

# San Francisco vs Amsterdam in green city rivalry

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"It is cities and regions that need to take leadership," San Francisco mayor Gavin Newsom said from Bangalore during a Cisco-orchestrated

teleconference with reporters on multiple continents.

"We are laboratories of innovation; that is what cities are all about."

[Amsterdam](#) launched an online Urban EcoMap that lets people see how kind they and their neighbors are being to the planet by recycling, conserving energy, and other actions.

San Francisco's EcoMap went live on Earth Day in May of this year.

"We wanted to create a competitive spirit," Newsom said.

"It has been extraordinarily well received. I am very enthusiastic now that Amsterdam is taking that baton and we can create a global competition of sorts and motivate innovations."

The map lets people use the Internet to see how well their neighborhoods are doing as compared to others. With the launch of an Amsterdam EcoMap, there is an online tool to measure whether it or San Francisco is "greener."

"I really hope that other cities will use it also so we can compare ourselves with them," Amsterdam mayor Job Cohen said while taking part in the teleconference from that [city](#).

EcoMaps also provide information on ways to live greener urban lifestyles. Data from the maps also shows city officials where they should better target services or policies, Newsom said.

"Changing behavior is obviously one of the big challenges in [climate change](#)," said Cisco chief globalization officer Wim Elfrink.

"Websites can set goals. We all know as business people that if you

make things measurable, right away you get improvement."

While voluntary measures such as those spurred by EcoMaps are important to greening cities, the need for regulation regarding recycling, composting and other green practices is unavoidable, according to Newsom.

"In order to get to the next level we need to start looking at the mandatory framework," Newsom said. "When I mandated composting, it was wildly more controversial than gay marriage."

San Francisco is the only US city to mandate composting.

The world's population is moving steadily towards city living, and technology will be key to providing city dwellers with connected, green lifestyles, according to Elfrink and the mayors.

"Technology is not an afterthought any more," Newsom said. "It must be front and center."

Cisco is working on "smart cities" that use Internet and computer technologies to use energy more efficiently and reduce the environmental "footprint" of those that live there.

Newsom met with Cisco to collaborate on a vision for a "Sustainable 21st Century [San Francisco](#)" while he was in Bangalore to commemorate it becoming San Francisco's newest sister city.

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