

U.S. NEWS



America's 20 Can-Do Capitals

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Moodboard-Corbis

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Economic experts fear a 50 percent chance of a new recession, but some parts of the country still have it going on. From business development to sustainability, livability to transportation and infrastructure, Newsweek offers a glimpse not just of how our nation's 200 largest cities are performing across these categories, but how they're progressing.

The largest 200 cities in the United States were on the hook for a maximum of 25 points for each category, for a total possible score of 100. Differences in the yearly ranges of data used are due to data availability.

For sustainability we took into account 2008 county emissions data from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for 13 major air pollutants, with total emissions divided by population to determine a final carbon footprint; we also took into account the change in total park acreage from 2008 to 2009 with data from the Trust for Public Land, and the percent change in LEED-certified buildings from 2006–08 to 2009–11 with data from the U.S. Green Buildings Council.

For livability we considered the change in the percent of people with health care from 2008 to 2009 and the change in the percentage of people over 25 with at least a bachelor's degree, both with data from the U.S. Census Bureau. We also considered the change in cost of living from 2005 to 2009, with data from Moody's.

For transportation and infrastructure we looked at the momentum of new construction via the percent change in new building permits from 2005 to 2010, and we looked at how people travel with the percent change in people who take public transportation or walk to work from 2007 to 2009, both with data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

For business development we considered the change in