their surroundings.

Social innovation is the key to effective governance in Medellín. The city aims to empower every member of society, giving them a stake in the city and in the process gaining public trust and confidence. The Good Start programme centred on early childhood education articulates the city’s commitment to invest in the future. Medellín has the needs of the people at the forefront of planning and policies and inculcated a culture of open dialogue and cooperation between government, private entities and the people. Proantioquia, a non-profit organisation of private businesses in the Antioquia region, serves as a platform for government and private companies to work together to formulate policies and execute initiatives, based upon the principles of social responsibility and fairness. By leveraging on co-creation and the collective inputs of its citizens, the city has managed to create meaningful interventions that are not necessary large in scale but are acutely sensitive to specific context, resulting in solutions that incisively address the most pressing needs of each area.

Medellín has come a long way from its past, sending a powerful signal that inclusive and collaborative governance can overturn even the most difficult circumstances. On the whole, what the city has achieved is not only an inspiration for cities looking to overcome similar challenges, but also provides many valuable lessons for all cities worldwide. However, its success is both remarkable and fragile. Successive city leaders need to build upon what had been put in place thus far; urban solutions and creation of jobs must continue to keep pace with growth in order to prevent the reappearance of past problems. As the wave of positive change that has swept Medellín settles, the city will have to manage the evolving expectations of its people. It is noted that key challenges remain, particularly the shortage of social housing, as well as the need for a clearer and cohesive urban plan at the metropolitan level to guide the development of the region. It is imperative that efforts to ensure the basic needs of citizens are met be sustained, for it is the message of hope that has given people unfettered belief and galvanised them to come together and steer Medellín in the right direction.
SUZHOU has undergone remarkable transformation over the past two decades. The significance of its transformation lies in the city’s success in meeting the multiple challenges of achieving economic growth in order to create jobs and a better standard of living for its people; balancing rapid urban growth with the need to protect its cultural and built heritage; and coping with a large influx of migrant workers while maintaining social stability.

Suzhou had initially benefitted from Singapore’s experience and contributions in the 1990s when it set up its first industrial estate and prepared a master plan of the industrial township and city centre. However, since then, Suzhou has independently put in place many initiatives that have propelled the city forward.

Firstly, it has successfully transitioned from an agricultural, manufacturing, export-oriented economy to an innovative, high-value, service-oriented economy. The city carried out proper planning and made deliberate efforts to invest in physical infrastructure to support its economic objectives. Coupled with a combination of innovative incentives and international marketing, the city has attracted key businesses from around the world to take shape in Suzhou Industrial Park and Jinji Lake Central Business District. The city continues to invest in needed infrastructure even as the city expands. For example, a new Metro system will serve the whole city and link its core with key industrial zones and other new development areas.

Secondly, Suzhou recognised the importance of cultural conservation at the city-wide level, even as the drive for modernisation gained momentum. In order to maintain and preserve Suzhou’s old city which comprised its historical and cultural core, Suzhou redirected urban growth pressures to a new Central Business District, a mixed-use centre for the 21st century. At the same time, the city continued to invest in its rich heritage, making it come alive for residents, small businesses, and tourists, as part of the continuation of the education and culture that has long been the hallmark of Suzhou. The UNESCO-designated regions, such as Pingjiang Historic District, are being preserved while continuing to serve as attractive neighbourhoods for its residents.

In its development of specific projects, Suzhou should be commended for continuous enhancement of the living environment. The Stone Lake District project is one such example. This district demonstrated Suzhou’s innovative social policies in the re-settlement of rural farmers to urban areas. Pig farming activities had to be relocated as these activities were contaminating the existing lake. The farmers were resettled in a short span of 4 months by utilising the innovative “1-for-3” relocation housing policy, where farmers were offered 3 units of urban housing in exchange for their 1 unit of farm residence. They are able to enjoy the first unit for themselves, the second unit for family members, and the third unit as income property. The city protected and made more accessible their water-rich landscape which is consistent with the Chinese value of ‘water’ forming linkages and connections between water and settlements.

Thirdly, a significant achievement of Suzhou is its inclusionary policies in the treatment of migrant workers. Faced with a surge of migrant workers flocking to the city for jobs, Suzhou’s economic growth is complemented by innovative social policies that advance community integration. Migrant workers are given equal opportunities to access health and education benefits as the local residents. These policies have facilitated the integration of workers into the city and brought about greater social stability.

Throughout the period of continuing rapid growth, Suzhou has maintained its specific and distinctive local identity and culture, creating a high quality of life for its residents and workers and attracting tourists to share in its past and future. However, in view of the rapid pace of development, it is noted that more attention could be given to the urban design of the city to guide individual development projects. In addition, quality architecture and more appropriate form massing of suitable human scale should be encouraged.

On the whole, the city leaders of Suzhou have demonstrated strong leadership and commitment to develop the city, guided by good governance and structured processes. The clearly articulated long-term vision and planning approach that Suzhou has put in place, combined with competent leadership and strong political support, have enabled the city to tackle urban challenges effectively. Suzhou provides many good lessons for the many rapidly urbanising cities in China as well as in other developing nations.
NEW YORK CITY is recognised for the strategic orchestrating of its remarkable transformation over the last decade. 2001 was a traumatic point in which the city suffered a sense of loss and uncertainty. Under the then-Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg's visionary leadership, New York City faced that adversity by defining a bold vision for its future, such that within years the city had not only recovered but had grown better than before.

Embracing its complexity, density and diversity, the city witnessed a marked increase in the quality of life in a short span of time. Building on the foundation of crime reduction and other urban initiatives of earlier administrations, the leadership of then-Mayor Bloomberg and his commissioners has altered the landscape and notably renewed confidence and optimism among New Yorkers for their city’s future.

NewYorkCity's successful reinvention and rejuvenation is framed by the effective and efficient implementation of the actions set out in PlaNYC – a holistic and interdisciplinary blueprint for a greater and greener New York. This forward-looking set of interdependent strategies charts the city's future to 2030 by integrating disciplines such as landuse planning, transportation investment, environmental stewardship, and public health in one document.

It addresses the challenges of accommodating another 1 million residents and new 21st-century jobs to the city’s population and workforce, renewing the city's physical infrastructure, and preparing for climate change.

PlaNYC's comprehensive set of strategies, while focused on outcomes for the year 2030, also sets specific short-term milestones for intended progress on a variety of metrics, ranging from numbers of trees planted, hectares of contaminated land remediated, and benchmarking for energy efficiency to improvements in air and water quality. Many of these initiatives cumulatively contribute toward the overarching goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 30% below 2005 levels by 2030. Progress on all initiatives, and this overall goal, is measured and publicly published each year.

Recognising the importance of improving existing urban systems and creating new public infrastructure at the citywide level to secure its future, the city takes the lead in strategic capital investment as an imperative to generate catalytic benefits for the city.

Today, more than 700 acres (283ha) of parks and 450 km of bicycle lanes have been installed. Specific examples include the reuse and repurposing of the city's industrial waterfront into a dynamic and sustainable park, as embodied in Brooklyn Bridge Park.

By demonstrating a high level of commitment and capital investment, business confidence has been boosted and has, in turn, restored citizens' faith in their city. The decision to legislate PlaNYC for review every four years to chart the city's future further displays exemplary foresight. Institutionalising key processes and mandating their continual measurement ensures longevity of the plan and that strategic objectives will be met over the long-run.

The then-administration is highly commended for the strong political will that is spearheading change in the city and in the mindset of its residents. The capacity for dialogue between government and civic groups also synergises efforts and allows creative ideas to take root. This is exemplified in bottom-up, high-impact initiatives such as the High Line, where neighbourhoods are renewed and beneficial effects stimulate the city's economy.

Underutilised spaces and roads have also been carefully transformed, with limited funds, into plazas for the public's enjoyment. Partnerships with community and business groups not only helped to maintain the spaces but fostered a sense of ownership. This has significantly lifted the quality of life in an urban environment.

The city's transformation is a testament to the dynamic leadership of then-Mayor Bloomberg and the departments of Transportation, City Planning and Parks & Recreation, as well as other city agencies, and to the dedicated partnership between the city and its stakeholders to implement a shared vision for the city.

It serves as an inspiring model for other mature, high-density global cities to reframe their future in terms of sustainability and offers many innovative and replicable solutions for cities around the world.
BILBAO CITY HALL has been instrumental in regenerating and transforming the city of Bilbao from an obsolete and dilapidated industrial city into a knowledge-based economy. The success of Bilbao is largely attributed to its integrated and holistic approach to achieving economic, social and physical transformations. Its emphasis on environmental clean-up, use of culture, internationalisation and design, and major improvements to its infrastructure, as well as the restoration of its historic areas over 25 years have successfully rejuvenated the city.

More significantly, the city was able to connect investment in infrastructure with social integration. The river, which was once a physical and social barrier, is now a hub for social and cultural integration, and a centre for innovation and creativity.

The jury is particularly impressed with the establishment of Bilbao Ria 2000 as an effective framework to align government, business and the community towards a shared vision for the city. Bilbao Ria 2000 is a testimony to the importance of strong leadership and institutionalised processes in key decision making and sustained implementation.

Bilbao is also an exemplary city that continually reinvents itself and evolves amidst dynamic changes, and will serve as an inspiration to cities worldwide. The experience of Bilbao as a comprehensive “city project”, incrementally executed through 25 urban projects over 25 years, has achieved a profound transformation of the city. The city has improved its environment and quality of life significantly, strengthened its social cohesiveness and cultural vibrancy, and also increased its economic competitiveness.

It is noted that the key factors underlying the success of Bilbao’s transformation are more than the “Guggenheim Effect”. It is not about achieving urban transformation and economic and social vibrancy through a few iconic buildings. Rather, Bilbao has shown that strong leadership and a commitment to a systematic and long-term plan, based on solid processes and supporting infrastructure, are key factors to the success of a city’s transformation.
HAMBURG is recognised as an extraordinary port city that has overcome planning challenges to become an attractive and welcoming city of opportunities for a population that now includes a growing number of immigrants. It has very effectively evolved from previous conventional practice of urban expansion on the fringe through the successful implementation of its inner city densification strategy to cater to increased demand for housing and urban mobility from its growing population.

The new HafenCity is an excellent demonstration of this strategy. The former underused harbour and industrial space located next to the historical Speicherstadt warehouse district has been transformed from a dilapidated area into a dynamic mix-use district of urban housing, workplaces and recreation areas. Recognising that built heritage is an important aspect that adds to the quality of life in an ever-changing environment, the city placed great emphasis on the urban design of the new district to relate to the old city, and to align vistas with the spires of the old churches while also sensitively providing protection against flooding and rising waters.

Former First Mayor Olaf Scholz is instrumental in the city’s drive towards affordable housing for different segments of the population, and the creation of an especially attractive city for the young. Major residential development projects consist of three equal parts: one-third social housing, one-third condominiums, and one-third privately-funded rental housing. In Altona, a soon-to-be defunct rail yard is making way for new housing, simultaneously enhancing intercity train service while also linking neighbourhoods that had previously been divided by the rail lines.

Hamburg’s strategy of inclusiveness is exemplary. The city’s culture of cooperation is characterised by public-private partnerships realising many housing and transportation projects, and complemented by a citizen participation process that acknowledges its people as key stakeholders and drivers of change. Extensive communication with citizens, involving even young children, from the very early stages of planning have devised holistic solutions that bring about greater benefits; for instance, the Autobahndeckel evolved from conventional traffic noise protection walls to landscaped decks that goes beyond its original purpose to reconnect existing parks while adding new gardens spaces for the city’s inhabitants. Hamburg’s inclusiveness extends to its immigrants and refugees. Under a comprehensive integration programme launched in 2013, newcomers are given the best possible support to overcome the barriers that normally impede their assimilation. This allows them to become positive contributors as quickly as possible, with the potential to achieve German citizenship.

Hamburg is also commendable for its push towards sustainable urban development through the ongoing conversion of its transportation system to one based on renewable energy and its innovative initiative “switch”, which intend to reduce private car usage through the introduction of alternative mobility options at key transportation nodes.

With excellent urban initiatives creating a conducive environment for its inhabitants and imbuing the city with an uplifting spirit, Hamburg stands out as an exemplary model for other cities who are looking for ways to enhance economic competitiveness through education, workforce support, and high quality of life.

KAZAN is recognised for its impressive turnaround from a formerly drab city with youth criminal gang and poor public health problems into a healthy city now known for sports and social and religious harmony. Under the highly commendable leadership of Mayor Ilsur Metshin, the city recognises that its people are the city’s most valuable asset and has invested strategically in sports, medicine, nutrition, and family life to improve Kazan’s overall quality of life.

The city has leveraged international sporting events such as the 2013 Summer Universiade to brand itself as the sporting capital of Russia, and has constructed a range of sporting infrastructure, which benefited its people after the events as part of the city’s push for wider adoption of sports and wellbeing. The Department of Food and Social Catering of Kazan – the largest food industry operator in the Republic of Tatarstan – caters meals for some 265,000 people including schools and hospitals, ensuring good nutrition to its people. The Kazan Family Centre is an institution that promotes family life by celebrating marriage life and multiple births, and organises social activities for families. Through these initiatives, the city has seen dramatic improvements in the city’s quality of life: over the last 9 years, birth-rates increased by 2 times, abortion rates decreased by 40%, and crime rates decreased by 2 times.

Kazan is highly remarkable as a city of diverse cultures, comprising 115 different nationalities, 36 national cultural organisations, 180 religious communities, and 9,000 foreign students. Most notably, the city’s population is made up of approximately 50% orthodox Christians and 50% Muslims living in peaceful co-existence. The friendship and respect for one another’s individual beliefs demonstrated amongst the Kazan people makes it a model city of respect for ethnic and religious diversity, and sends a powerful message to the rest of the world that civil, racial and religious harmony is achievable and sustainable.

Kazan is also commendable for taking the lead among Russian cities in embracing innovation. The city capitalises on its youth, as seen in its young leadership, and is committed to bringing new ideas that could catalyse positive change. Kazan is one of the host cities for the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia, as well as the host for the 2019 WorldSkills Competition. These events provide the impetus for infrastructural upgrades and urban development that will benefit the everyday life of its residents.

The development of the embankment of the Kaban Lake and the rehabilitation of Lebyazhye Lake are also positive examples to show how Kazan creatively improves the city through landscaping, while providing new recreational areas and opportunities for the people.

Kazan is also notable for its economic growth, with its focus on education, workforce support, and high quality of life. The Department of Education, in collaboration with local universities and employers, has focused on developing a skilled workforce and promoting lifelong learning. The city’s strategic investment in education, workforce support, and high quality of life has contributed to its growth as a dynamic and creative place to live and work.

The Kazan Family Centre is an exemplary model for other cities who are looking for ways to enhance economic competitiveness through education, workforce support, and high quality of life. The centre provides a range of services, including childcare, education, and family support, to promote the well-being of children and families. Kazan is also noteworthy for its multi-cultural and multi-religious society, which is made up of approximately 50% orthodox Christians and 50% Muslims living in peaceful co-existence.

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SPECIAL MENTION 2018

SURABAYA

SURABAYA is an emerging city that is commended for its strong appreciation of culture and for taking a bold urban development strategy to preserve and develop its kampung neighbourhoods, instead of displacing them, while also experiencing rapid economic growth.

The comprehensive ‘Kampung Improvement Programme’ successfully brought together strong community support and participation from the citizens to collaborate closely with the local government in transforming the kampungs into clean, conducive, and productive environments. The initiative is also an inspiring model for alleviating poverty through which the city provided professional training to improve the villagers’ in-house production of food and crafts for sale, made available cheap credit by the national government, and prepared the market to absorb the products.

The ‘Kampung Unggulan’ (Prominent Kampung) and ‘Pahlawan Ekonomi’ (Economy Hero) programmes, and community-based waste management measures such as recycling, composting and waste bank helped to formalise and improve the economic status of the lower income settlements, transforming their subsistence economy into urban economy, while also promoting home-based entrepreneurship.

Mayor Tri Rismaharini is instrumental in the city’s achievements and transformation. She is widely acknowledged for her inclusive and people-centric urban development approach to advance Surabaya from an unattractive city into a clean, green and thriving metropolis with improved quality of life. Surabaya has successfully mustered many innovative ground-up initiatives by harnessing businesses and citizens to make modest attempts at improving the environment, creating jobs and managing urban waste.

The city government has placed great importance on citizenry participation and building trust and worked closely with the local universities in seeking policy advice and implementation of its initiatives.

Surabaya’s strong drive to promote greening in the city deserves praise. The city constantly seeks innovative and creative ways despite limited resources to achieve its vision, exemplified by partnering with the private sector in the development and maintenance of green spaces and environmental improvement works. Today there are about 100 active parks in Surabaya, and the green open space has reached more than 20% of the city area.

Surabaya efforts to promote inclusive learning and develop the young population are exemplary. With 35% of the city’s annual budget allocated for education, the city has improved the literacy level of the community through providing free education for the under-privileged, setting up reading corners and mobile libraries across the city and in the parks, and offering free computer classes and foreign language training to its residents.

The involvement and commitment of both the people and the Mayor working closely together for a better quality of life, is clearly felt through the palpable vibrancy of the kampungs. Surabaya has distinguished itself as a forward-looking emerging city and is an inspiration to other cities in developing economies who are looking to learn from a well-managed city now characterised by economic growth, social harmony, and environmental sustainability.

TOKYO

TOKYO is recognised as an exemplary megacity that works. Everything across the city is well managed despite its large and seemingly un governable size. Through the conscientious implementation of the city’s urban blueprint first developed in 2001 and updated in 2016, Tokyo has transformed from its low period of the 90s following the burst of Japan’s economic bubble to the highly efficient, liveable, and vibrant city one experiences today.

The credit for the achievements goes to both the government, as well as the enlightened private sector who took it upon themselves to contribute towards the greater good for citizens as part of their larger social responsibility.

Tokyo displayed prescient foresight in recognising that good public infrastructure is critical to support the growing metropolis and that it epitomises the Japanese concept of “kaizen” through its long-term provision of, and continuous investment in, its public transportation network over 60 years to ensure its contemporary efficiency and success. The results are evident: in most parts of central Tokyo, it only takes 5 to 10 minutes on foot to reach the nearest train station, while the city’s train modal share within its 23 Special Wards is at an impressive 48% - higher than any other city in the world. At the same time, despite its growing population, the city reduced its train congestion rate from 221% in 1975 to 164% in 2015.

Tokyo is highly commendable for its exceptional public-private partnership model over the long term which has produced huge successes for the city. The city overcomes its governance and budget limitations by leveraging the enlightened private sector with the capability and talents to deliver high quality urban development projects.

As Tokyo moves towards hosting the Tokyo Summer Olympics 2020, it has in place a planned vision for the future toward which the city is working. Under the Action Plan 2020, the city focuses on three aspects: “Safe City”, “Diverse City”, and “Smart City” to make the city resilient, accommodating, and open to broader collaborations to meet future challenges.

Governor Yuriko Koike is an inspiration for her leadership, as seen in her drive for inclusiveness by focusing and capitalising on the planning for Paralympic Games, to step up the city’s barrier-free efforts. In doing so, Tokyo is preparing itself for the future as its population ages, an initiative from which other cities facing similar aging issues can learn.
**SPECIAL MENTIONS 2016**

**AUCKLAND** is recognised for overcoming its planning challenges over the last 20 years through a highly integrated and innovative governance model to bring about urban transformation in one of the world’s most distant cities. The city is highly commended for its social integration of its first-peoples, and dramatically improving its urban environment through significant design-led initiatives.

**SYDNEY** is recognised for its demonstration of strong leadership, relentless commitment and high level of collaboration with its citizens and stakeholders in tackling urban challenges. Despite political limitations, the city is commendable for effectively orchestrating its remarkable urban transformation through its ‘Sustainable Sydney 2030’ – the city’s shared long-term vision.

**TORONTO** is recognised for its outstanding social integration strategies, and reversing the trend of suburban sprawl through the revitalising of its city centre over the past 40 years – a result of long-term visioning backed by a committed civil service, public and private organisations and a people that embraces its diversity.

**VIENNA** is recognised as an excellent example of a very old city that has successfully transformed itself into a highly liveable, innovative and green city, while protecting its rich heritage, especially in its well-maintained historical city centre. Vienna’s long-term commitment to environmental conservation sends an important environmental message to other cities around the world.

**SPECIAL MENTIONS 2014**

**MEDELLÍN** is recognised for its outstanding urban transformation over the past 20 years, notably the significant reduction of homicide rates. This is achieved through bold and visionary leadership, and social innovation to tackle some of the city’s most critical issues.

**YOKOHAMA** is recognised for overcoming urban challenges through excellent partnership with its citizens and stakeholders. The city has successfully established its own identity as a liveable, relatively affordable and family-friendly city by tapping on the internationalisation of the region and excellent transport networks.

**SPECIAL MENTIONS 2012**

**AHMEDABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION** is recognised for its early successes in implementing a comprehensive City Development Plan, facilitating transformation to a more liveable, equitable and sustainable metropolis with a dynamic multi-sector economy and an emerging auto-hub.

**AHT GROUP AG & SUN DEVELOPMENT** are recognised for their exceptional merit in running on a daily basis the comprehensive Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading (VPUU) Programme in the Township of Khayelitsha, Cape Town, South Africa.

**BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL’S URBAN RENEWAL AGENCY** is recognised for its significant role in transforming a ‘country town’ blighted by economic stagnation, sprawl and urban decay into an economically, culturally and physically vibrant metropolis.

**COPENHAGEN & MALMÖ** are jointly recognised for their close collaboration at government and business levels, and shared vision of a holistic set of economic, environmental and socially sustainable goals.

**VANCOUVER** is recognised for its exemplary demonstration of strong visioning, community values and long-term planning. The city embarked on an inner-city densification process supported by innovative planning, which has contributed to a more liveable and vibrant city life.

**SPECIAL MENTIONS 2010**

**MELBOURNE** is recognised for its integrated approach and commitment to strategic planning in the last 30–40 years, from the 1974 Strategy Plan, to more recent Future Melbourne plans, projecting Melbourne’s urban development into the next 30 years.

**DR JAIME LERNER** is recognised for his achievements, particularly as mayor of Curitiba and as governor of the state of Paraná. He is widely credited for pioneering innovative and impactful urban solutions during his term in office.

**MRS SHEILA DIKSHIT** is recognised for her notable implementations in improving the living environment of the National Capital Territory of Delhi. She mustered the masses to implement several project-based initiatives that led to an improvement in quality of life.