



2023 Yearbook



Contact:

8 80 Cities
364-401 Richmond St. W.
Toronto, Ontario

(416) 591-7404
info@880cities.org
880cities.org

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A Look Back At 2023: Parking Lots, Plunges And Partnerships

A Message from the Executive Director

After you've written a few of these end-of-year letters, it gets harder to come up with a catchy headline that fully captures the year. Building off the momentum we gained in 2022, we were back on the ground in full force, re-engaging with diverse city and community partners to ignite action and challenge the status quo to create healthier, more equitable, and sustainable cities.

You might be thinking -parking lots- what's that all about? This year, we demonstrated the tremendous possibilities of parking lots as an important public space asset, spaces that can support community connection, joy, and belonging with a little love, community organizing, and placemaking investment. Our team helped bring together diverse community partners to transform a parking lot in Cooksville, Mississauga, into a pop-up community market. We also reimagined six car parking spaces into a vibrant pop-up pocket park in Downtown Brampton with the support of city champions and community partners.

Plunges? We hosted two study trips to Copenhagen this year for city teams from Canada and the U.S., culminating in the (cold) harbour plunge! This is a great symbol of all that we at 8 80 Cities try to achieve on these trips. We want to push boundaries, strengthen trust and relationships, get participants in a creative and open mindset and work together to address some of our biggest city challenges. We hope that those memories, learning, and experiences on our immersive study trips provide an accelerator for translatable community-led actions from our participating teams. We can't wait to see what you do with this Guelph, Saskatoon, Oshawa, Brandon, Detroit and Buffalo!

Finally, partnerships. There is not enough room to write all the amazing partnerships that we've had this year. I know people are often shocked when they find out our team is a small but mighty group of eight people. There's no secret in how we do this. It's not only because we have an amazing team, but we have an amazing team that understands the value of every single relationship, partnership and interaction we have as the foundational currency that advances our mission. Our work relies on the vast network of supporters, partners, board members, funders, clients, volunteers, students, interns, community changemakers, city champions, advocates, researchers and more who share a vision for a healthier and more equitable future for cities. For that, we are eternally grateful to all of you!!

This year was action packed one and a signal for much more to come in 2024! Take a look at some of our favourite project highlights of the year.



Amanda O'Rourke
Executive Director, 8 80 Cities



Land Acknowledgement

8 80 Cities acknowledges that the land on which we are situated is the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishinaabe, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, the Huron-Wendat, and Petun First Nations. These lands are the site of Treaty 13 and the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant — an agreement forged between the Anishinaabe Nation and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy to peaceably share resources around the Great Lakes.

We are mindful of broken covenants, violations of human and treaty rights, and affirm the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. It is our responsibility to actively interrogate and challenge settler-colonial systems of oppression through our work. We are committed to strengthening our relationships with Indigenous Peoples and Lands.

We Are 8 80 Cities!

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

In an 8 80 community, every resident has the right to safe, accessible, and comfortable sidewalks, bike lanes and public transit systems.

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

In an 8 80 community, every resident has the right to accessible, high-quality, and dynamic parks and public spaces.

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

In an 8 80 community, every resident has the right to participate in city building processes.

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 Commitments to Equity

We view equity as a direction, not a destination.

Our Equity Framework

Make equity a priority.

Develop structures and practices that advance equity.

Eliminate all forms of discrimination within the organization.

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

The following are commitments we made as an organization as part of our new Strategic Plan.

- 1** We understand the important role social identities such as gender, race, ability, sexual orientation, gender expression, ethnic and cultural background, and economic status play in a person's experience navigating public space and city building processes.
- 2** We will be advocates of public spaces, urban mobility, and community engagement practices that are designed to welcome and serve all communities, including newcomers, immigrants and racialized communities.
- 3** We will better educate ourselves, our partners and our clients to deconstruct the systemic racism that can be perpetrated by urban planning practices and urban form.
- 4** We will do more to centre the experiences of Indigenous, Black and racialized people in our work to create equitable streets and public spaces.
- 5** Our impacts, through our services and program design, will be responsive to the most marginalized in communities, with empathy and through an emphasis on social solidarity.
- 6** The impacts and outcomes of our engagement and advocacy processes will be informed by and will be responsive to social determinants of health, including mental, physical, emotional and environmental health.
- 7** While our mission is centred on a people-first approach, we understand the interconnectedness of all living things, and that the health of the land, water and air around us and our cities is quintessential to our very survival.

5-Year Strategic Plan

2022-2027 Strategic Goals

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.

Board of Directors

Gil Penalosa
Founder and Chair

Rafael Vargas
Treasurer

Kay Matthews
Director

Judy Noordermeer
Director

Shannon Holness
Director

Yvonne Young
Director

Suelyn Knight
Director

Nadha Hassen
Director

David Roberts
Director

8 80 Support

Shameel Chankar
Summer Intern

Amira Babeiti
Summer Intern

Lucy Mackinnon
Student Intern

Swati Panwar
Student Intern

Mateo Higgins
Cleaning Support

Thank You

Special thanks to all other past staff for your support in 2023!

Brandon Miles

Who we are



Amanda O'Rourke
Executive Director



Shannon Lawrence
Director of Programs and Development



Camila Uriona
Admin. & Communications Manager



Deborah McKeon
Finance Manager



Jayne Armstrong
Project Manager



Jiya Benni
Project Manager



Joanna Delos Reyes
Project Manager



Tennesha Joseph
Project Coordinator

Funders & Clients

AARP
 Balsam Foundation
 Brandon University
 Canadian Institutes for Health Research
 Canadian Urban Institute
 City of Brampton
 City of Toronto
 Knight Foundation
 New Horizons for Seniors
 Ralph C. Wilson Foundation
 Toronto Metropolitan University
 Town of Caledon
 TAS Impact
 University of Saskatchewan
 University of Ontario Institute Technology

Partners & Co-Creators

Abiola Idowu	Muslims in Public Space
Access Alliance	OCChangemakers
Algoma	Park People
BLOXHub	Placemaking Canada
Brampton Library	plazaPOPs
Buffalo Parks	Queen's University
Cities Changing Diabetes	Roots Community Services
City of Brandon	Shawn Howe
City of Copenhagen	Sheridan College
City of Guelph	TCAT
City of Mississauga	The Indigenous Network
City of Oshawa	Universite de Montreal
City of Saskatoon	University of Toronto
Cycle TO	Urban Minds
Cycling Without Age	WalkTO
Detroit Riverfront	Waterfront Toronto
Downtown Brampton BIA	Woodgreen Community Services
Evergreen	WUP
FFSS	YMCA Greater Toronto
Gehl	
GPA	
Green Communities Canada	
Heart Comonos	
Helpful Places	
HPBD	
Indus Community Services	
ISUH	
Jay Pitter Placemaking	
KCAT	
Kenneth Balfeat	
Lindsay Kretchmer/ Swooping Hawk	
MUEC	

Engagement

AARP State Offices – RI, CA, WA, NC, NY
 BuildingUP
 Caledon Area Families for Inclusion (CAFFI)
 Caledon Communities Services
 Caledon Parent-Child Centre (CPCC)
 Chinese Association of Mississauga
 City of Anchorage
 City of Juneau
 Community Gardens Communities of Practice
 COSTI Immigrant Services
 Dam Youth Drop-In Centre
 Denver Urban Gardens
 Downtown Whitby BIA
 Eagle Spirit of the Great Waters
 Erin Mills Youth Centre
 Family Transition Place
 Foundation for Social Connection
 Friends of Kensington Market
 GenWell
 Gotham Park
 JFL Hope Centre
 Learning Disabilities Association of Peel Region
 marketcityTO
 MLSE
 Muslim Council of Peel
 OBIAA
 Peel Multicultural Council
 Peel Regional Diversity Roundtable
 Placer Resource District
 Punjabi Community Health Services
 Renton Seniors Centre
 Shorefast
 T.L Kennedy High School
 The Indigenous Network
 Town of Mount Airy
 U of T Public Life Students

- Building Connected Communities Conference, Harvard Human Flourishing Program, *Boston*
- Canadian Human Connection Conference
- Change for Good Roads Podcast
- Cities for Everyone with Gil, 8 80 Cities
- Flourishing Neighbourhoods Conference, NYC
- International Society for Urban Health Congress, *Atlanta*
- Ontario Business Improvement Association Conference
- Park People Conference
- Parks and Recreation Ontario Forum
- Planning Institute of Australia National Congress, *Adelaide*
- Urbanistica Podcast

Conferences & Webinars

2023

2023

By the Numbers

Our Influence

12
Newsletter
Issues

15
News
Features

7,528
Facebook
followers

4,751
Instagram
followers

59,679
Website
Sessions

18
Blog Posts

12,774
Twitter (X)
followers

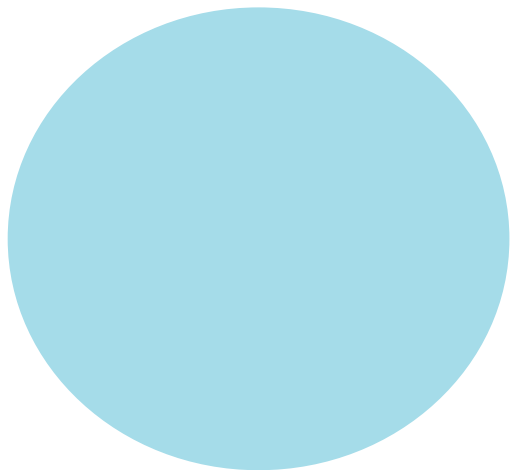
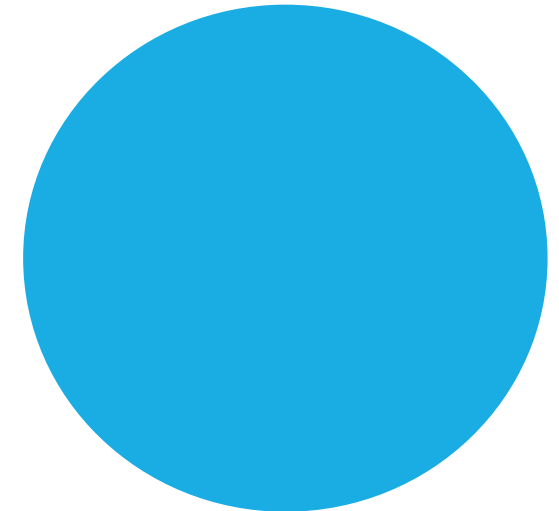
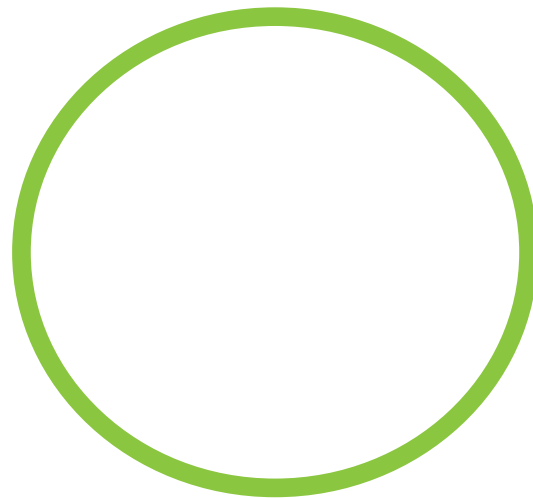
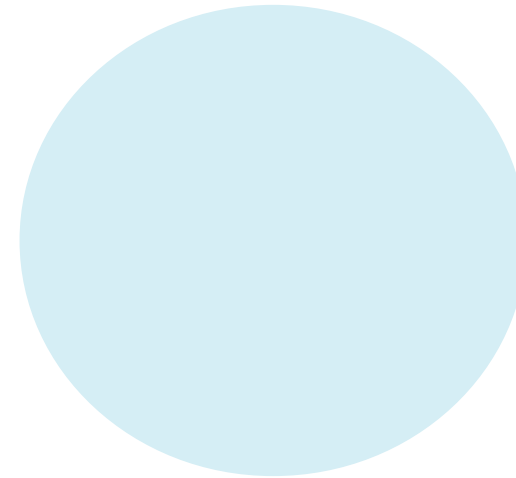
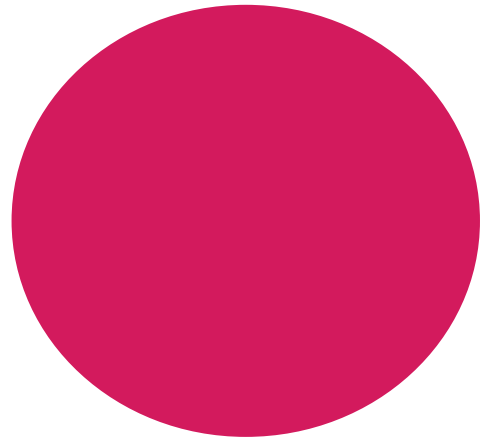
7,842
LinkedIn
followers

32% 22% 46%



Website Visitors
by Country

90%
NEW
Web Visitors



Canadian projects



Nelson Square Pocket Park

Location: **Brampton, Ontario**
 Client: **City of Brampton**

6

parking spots transformed from concrete to green space designed for play and relaxation

The Nelson Square Pocket Park builds on the momentum, strengthened capacity, and relationships from Activate Downtown Brampton 2022 to continue to strategically knit these important public spaces into a healthy and vibrant public realm network. The Nelson Square Pocket Park's goal is to leverage the community engagement data and learnings from ADB 2022 to inform the pop-up placemaking activation for Nelson Garage Surface Parking Lot at 20 George Street North.



SUPPORTED BY



Cooksville Pop-Up Market

Location: **Cooksville, Missisauga**
 Funder: **TAS Developers**
 Partners: **Heart Comonos, Cooksville Community Hub and TAS Developers**

The Cooksville Pop-Up Market and Gathering was an event to activate a disused parking lot with community programmers. The day held over 40 vendors, one ice cream truck, three musical performances and one Bollywood dance class.

SUPPORTED BY



200+

disused parking spaces transformed into a vendor market

40+

vendors involved





Western Beaches Public Life Study

Location: **Toronto, Ontario**

Client: **City of Toronto**

50+
volunteers

18
study locations

112
hours of public life studied

282
intercept interviews collected

169
travel movement studies

155
activity mapping studies

The City of Toronto acquired the expertise of the 8 80 Cities' team to conduct a series of public life studies at the Western Beaches to uncover insights into how visitors currently move through the space, the types activities they engage in and how they would like to see it improved. With the help of over 50+ volunteers, we collected quantitative and qualitative data that will be used to inform the Western Beaches Public Realm Plan and make the space better for all users!

SUPPORTED BY



Ontario Community Changers

(Year 3)

Location: **Ontario, Canada**

Funder: **Balsam Foundation**

20
new changemakers!



Ontario Community Changers

\$5,000
grant awarded to each participant

Ontario Community Changers (OCC) is an exciting micro-grant program created for young Ontario residents to help spark new ideas and invigorate change in their local communities. Now in its third year, the program has supported 60 young leaders from diverse backgrounds and lived experiences to deliver their own creative projects that activate public space, enhance civic engagement, and/or foster social inclusion. Over the past three years the program has elevated new voices in city building and supported bold projects that strengthen the well-being of communities. The program aims to go beyond capital "P" placemaking and instead looks to elevate the voices of those who the placemaking and urban planning fields typically leave out. This program is regarded as truly unique and as filling a gap in the funding landscape. After three years, we have seen the program beginning to take on an identity of its own, and the networks between past, present and future changemakers are being made and leveraged all the time. We have also seen that changemakers are beginning to take on the identity of being a "changemaker", this is a critical element of the program as so often those working on social justice projects or those building their own projects don't know what to call themselves or how to market their work. We see this program as providing the legitimacy for changemakers to be able to go out with confidence, engage community and grow their projects. We were very excited to host the first fully in person studio this year as the program initially launched during the pandemic. Bringing all the changemakers together in Toronto was a wonderful experience, we have been so inspired by the work of this year's cohort. You can read more about the program and the specific projects at ontariocommunitychangers.org



SUPPORTED BY





Illuminate Caledon

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

The Town of Caledon acquired engagement support from 8 80 Cities to begin an introductory cultural placemaking campaign aimed at better understanding what makes Caledon a great place to work, live and play for people of all backgrounds.

50+

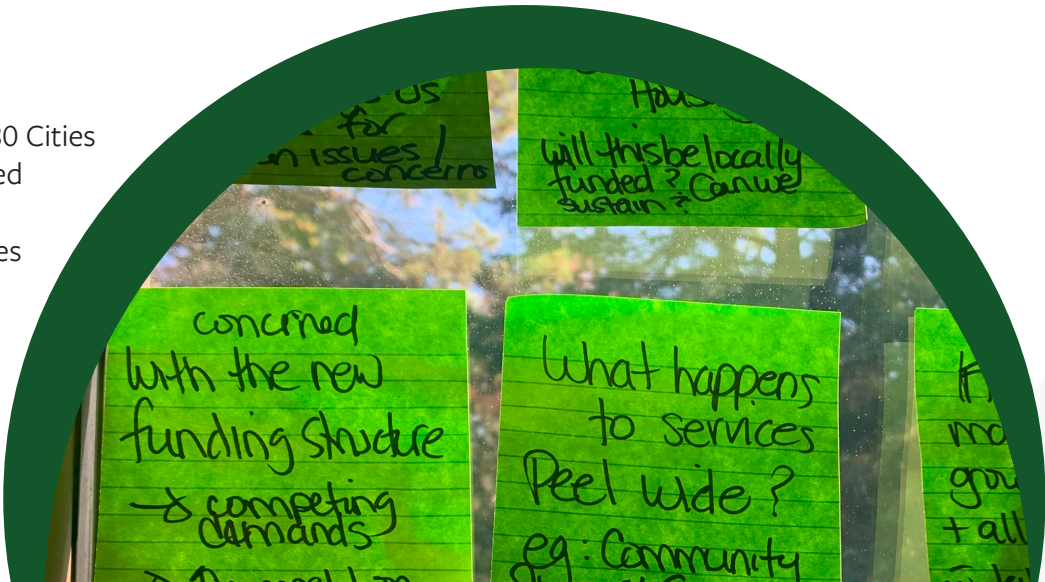
seniors from the Caledon Senior Services participated in a brainstorming workshop!

24

participants in attendance

19

different community organizations



Caledon Community Services Workshop

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

The Town of Caledon engaged 8 80 Cities to develop activities for a facilitated conversational workshop with the Town's community service agencies and organizations to better plan for the anticipated transition from a two-tier to a single-tier municipality.

Activating Humber River Centre

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

The Town of Caledon acquired the support of 8 80 Cities to further engage with the local business and entrepreneurship community to understand specific needs for programming and facility activations in the new Humber River Centre.

200+

people engaged in focused interviews, workshops & canvassing

35

survey participants

6

1:1 interviews with local business owners



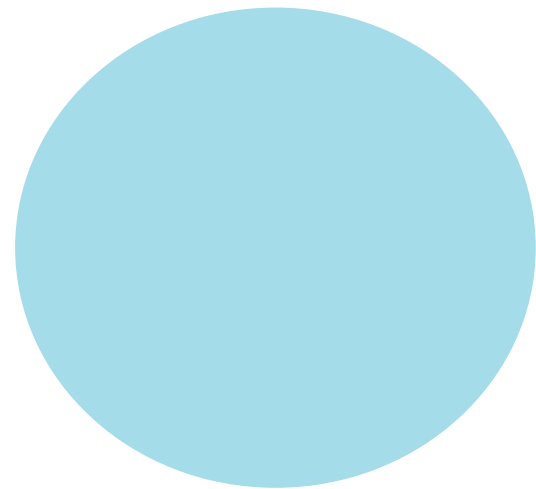
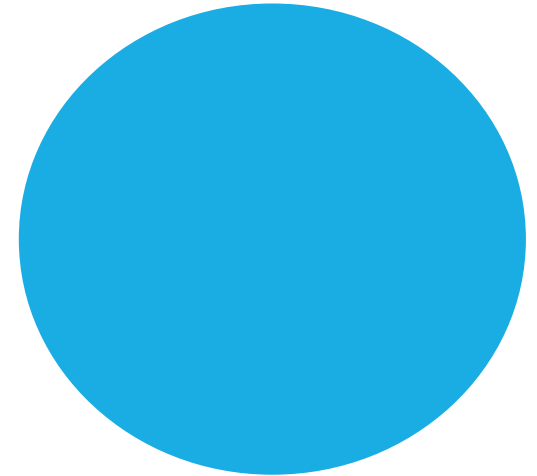
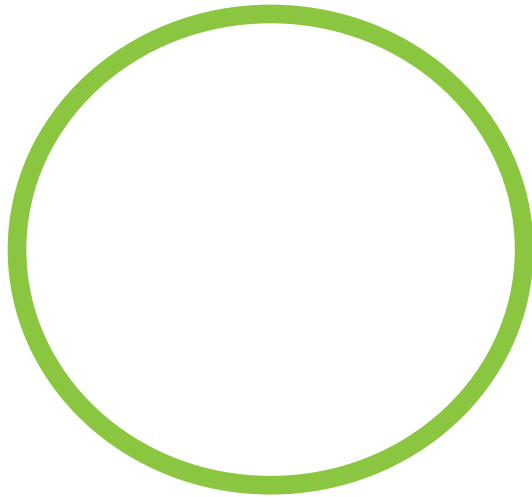
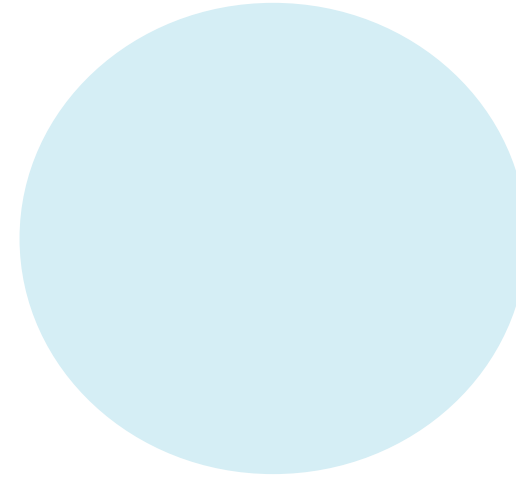
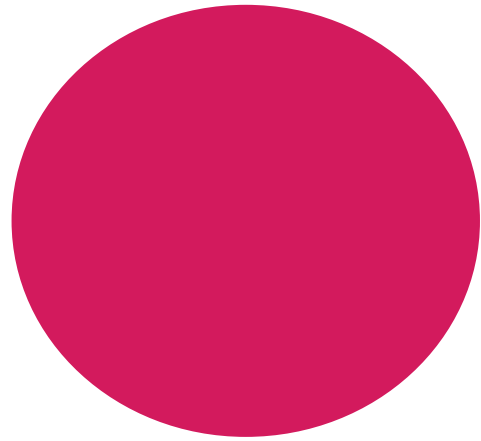
Caledon Active Transportation Master Plan

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

The Town of Caledon acquired the technical support of Alta Planning + Design and the community engagement support of 8 80 Cities. Community engagement is important when crafting an Active Transportation Master Plan to ensure the vision of the community is captured and reflected.

SUPPORTED BY





International projects

Copenhagen Study Tours 2023

43

city leaders & researchers

2

delegations

This year, 8 80 Cities was very excited to re-launch our Copenhagen Study Tour. The tour was created in 2014 to inspire city leaders to adapt Copenhagen's promising practices for enhancing public life. Since then, 8 80 Cities has hosted over 100 urban decisionmakers on a five-day tour of one of the happiest, healthiest, and most engaged cities in the world. 8 80 cities curates a week of engaging lectures, planning workshops and walking and cycling tour featuring some of Copenhagen's best and brightest urbanists. Study Tour participants are immersed in Danish culture and experience firsthand a city dedicated to putting people first. This year we hosted two delegations.



Healthy Urban Policy Workshop

Location: Copenhagen, Denmark

Funder: CIHR Healthy Cities Research Initiative (HCRI)



In 2019, 8 80 Cities and CIHR (Canadian Institutes for Health Research) embarked on a bold program to foster connections and bridge the gap between Canadian researchers, decision makers and city leaders on immersive study workshops under the mandate of the Healthy Cities Research Initiative. This was the first program of its kind and was run as a pilot project. The theme of the Healthy Urban Policy Implementation Workshops established at that time was active transportation and public space. With this focus, the City of Copenhagen was selected as an exemplary model that has developed promising practices in this field. The CIHR Healthy Cities Research Initiative (HCRI) launched a funding opportunity in 2022, in partnership with 8 80 Cities, focused on implementing healthy urban policy. At its most fundamental level, healthy cities research depends on partnerships between researchers, municipalities, and community organizations to identify needs and co-design projects to help address those needs. We were very excited to be able to bring the first Canadian study group to Copenhagen in September 2023. We were joined by four city teams from Brandon, Manitoba, Saskatoon Saskatchewan, Oshawa, Ontario and Guelph, Ontario for 5 days in Copenhagen to experience the 8 80 immersive workshop.



SUPPORTED BY





Parks and Public Space Implementation Workshop

Location: Copenhagen, Denmark
Funder: Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation

We were also very lucky to bring two cities currently working on Waterfront Redevelopment projects, Detroit, and Buffalo. Through funding received from the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation, we brought a group of 24 representatives to Copenhagen in October 2023, to focus on the transformation of Copenhagen's harbour, from a industrial Portland to a vibrant and integral part of the city's public realm. We learned how often the most innovative and beneficial solutions, come from the places of most scarcity and challenge. We saw how Copenhagen has taken the lessons of it's 1990's era harbour development and translated those into a new norther harbour development and we all left feeling very inspired about our own Waterfront cities!

SUPPORTED BY



AARP Technical Assistance Program

Location: Various States, U.S.A.
Funder: AARP Livable Communities

Partners:

- Alaska (Juneau & Anchorage)
- California (State wide)
- Idaho (Soda Springs, Montpelier, Malad, Preston City)
- New York (Brooklyn)
- North Carolina (Mt. Airy)
- Washington State (Renton)

SUPPORTED BY



8 80 Cities are the only Canadian Technical Assistance Providers for AARP Livable Communities. 8 80 Cities is proud to have worked with over 50 U.S. communities of all sizes realize their vision for age-friendly parks and public spaces.



AARP Community of Practice: Creating Community Gardens for All Ages

Location: Various States, U.S.A.

Funder: AARP Livable Communities

In addition to the new gardening guide, we supported over 100 community gardeners across America through workshops introducing great gardening practices and green-thumb based community engagement. Learn more here: www.880cities.org/portfolio_page/creating-community-gardens-for-people-of-all-ages/



SUPPORTED BY



Awards & Recognition

Mississauga Corporate Award Community Partnership

We received this award for our work with the City of Mississauga and Green Communities Canada and the fantastic schools, school board, and community partners that helped make healthy, active and safe School Streets possible.



Brampton Urban Design Award Public Realm, Public Space and Landscape Design

We received this honour for the engaging design that elevates the dialogue among place, people and landscape for Vivian Lane, an underutilized laneway in downtown Brampton. Thank you to the City of Brampton, our partners, artist Abiola Idowu, volunteers and the community at large for being part of this fantastic project!



Spacing Magazine Recognition 20 People We Love - Streets For All Ages

8 80 Cities Executive Director, Amanda O'Rourke, was recognized as one of 20 inspiring individuals who care deeply about urban issues and the future of Toronto.





Looking ahead..

As we embark on new adventures in 2024, we at 8 80 Cities are excited and thankful for the work, opportunities, and partnerships ahead.

We look forward to growing even more and accomplishing the goals we have set as an organization. Thank you to our clients, partners, board members and volunteers for your continued support and dedication to helping us build better cities for all.

Here's to a transformative and inspiring 2024!

- The 8 80 Cities Team



We believe 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.

Explore what we do.

