

| A MESSAGE FROM TORONTO MAYOR DAVID MILLER



After a decade as an amalgamated City, 2008 marked a year of continued action on Council priorities and initiatives. Last year, Toronto was rated one of the top 15 cities for quality of life for the third year in a row and one of the most economically powerful cities in the world. Torontonians enjoyed the benefits of greater use of public transit, better neighbourhoods and a cleaner, greener Toronto. We are producing less waste and using less water.

Last year, our city experienced the effects of an economy in crisis. This global crisis left its mark on Toronto. But thanks to sound financial management and advice, and the City's effective use of its financial resources, we continued delivering the core services Torontonians want and deserve with pride.

With more than \$12 million in City funding and more than \$53 million in new investments, we implemented vital climate change strategies, further reduced landfilling by introducing green bins to the city, improved public transit by reducing TTC wait times and made our transit system cleaner and safer. Although it was a difficult decision for Council to make, the implementation of two new taxes – Land Transfer Tax and Vehicle Registration Tax – has given the City the ability to maintain its programs in tough economic times and to improve our investment in the City's infrastructure. In 2008, Toronto's new Utility Bill was released combining water and solid waste management fees which allowed homeowners to choose garbage collection based on the size bin they use – helping reduce waste. All these programs were carried through on target and on budget.

We have created two new economic development organizations. The first, Invest Toronto, engages the private sector with investment opportunities through marketing, trade missions and coordination with other governments and businesses. The second, Build Toronto, engages private and public sector partners in the development of under-utilized City real estate unlocking value, stimulating the creation of jobs and regenerating neighbourhoods – all consistent with the City's broader economic, social and environmental goals. Both divisions were formed by reorganizing the Economic Development, Culture and Tourism division. This will ensure the City of Toronto functions more efficiently and effectively.

In 2008, the first report of the Fiscal Review Panel's Blueprint for Fiscal Stability took a high-level, impartial and subjective assessment to the City of Toronto's relative competitiveness, financial position, revenue opportunities and savings potential. With the help of the Panel's recommendations, the City is working to improve its economic prosperity, liveability and opportunity for all.

The Agenda for Prosperity initiative continued to retain and stimulate new investments which provided jobs, increased assessment and improved quality of life. This initiative continues to advance Toronto as a global city through trade, finance, technology, multi-linguistics and creativity – allowing the City to connect with its residents.

Reaching out to Toronto communities means Community Recreation Division's continued development of mixed-use, transit-friendly waterfront communities including the Toronto Public Library's Virtual Branch Service, child and youth programs and investments in Priority Neighbourhoods. We have improved Public Safety programs including Fire station maintenance, construction of the 11 Division Police Station and new training facility, and EMS/Fire headquarter upgrades.

Last year's proposed initiatives have been started and maintained. We've continued to improve the TTC by providing new buses and streetcars. This was accomplished without raising TTC ticket prices – all while the TTC reached an important milestone of more than 464 million rides in 2008, the highest ridership levels since 1994. Transportation initiatives ensured the maintenance of roads, improved bikeways and an increase in transit safety. In our continued effort to Green our city, initiatives have been put into action or planned. A few of these include Toronto Energy Conservation fund, Deep Lake Water Cooling, 70% Waste Diversion Plan, Climate Change Action Plan, Live Green program, Mayor's Tower Renewal and Air Quality programs.

Other great initiatives developed in 2008 include the Better Buildings Partnership (BBP) relaunch which assisted building owners in improving their buildings through energy efficiency measures and Web 2.0 – taking the City into the next generation of web-based networking. A 311 framework and hotline were established and launched in 2009 – connecting residents of Toronto with the services they need, one easy number, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Part of making Toronto a world-class city means building more creativity and a bustling arts and culture scene. In 2008, the City of Toronto added more Nuit Blanche locations, contributing to a more creative city. Creative Toronto, one of the pillars outlined in the Agenda for Prosperity, is helping to promote and boost our creative economy.

The City of Toronto, as a global city, must continue to build positive relationships with the provincial and federal governments. The *City of Toronto Act, 2006*, new taxation measures, and the Provincial Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review (PMFSDR) – advocates for changes in funding responsibilities including the upload of costs of income redistributive programs such as Ontario Works – all resulted in a fostered partnerships and a better relationship with the province.

In 2008, we also added to the current Accountability Offices a new Office of the Ombudsman to address public concerns about the services taxpayers receive. All changes ensuring Toronto's economy thrives, the City is connected with its people and vital City services are provided.

In 2008, the first balanced Operating Budget since amalgamation continued services to all Torontonians. Currently, more than 97 per cent of initiatives for 2010 are underway which will lead Toronto to become a cleaner, greener, safer city with better transit and more creative economy. Last year's accomplishments were inspiring and encourage us to move on as an environmental and diverse yet cohesive City which will continue to enhance prosperity, liveability and create opportunity for all Torontonians.



David Miller, Mayor
City of Toronto