

Mayor David Miller
Address to G-20 media
June 24, 2010, International Media Centre

Good morning, everybody and to our visitors from abroad, I'd like to welcome all of you to Toronto. Welcome to the Direct Energy Centre. This special facility, which was built through a three-government partnership, is an example of the success of the infrastructure program.

My colleagues and I would like to tell you a little bit our very special city and encourage you to get out and see as much of it as you can.

We've made it easy by including in your media packs a transit pass that will allow you full access to our world class public transit system. In fact there is a streetcar stop right behind this building to make things easy for you.

Over the past few weeks in the lead up to the G20 conference, I've had the opportunity to address dozens of your colleagues from all over the world and I'm delighted with the response that, I in Toronto, have received.

Some of you may have been here before, many will not have been. But the one thing that I hear over and over from our visitors is how diverse and modern Toronto.

And they always say, what's your secret?

I can't completely give the secret but perhaps this morning and over the next three days you will hear and see for yourself what makes Toronto special and unique.

Those who live here and those who visit seem often to come to the same conclusion because they know the city is prosperous and liveable while also being a great place to do business.

I'd like to take a few moments to highlight the areas in which Toronto is a leader.

1) Toronto is a diverse world city

Toronto is one of the most ethnically, culturally and economically diverse cities on the planet — it's home to people from well over 100 countries, including EVERY G20 nation.

We have many diverse neighbourhoods where more than 140 languages and dialects are spoken.

And more than half of all Torontonians, including the Mayor, were born outside of Canada but chose Toronto as their home.

Our G20 visitors will see themselves reflected in the faces of Torontonians in our communities, and in the businesses that serve them.

Not only does this add to the cultural richness of our city, it's an economic advantage. Financial services companies, for example, choosing to locate or expand in Toronto frequently cite the diversity and talent of our workforce as one of the reasons they settle here.

Our diversity is an important reason why millions of tourists visit this city every year, and companies from around the globe choose Toronto as a place to do business, as you'll hear more about that in a moment from Terry and Renato.

2) Toronto is a green city

Most visitors to Toronto are struck by the number of parks that we enjoy. But for Torontonians, the green movement is about more than parkland. The City of Toronto is recognized around the world as a leader in environmental stewardship and I'm very privileged to chair the C40 Environmental Forum.

The Power to Live Green, the City's sustainable energy strategy, is founded on greater conservation, renewable energy sources, reduced use of fossil fuels, and the implementation of a 'smart' energy grid. The Power to Live Green will help us reach our target reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels by 2050, while maintaining energy reliability and affordability.

The Direct Energy Centre is an example of a green building partnership amongst all levels of government.

Meanwhile, the Toronto Green Development Standard is about designing sites and buildings that are more environmentally friendly. Achieving the Toronto Green Standard results in measurable improvements to air and water quality; increases energy and water efficiency, and solid waste diversion rates; reduces greenhouse gas emissions; and enhances ecology and the natural environment.

By adopting sustainable principles at every level and providing green options to all Torontonians — leaders of business, elected officials, educators and citizens — the city has become a model of environmental leadership.

An important part of our economic strategy incorporates green thinking. Last year we developed a Green Sector international marketing plan to help Toronto's 1,500 green businesses generate new investment and export opportunities – and raise the profile of our emerging green sector on the world stage.

And of course, we also promote the use of public transit to reduce our carbon footprint. Public transit ridership today is at its highest level it's ever been in Toronto.

Our most recent plan to expand public transit and increase its use is Transit City, a 120-kilometre network of light rail or European-style trams that will bring higher order transit to all parts of the city including our poorest neighbourhoods.

3) Toronto is a great place to do business

The third point I'd like to make is that Toronto is a great place to do business.

We are all aware of the challenges of these economic times. But the diversity of Toronto's economy is allowing us to withstand these challenges better than many cities.

We benefit from global competitiveness in a number of industry sectors – financial services, green industries, biotechnology, design, food and beverage, film, tourism, and business services.

Toronto is the heart of Canada's banking system. For the second year in a row, Canada's banks were rated best in the world in terms of soundness in the Global Competitiveness Report, released by the World Economic Forum. Along with London, Toronto is the fastest growing G8 financial centre.

According to an FDI ranking of North American Cities of the Future, Toronto is in the top five for economic potential and infrastructure. No doubt because of our reputation as a trusted business centre—one with accountability, transparency, regulation and ethical business practices— and that's earned us high praise from international fiscal leaders and high marks as a global business centre.

We also benefit from having a strategy to guide our success in the 21st Century. It's called the Agenda for Prosperity.

Developed in 2008 through partnership with the business, labour and academic communities, the Agenda for Prosperity is our roadmap to guide the future of Toronto and the surrounding region.

The Agenda for Prosperity is based on four simple principles:

- improving the business climate within the city (we call that Proactive Toronto)
- diversifying our international portfolio by increasing economic activity with cities beyond North America, especially those in emerging markets (we call that Global Toronto)
- supporting and expanding strategic industry sectors (we call that Creative Toronto), and
- enhancing Toronto's labour force so that all residents benefit from economic opportunity (we call that One Toronto).

4) Toronto is a livable city with a thriving cultural sector

The final point I'd like to make is that Toronto is a liveable city, with a thriving cultural sector.

Business travelers and industry leaders appreciate the fact that Toronto is a highly liveable and safe city, making it a much sought-after destination. The Economist Intelligence Unit "Liveability Survey" this January ranked Toronto 4th in the world for liveability. Well, I would call it first but fourth isn't bad.

In the past decade, Toronto has undergone a dramatic cultural renaissance. New opera and ballet houses have been built, landmark museums and galleries have been revitalized, the Toronto International Film Festival has been given a new home and Toronto has added a host of new festivals like ScotiaBank Nuit Blanche.

In a global survey of 60 cities across 40 countries, Toronto was ranked the fourth-best city in the world to experience culture, behind only New York, London and Paris.

And I believe that the strength of Toronto's Film and Television sector illustrates the bond between culture and economy.

The volume of filming in Toronto is 3rd in North America – behind only Los Angeles and New York City. Total film and television spending last year contributed almost \$1 billion to our economy.

Toronto's geography also makes it a liveable City:

- Our network of ravines is unique to our City.
- One of the largest freshwater lakes is just a few metres from this building and serves as our southern border.

I should also mention that with respect to our lake shore, we are working in partnership with the federal and provincial governments on the largest urban renewal project in North America and one of the most significant waterfront revitalization projects in the world.

It totals more than 800 hectares, and includes the creation of 40,000 residential units, one million square metres of commercial space and 300 hectares of parks.

These are just a few of the elements that make Toronto a truly special City.

And I hope that you have a chance during your stay to take a few minutes or an hour to go outside and experience this great city.

We have a great story here and we're ready to tell it. And I think if you are able to experience Toronto, you will agree. Thank You.