A Year of Revival in Transforming Public Space

After a long pause during the pandemic restrictions, this year felt like a comeback year. We were back...like really back! And boy, did it feel good.

At 8 80 Cities, we believe in the power of public space to bring people together and to spark radical change for people and the planet. We transform public space as a catalyst for creating better cities for all people. But more importantly, we transform mindsets and narratives about who the city is for; who has the right to mobility; the right to public space; and the right to full participation in the city.

We often make the improbable happen. The term “first ever” appears a lot in our project descriptions. Venturing into uncharted territory is not for the faint of heart. It takes courage and perseverance to innovate. It takes compassion, vulnerability, and a commitment to something much bigger than us.

So thank you to all of the changemakers, partners, collaborators, artists, activists, activators, connectors, and good troublemakers who helped us along the way.

While we continue the work to recover from and respond to the impacts of the pandemic, we say goodbye to 2022 feeling revived. Take a look at the incredible projects and collaborations that our brilliant 8 80 Cities team has been able to bring to life.

With gratitude,

Amanda O’Rourke
Executive Director, 8 80 Cities
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We are guided by the simple but powerful idea that if everything we do in our cities is great for an 8 year old and an 80 year old, then it will be better for all people.

Our Mission

To ignite action and challenge the status quo to create healthier, more equitable, and sustainable cities for all people.

Our Vision

Healthy, happy, and sustainable cities for people to grow up and grow old in; where all people have the right to safe and active mobility, welcoming and accessible public spaces, and inclusive city-building processes.

Right to Mobility

The movement of people in a city is an essential aspect of modern life. Too often, urban transportation is planned with only a few types of users in mind. Sustainable transportation, which includes all forms of human powered movement, has been proven to be a successful model for healthier, safer and environmentally friendly neighbourhoods. An 8 80 friendly community is one where streets are well designed for safe walking and biking, and where public transportation is affordable, reliable and accessible.

Right to Public Space

Public spaces are where cities come alive. When well-designed and supported, they allow individuals and groups to take ownership of their local spaces, creatively programming them to fit the needs of the communities they serve. Parks and green space are a critical means for urban residents to interact and connect with nature. They can be therapeutic to the sick, an adventure to the young and are a natural oasis for all. Parks and public spaces are not ‘nice to haves’ but are necessary components of any inclusive and healthy 8 80 community.

Right to Participate

Everyone has a voice that deserves to be heard in city building initiatives. Too often, the voices of the most vulnerable, i.e. children, older adults, and lower income and racialized residents, are dismissed or altogether absent from civic initiatives. 8 80 neighbourhoods are ones where all residents actively participate in shaping and utilizing their urban environment. When all residents collaborate in city building, the resulting community systems and built environment are inherently inclusive.
Our Equity Framework

We view equity as a direction, not a destination. This equity driven Strategic Plan starts from the inside out, with initial and immediate term impacts and results anticipated at an internal level while we continue to aim for external impacts in the mid and longer terms. While our initiatives and priorities may change seasonally or annually, we commit to actualizing these action areas as our forever and founding priorities.

1. Advancing Equity
   - We will use our equity framework to prioritize, plan and deliver all projects, programs, and services.

2. Strengthen Relationships & Build Trust
   - We play a unique, supportive, and complementary role in “building back better” strategies for municipalities and the non-profit sector in the GTHA.

3. Spark New Ideas & Accelerate Action
   - We will spark new ideas, innovate, and demonstrate change to accelerate action to build stronger, resilient and sustainable communities in the GTHA and beyond.

4. Build a Resilient Funding Infrastructure
   - We will expand the adoption of the 8 80 Neighbourhood Diagnostic Tool and 8 80 Cities’ programs and services to enable GTHA leaders to shape informed plans and actions for improving the equity and sustainability of their community.

Make Equity a Priority

- Establish organizational commitment towards equity by making it an explicit strategic priority, embedding it into all aspects of the Strategic Plan, as well as the mission, vision, and values.

Develop structures and practices that advance equity

- Integrate into human resources, communications, performance management, planning and evaluation, and decision-making policies and protocols - at board and staff.

Eliminate all forms of discrimination within the organization

- Work from the inside out to eliminate discrimination and oppression by implementing relevant staff and board development activities and accountability processes.

Explore, develop, and foster reciprocal partnerships that amplify the mission and vision

- Work across multiple sectors and with networks and coalitions who are working on common vision with complementary missions and mandates. Prioritize meaningful and purposeful community engagement that seamlessly ties to the priorities and organization vision.

5-Year Strategic Plan
Board of Directors

Gil Peñalosa  
Founder & Chair of Board*  
* (Chair of Board from January-June 2022)

Eti Greenberg  
Director

Rafael Vargas  
Director*  
*(Interim Chair from July-December 2022)

Rabia Abrar  
Director  
*(Outgoing)

Yvonne Yeung  
Director  
*(Incoming 2022/2023)

Sue Lantz  
Director

Jordana Wright  
Director  
*(Outgoing)

Nithursan Elamuhilan  
Director  
*(Outgoing)

Nadha Hassen  
Director  
*(Incoming 2022/2023)

Our Team

Amanda O’Rourke  
Executive Director

Camila Uriona  
Administration & Communications Manager

Deborah McKeon  
Manager of Finance

Jiya Benni  
Project Manager

Jayne Armstrong  
Project Manager

Shannon Lawrence  
Project Manager

Brandon Miles  
Project Coordinator

Laura Smith  
Project Coordinator

8 80 Support

Bohdan Mamalyga  
Student Intern

Janice Wong  
Student Intern

Shameel Mohammed  
Student Intern

Jonathan Chan  
Student Intern

Joshua Lee  
Student Intern

Rosa Braico  
Student Intern

Sabrina Poinen  
Volunteer

Thank You

to all other past staff and volunteers for your support in 2022!
Lanrick Bennett
2022

Partners & Clients

A
AARP Liveable Communities
Alta Planning Canada
Alzheimer’s Society of Peel
Anishinabeg Outreach

B
Balsam Foundation
Bienenstock Natural Playgrounds
Bike Brampton

C
Canadian Healthy Communities Initiative
Canadian Institutes for Health Research
Canadian Parks and Recreation Association
Canadian Urban Institute
City of Brampton
City of Hamilton
City of Helsingborg
City of Kingston
City of Kitchener
City of Markham
City of Mississauga
Community Foundations of Canada
Cycle TO

D
Downtown Brampton Business Improvement Association

E
EarthScape Play

F
Federal Economic Development Agency of Southern Ontario

H
Healthy Places by Design
Housing for Health

I
ICLEI

J
Jay Pitter

M
Movium
Muslims in Public Space

O
Open Streets TO

P
Park People
Parks and Recreation Ontario

S
Steno Diabetes Center Copenhagen

Q
Queen’s University

R
Real Play City Challenge
Roots Community Services

S
Sullivan Renaissance
Swedish Lund University

T
The Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities
Toronto Metropolitan University
Town of Caledon
Town of Springwater
Town of Whitecourt

Q
University of Alberta
University of Toronto
University of Toronto Scarborough (UTSC)
University of Waterloo

W
Weston Consulting
WoodGreen Community Services
World Urban Parks

February
- Healthy Communities Initiative Mobilizer Session
- Parks and Recreation Ontario Conference
- Toronto Metropolitan University - Public Health & Healthy, Equitable, and Sustainable Cities

March
- Piloting School Streets Webinar

April
- Ontario Bike Summit: Ontario School Streets Pilot
- University of Toronto School of Planning: Reimagining Toronto’s Streets
- ULI’s Curtner Urban Leadership Program: Placemaking Panel

May
- City of Toronto & Jay Pitter Placemaking: Cultural Districts and Intergenerational Placemaking Panel
- Global Designing Cities Initiative: Streets for Kids Leadership Accelerator
- Swedish Lund University - Tankeskedjan Movium, Helsingborg: Playful City for All Ages

June
- ULI Shaw Symposium for Urban Community Issues: Multigenerational Housing and Neighbourhoods

August
- Metropolitan Planning Council, We Will Chicago: Global Voices, Local Action

September
- Gether OPPI PALA Conference
- Ontario Professional Planners Institute Conference

October
- Sullivan Renaissance Roundtable: Creating Inclusive & Accessible Parks

November
- School Streets Summary Report Webinar
- Sullivan Renaissance Seminar: Winter Placemaking in your Town
- World Urban Parks Congress: Children, Play, and Nature Keynote Panel

December
- Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals Webinar
- COP 15 Panel: Health and Well-Being in Cities - Acting for access to green and blue spaces (GBF Target 12)
2022
By the Numbers

Where We’ve Been

13 Cities we worked in in person

12 Cities we worked in virtually

Our Work

17 Blog Posts
12 Newsletter Issues

11 projects completed
+ 41+ virtual engagements
+ 4 publications written
+ 25+ workshops initiated

Our Influence

86% NEW Web Visitors
49,105 Website Sessions

Social Media

10,419 Newsletter Subscribers
1,459 TikTok Views
228 YouTube Subscribers

7,910 Facebook Followers
12,836 Twitter Followers
4,145 Instagram Followers
3,482 LinkedIn Followers
Canadian Projects

- Brampton | Caledon Village
- Whitecourt | Midhurst | Kitchener
- Markham | Elmvale | Toronto | London
- Minesing | Bolton | Hamilton | Kingston
- Mississauga | Kitchener
Activate Downtown Brampton

Location: Brampton, Ontario
Client: City of Brampton, Brampton Downtown BIA

A collaborative project between 8 80 Cities, The City of Brampton, and the Downtown Brampton Business Improvement Area and funded by the Government of Canada through the Main Street Community Activator program, Activate Downtown Brampton was a series of interactive installations and activations that took place in downtown Brampton’s laneways and public gathering spaces from May to October 2022.

Project Highlights

In the weekend, we found that after the physical transformation of Vivian Lane, the number of people hanging out in Vivian Lane increased by 242% and the number of people moving through Vivian Lane increased by 136%.

We hosted eight weeks of programming in Vivian Lane with 29 events including 3 pop-up night markets, 6 art-based events, 6 health and wellness events, 1 day of family-friendly activities with 30 local vendors and 40 volunteers engaged.

Before the transformation, 60% of people surveyed rated the socialness of the space to be ‘excellent’ or ‘good’. After the transformation, this was 82%.

The 8 80 Neighbourhood Diagnostic

A Common Vision Project

Location: Whitecourt, Alberta
Client: CPRA
Partners: University of Waterloo, University of Alberta

We worked in partnership with the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA), the University of Alberta, and the University of Waterloo to evaluate how the downtown neighbourhood of Whitecourt, Alberta, was performing in relation to safety, walkability, and mobility. Using a specific set of 8 80 spatial audit tools, this study led to the creation of a comprehensive case study in neighbourhood walkability through the eyes of an 8 and 80 year old, along with a neighbourhood toolkit to allow communities of all shapes and sizes the ability to assess and measure how 8 80 friendly their communities are.

Project Highlights

One comprehensive case study was created showcasing the town’s assets and measurements safety, and physical and social activity in the downtown Whitecourt.

One neighbourhood toolkit was produced with step-by-step instructions communities can follow to diagnose their own neighbourhoods.

Over 2,000 data points have been collected and analyzed for the assessment of Whitecourt’s public spaces and surrounding environment.

One neighbourhood diagnostic was supported by

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TRANSFORMED-VIVIAN-LANE-UNVEILING
ACTIVATEDOWNTOWNBRAMPTON

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8-80-NEIGHBOURHOOD-DIAGNOSTIC
COMMONVISIONPROJECT
NEIGHBOURHOOD
880 Cities and the Town of Caledon have come together to host a series of pop-up engagements in coordination with diverse community partners. The engagements focus on creating space for conversation, dialogue, and idea generation on equitable and culturally responsive placemaking opportunities.

**Project Highlights**

- Engagement boards have been translated into three different languages for diverse outreach.
- Over 10 pop-up engagements were coordinated with various community groups.
- Residents of Caledon wanted more diverse uses of parks and public spaces that reflect their culture

**Illuminate Caledon**

**Location:** Caledon Township, Ontario  
**Client:** Town of Caledon

880 Cities and the City of Kitchener came together to launch the first-ever pop-up park in downtown Kitchener to build excitement and engage diverse communities in reimagining parks and public spaces from an equity lens.

The pop-up park was a real-time demonstration and test of ideas generated by residents through the Places and Spaces engagement conducted by the City of Kitchener’s Parks and Recreation Department. The pop-up park demonstrated that quick action can be taken to show residents and equity deserving community groups that the City is listening and taking action. It also demonstrates the value of pedestrian focused spaces, especially when designed in collaboration with community. The pop-up park was strategic and measured placemaking activations.

**Project Highlights**

- During the activation, there were 150% more children (aged 5-14) in the site during evening hours (5-7 pm).
- 70% of survey respondents said they played during the pop-up park, and of the respondents who played, 60% of folks fell between the ages of 30 – 49.
- As a result of creating play for all ages, abilities and play styles, there was 748% increase in physical activity.
- 88% of people who identified as a part of the LGBTQ2S+ community, said that they saw their interests reflected in the space.

**Kitchener Pop-Up Park**

**Location:** Kitchener, Ontario  
**Client:** City of Kitchener  
**Partners:** University of Waterloo

**Project Highlights**

- 70% of survey respondents said they played during the pop-up park, and of the respondents who played, 60% of folks fell between the ages of 30 – 49.
- 88% of people who identified as a part of the LGBTQ2S+ community, said that they saw their interests reflected in the space.
Ontario Community Changemakers

YEAR 2

Location: Toronto, Ontario, Ontario-Wide
Client: Balsam Foundation
Partners: Park People

Funded by Balsam Foundation, Ontario Community Changemakers is a fellowship and micro-grant program for young civic innovators with bold ideas to activate public space, enhance civic engagement and foster social inclusion, and is now in its second year.

Project Highlights

20 young people selected as the second cohort of the Ontario Community Changemakers program representing diverse backgrounds, lived experiences and geographies.

57% of the applications were from racialized applicants, 57% were from applicants who identified as women and 19% were from rural or small towns.

Changemaker Avery Greaves was featured in local newspaper and changemaker Tennesha Joseph was featured in Spacing Magazine.

Ontario School Streets Pilot

Location: Mississauga, Markham, Hamilton, Kingston, Ontario
Client: Green Communities Canada
Partners: City of Mississauga, City of Hamilton, City of Markham, York Region District School Board, City of Kingston, Ontario Active School Travel, Government of Ontario, Kingston Coalition for Active Transportation

Funded by Green Communities Canada through the Ontario Active School Travel program, Ontario School Streets Pilot was an initiative that tested the implementation of School Streets programs in four Ontario communities - Hamilton, Markham, Mississauga and Kingston - during the 2021-22 school year.

Project Highlights

Markham, Mississauga, Hamilton and Kingston all saw an increase in active school travel during the School Street pilots with the rate of increase ranging from a +4% to over 20% in Mississauga.

School Streets encourage walking and cycling. In Mississauga, the rate of Active School Travel School Streets improve air quality in front of schools during the closure periods. In Mississauga, 65% of pre-pilot air pollution was removed at Hillside Public School and 42% at Brian W. Fleming Public School. In Markham, 42% of pre-pilot air pollution was removed at John McCrae Public School.

8 80 Cities presented the Ontario School Streets Pilot at two webinars and one conference in 2022.
Caledon’s Active Transportation Master Plan

Location: Caledon, Ontario
Client: Town of Caledon, Alta + Planning and Design

880 Cities was brought on board the Active Transportation Master Planning process to lead community engagement as a subconsultant to Alta + Planning and Design. 880 Cities has been busy talking to folks across Caledon about their vision for a walkable, bikeable and accessible town.

Project Highlights

Three phases of engagement have been scheduled over the course of the project!

Over 131 survey respondents have been captured so far in the community engagement initiative.

58% of older adults (>60) surveyed indicated that better pedestrian connections to destinations like shops and services would make them feel safer and more comfortable.

The Lending Library Project

Location: Toronto, Ontario
Client: Government of Canada
Partners: WoodGreen, New Horizons for Seniors Program

The objective of the Lending Library Project is to support flexible and autonomous social and physical activities in seniors and to invest in the capacity of WoodGreen’s Senior Active Living Centres and their ability to serve the diverse needs of their clientele.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, 880 Cities and WoodGreen decided to implement a Lending Library program to allow seniors to be physically active while also addressing seniors’ desire for autonomy, outdoor recreation and socialization. The Lending Library provides high-risk seniors, those hesitant to return to in-person programming and those searching for autonomy in their recreation, the

Project Highlights

80 seniors trained on the uses of the lending library equipment.

6 Ball and Band exercise classes were held during Fall Prevention Month.

Over 40 new Nordic poles purchased to outfit the lending library.

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Canada
Our Springwater

Location: Springwater County, Ontario
Client: Township of Springwater, Weston Consulting

OUR SPRINGWATER: Imagine a place for everyone is a dynamic and evolving community engagement process that will continue to co-create with community members for the design, layout and programming of the future Community Hub that will be located at 1132 Snow Valley Road. As Springwater grows, the Hub will be a destination that will provide residents and organizations with a space to grow, evolve and thrive. Through both programming and design, the Hub will be a place where the history of Springwater’s agriculture, forestry, Indigeneity, sporting prowess and socio-economic diversity is tangible.

In true 80 Cities style, we brought fun and dynamic community engagement practices to Springwater that informed the Community Hub’s vision and Master Plan.

Project Highlights
Over 600 survey responses captured from community engagement roll-out!
42% of all survey respondents called Midhurst home.
100 pizzas eaten at the Anten Mills Movie Night and community engagement pop-up!

Canada Healthy Communities Initiative

Location: Canada-Wide
Client: Government of Canada, Community Foundations of Canada, Canadian Urban Institute
Partners: ICLEI, Vivre En Ville, Canadian CED Network, National Association of Friendship Centres, Jay Pitter, Network for Advancement of Black Communities, Park People

The Canada Healthy Communities Initiative is a $60 million investment from the Government of Canada to transform public spaces in response to COVID-19, and provides funding to a broad range of organizations for projects that help communities create safe and vibrant public spaces, improve mobility options, and provide innovative digital solutions. Since the initiative started, we have offered technical support for participating teams from different cities in mobility and other areas.

Project Highlights
Canada Healthy Communities Initiative hosted one mobilizer session on winter placemaking, and three small group discussions on communications and Open Streets.

Canada Healthy Communities Initiative launched the Placemaking Community website - Placemaking Canada | Canada’s Placemaking Community.

Canada Healthy Communities Initiative has funded over 1000 pandemic-responsive placemaking projects to date with people experiencing low income or living in poverty, persons with disabilities, and newcomers being amongst the most served communities in the Initiative.
International Projects

HELENA | BISMARCK | WORCESTER
SIOUX FALLS | BOSTON
ALBANY | MADISON | PORTLAND
AARP Liveable Communities Technical Assistance Program (LC-TAPS)

Location: Various States, U.S.A.
Client: AARP Liveable Communities

8 80 Cities has been working with AARP state offices in the U.S. to host virtual and in-person workshops on good practices for Creating Parks and Public Spaces for People of All Ages in partnership with the American Association of Retired Persons.

Project Highlights

- We've worked with 8 new community partners from across the United States
- We traveled to Sioux Falls to trial winter placemaking in their downtown
- We worked with both North and South Dakota

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AARP
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

LIVEABLECOMMUNITIES
TECHNICALADVISORY
8 80 Resources
What we published in 2022

Ontario School Streets Pilot Summary Report

Over the past year, 8 80 Cities and Green Communities Canada led a group of four city teams aiming to pilot School Streets in Ontario through the Ontario School Streets Pilot (OSSP) project. The School Streets Pilot Summary Report summarizes our findings from the pilot School Streets in Mississauga, Markham, Hamilton and Kingston along with recommendations for future School Streets.

For more information on this report, please visit: https://www.880cities.org/portfolio_page/school-streets

The 8 80 Neighbourhood Diagnostic: A Case Study on Whitecourt, AB

The 8 80 Neighbourhood Diagnostic: A Common Vision Project in Whitecourt, AB was made possible by the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association, with support from the Public Health Agency of Canada, the University of Waterloo, and the University of Alberta’s Housing for Health team. This report summarizes the findings from a multi-seasonal study of Whitecourt, Alberta’s urban core in relation to the accessibility and age-friendliness of the town’s public spaces.

For more information on this report, please visit: https://www.880cities.org/portfolio_page/8-80-neighbourhood-diagnostic-whitecourt-ab/

8 80 Diagnostic: A Neighbourhood Toolkit

This Neighbourhood Toolkit provides a set of useful tools to evaluate how neighbourhood public spaces are performing for people of all ages.

For more information on this toolkit, please visit: https://www.880cities.org/portfolio_page/8-80-neighbourhood-diagnostic-whitecourt-ab/

Seniors’ Outdoor Activation Toolkit

The Seniors’ Outdoor Activation Toolkit tells the story of a partnership between WoodGreen Community Services, 8 80 Cities and over 100 seniors who saw the COVID-19 pandemic as an opportunity to flip the standard for seniors programming in parks and public spaces. The Toolkit proves that Toronto’s parks and public spaces have the capacity to become safe, accessible, fun and programmable spaces for seniors.

For more information on this toolkit, please visit: https://www.880cities.org/portfolio_page/seniors-outdoor-activation-toolkit/
We are... guided by the simple but powerful idea that if everything we do in our cities is great for an 8 year old and an 80 year old, then it will be better for all people.

Looking Ahead...
Building a Better Future for All

While 2022 was another challenging year for us all, our perseverance, strength, and human-kindness have helped us push through the toughest of it all. As we look ahead into 2023, we seek to move away from the COVID-19 pandemic with some important lessons learned and a chance to establish new beginnings. We look forward to growing the fire with the amazing people we already know, while we seek to spark a flame and foster new and exciting relationships with the ones we will meet on our journey ahead. Join us as we work together to ignite action and challenge the status quo in order to create healthier, more equitable, and sustainable cities for all people.

- The 8 80 Cities Team