

# globalcity

BY TOM LEBOUR

Last year's Greater Toronto Area resale housing market demonstrates the incredible amount of change that can occur in just 12 months.

Historically low interest rates, relative affordability and pent-up demand have all contributed to our remarkably quick recovery. Another important influence though, is Toronto's ranking as a world city. Compared to other global centres real estate here is relatively inexpensive and offers excellent long-term investment potential, a factor that has galvanized transactions throughout the GTA.

Toronto is now considered an alpha city, an important hub in the global economic system, ranking amongst the world's top urban centres.

Loughborough University in the United Kingdom undertook one of the first studies developed to rank global cities in 1998. Researchers used four factors to evaluate cities: political, economic, cultural and infrastructure characteristics. In its updated 2008 study, Toronto ranked 15th in the world. The only North American city to achieve a higher ranking was New York City, in first place. Various studies of this type have followed.

The consulting firm A. T. Kearney and the Chicago Council on Global Affairs

also produced a ranking of global cities in 2008. In this study, which employed five evaluation criteria: business activity, human capital, information exchange, cultural experience and political engagement, Toronto ranked 10th in the world.

A more recent study published by Tokyo's Institute for Urban Strategies at the Mori Memorial Foundation ranked Toronto 15th in the world based on the six characteristics of economy: research and development, cultural interaction, livability, ecology and natural environment, and accessibility. In this case, the only North American cities to achieve higher rankings were New York City and Los Angeles, in first and 13th place respectively.

It's probably no surprise that Toronto receives top marks with respect to culture and livability. We live in a region of more than 5.5 million people – one of the world's most ethnically diverse, with more than 100 languages spoken throughout the city. We have low crime rates, a clean environment and a high standard of living.

In a quality-of-living study undertaken annually by global consulting firm, The Mercer Group, Toronto captured the highest international ranking of all North

American cities in 15th place, well above New York City, which is rated in 49th place.

Toronto is home to the tallest tower in the western hemisphere, the world's seventh largest stock exchange, globally acclaimed universities and an international airport. We have the longest street and the longest-running fair in the world, more performing arts venues than anywhere else and even one of the largest zoos in the world. Our city is home to North America's largest continuous underground pedestrian system, the second largest public transit system on the continent and the third largest film and television production industry.

If you haven't yet bought a home in the GTA, I encourage you to talk to a Greater Toronto Realtor because there's no doubt, our city's star is on the rise. For more information please visit [TorontoRealEstateBoard.com](http://TorontoRealEstateBoard.com).



Tom Lebour is president of the Toronto Real Estate Board, a professional association that represents 29,000 Realtors in the Greater Toronto Area

