



Tenants Want More “Green” in their Workplaces – Colliers International 2007 Canadian Office Tenant Survey

TORONTO, ON September 4, 2007- Sustainability has become a key issue among tenants according to the Colliers International 2007 Canadian Office Tenant Survey released today. Of commercial tenants surveyed, 90 per cent agree that it is important for landlords and developers to “green” their portfolios, and – all other factors being equal – 91 per cent of tenants would give preference to a green building. Also, 94 per cent of tenants surveyed believe sustainability is an important future component of good business practices, with 63 per cent saying it is very important.

“At Colliers International, we value our clients and want to ensure they are offered the best possible real estate solutions to meet their needs,” says Carolyn Lane, Vice President of Research at Colliers International. “Our experience has shown that high performance green buildings and commercial interiors can be cost effective, increase employee comfort, retention and recruitment, and attract new business. Colliers’ leadership in sustainability provides our clients with the future-proofing they need to be competitive, productive and profitable, while promoting corporate social responsibility, and reducing the negative impact of buildings on the planet.”

Colliers commissioned POLLARA, an independent market research firm, to investigate where tenant demands are heading in the future, the main drivers associated with site selection when relocating or redesigning office space, tenant impressions about environmental sustainability, and the importance of various features of commercial buildings in attracting and retaining staff.

The survey found that the three main drivers, other than cost, that would make tenants relocate or redesign their office within the next five years are:

- a better location to attract and retain staff,
- the ability to expand to accommodate more staff, and
- location in general.

In terms of attracting and retaining staff, tenants view having a location that is close to public transit (mean importance score 8.7 out of 10), has excellent indoor environmental air quality and thermal comfort (8.7) and high levels of natural light (8.0) as being very important.

“This survey sets the tone for the future,” says Nancy Searchfield, a LEED® AP and green building specialist at Colliers International. “It will be very helpful for building owners to better understand tenant expectations and to learn that there is such a high level of tenant demand for environmentally-friendly options at their workplaces. It will also assist our clients and the general public in making more informed choices regarding building selection. Clearly, sustainability is becoming an important driver for business.”

Colliers is already striving to assist landlords in meeting tenant expectations for sustainable premises. Searchfield is also Vice Chair of the Canada Green Building Council (CaGBC), and is taking a leadership role in developing the next generation of the LEED® rating system – a tool to help accelerate the greening of existing buildings in Canada. The CaGBC's LEED® Complete initiative will transform the rating system into a tool that will assist landlords in evaluating their current portfolios and developing action plans to green and certify their office buildings. The tool is also intended to be performance-based and to track results that will inform comprehensive management over the life of the building. The CaGBC is accepting applications for LEED® Complete pilot projects for commercial office buildings, administration and government buildings and schools.

“This survey highlights many interesting points,” says Thomas Mueller, President of the CaGBC. “One significant finding is that people are weighing environmental issues more heavily in the context of a healthy work environment, and it’s great to see Colliers International take the lead in guiding its clients on the benefits of green building options.”

Searchfield notes that commercial/institutional buildings currently account for over 30 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions in Canada. “The impact of buildings on the planet is substantial and so is the opportunity for environmental benefit by making changes. When we design buildings that are less harmful to the environment, they can also provide healthier spaces for people,” says Searchfield. “Some tenants report reductions in absenteeism and health complaints. When you combine these potential productivity benefits with the opportunity to reduce utility costs by 20-30 per cent or more, the question, really, is not whether we can afford to go green, but whether we can afford not to.”

Other notable results from the survey include:

- 82 per cent of tenants say that sick leave, low productivity, high employee turnover, and low morale have an impact on their company, 31 per cent saying these have a high impact,
- Tenants rate the health and well-being of staff as being very influential in their organization’s selection of new premises (mean score 8.5 out of 10),
- 63 per cent of tenants are prepared to pay a premium to occupy green space, with 14 per cent willing to pay more than 10 per cent extra, and
- 52 per cent said they are familiar with the term LEED®.

“Colliers shares best practices among its 10,000 professionals operating in 57 countries around the world. This means our clients have access to in-depth, market-specific environmental sustainability knowledge anywhere they choose to locate and operate their businesses,” says Lane. “Through our actions, Colliers accelerates the long-term success of our clients, our community and our world.”

This year's survey involved 181 office tenants from a broad cross-section of industries, each occupying more than 10,000 square feet, located in Vancouver, Calgary, and the metropolitan markets of Toronto and Montreal. To access the report visit: www.colliersreports.com

About Colliers International

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About LEED®

LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design and is a third-party recognition provided through the Canada Green Building Council to qualifying projects (LEED® certifications) and individuals (LEED® Accredited Professional, or "LEED® AP"). LEED certified buildings meet the highest environmental performance standards in Canada. The point-based system covers six areas: site development, water and energy efficiency, material selection, indoor air quality and innovation of design. There are four levels of certification awarded: certified, silver, gold and platinum.

Green buildings are often high performance, intelligent buildings – self-monitoring and self-adjusting. Green features of a LEED®-certified building may include; high efficiency air-handling and lighting systems, day-lighting, water conservation, rainwater harvesting for landscape irrigation and toilet flushing, green roofs, green power, green housekeeping, and more sustainable material choices such as recycled content, local materials and rapidly renewable materials. Another important component is low-VOCs (volatile organic compounds): paints, carpets and other materials that off-gas lower levels of toxins.

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