



215 Spadina Ave. Suite 500
Toronto, Ontario
M5T 2C7 CANADA
Telephone: 1 (416) 591-7404
info@8-80cities.org
www.8-80cities.org

PRESS RELEASE

*For Immediate Release: Thursday, February 4th, 2010
Contact: Gil Penalosa, 416.591.7404
Cell: 905.399.1314
Executive Director, 8-80 Cities*

8-80 Cities sends letter to elected officials in the GTA outlining actions to improve pedestrian safety

(Toronto)—(February 4, 2010) — The rash of pedestrian fatalities in the Greater Toronto Area is a tragic symptom of city planning that does not serve those who are most vulnerable on the roads. Such incidents can be avoided with better design, planning, and maintenance.

As such, 8-80 cities is sending a letter to decision makers across the GTA urging them to act. The letter outlines 10 specific actions that can dramatically improve conditions on the road for all users.

“Over the past 40 years we have been building cities thinking more on car’s mobility than in creating cities for people. This is coming at a significant cost, and this has been clearly demonstrated with the terrible loss of life in the last few weeks in the GTA” says Gil Penalosa, Executive Director of 8-80 Cities. Penalosa notes, “Those who were killed in the last four weeks were young people, old people, rich and poor, men and women, at night and in the daytime. Everyone is a pedestrian and we need to make the streets safe for all.”

Twice as many pedestrians are killed by motor vehicles in Ontario and Canada than homicides by firearm. Every day 37 people are injured by motor vehicles in Canada while walking. With the Greater Golden Horseshoe area set to grow from 7.5 m to 11.2 million, by 2031 the recommendations outlined in the letter are to improve our existing cities but also to use as we create communities for 3.7 million additional people.

The letter being issued to decision makers by 8-80 Cities is attached below.



215 Spadina Ave. Suite 500
Toronto, Ontario
M5T 2C7 CANADA
Telephone: 1 (416) 591-7404
info@8-80cities.org
www.8-80cities.org

Dear Elected Official,

8-80 Cities would like to help you make communities in the Greater Toronto Area safer for everyone. Our organization is deeply concerned about the recent spate of pedestrian fatalities that have occurred across the Greater Toronto Area this year. 14 people have been killed by motor vehicles while walking in the last 29 days. In addition, over 2,000 pedestrians were injured by cars in 2009 in the City of Toronto.

Everyone is a pedestrian and every trip begins and ends by walking. We need to improve the cities that we have today and build our communities differently to prevent these tragic and unnecessary deaths.

The following is a list of 10 actions that can be implemented immediately to improve the safety of our streets and have been proven to work in both North American and European cities:

1. *Lower the speed limit on all neighbourhood streets to 30 kph or below.* This includes creating physical barriers so that drivers are forced to obey the speed limit, also known as traffic calming. Lowering speed ensures fewer accidents because drivers have more time to see ahead of them and to react. In addition, a pedestrian hit by a car going at 30 kph has an 80% probability of surviving whereas a pedestrian hit at 50 kph has only 20% probability of surviving.
2. *Create separate facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and motor vehicles.* On arterial roads with more than 5,000 cars per day or speeds over 40 kph there should be physical barriers separating pedestrians, cyclists and motor vehicles as each goes at very different speeds.
3. *Eliminate right turns on red.*
4. *Give pedestrians a five-second head start over vehicles at green lights.* This increases the visibility of pedestrians.
5. *Significantly increase the lighting on street crossings to ensure pedestrians are highly visible at night.*
6. *Maintain sidewalks and street crossings* – ensure crosswalks are clearly marked and clear snow promptly.
7. *Ensure curbs at corners are built at 90 degree angles.* Rounded corners encourage vehicles to turn faster and increases the crossing distances for pedestrians.
8. *Ensure the number of crosswalks in neighbourhood is commensurate to the volume of vehicle and pedestrian traffic in the area.* Providing enough crosswalks will reduce jaywalking.
9. *Educate pedestrians and drivers.* Children in primary school should receive significant training on road safety and mobility as a pedestrian. 40 per cent of the questions on the driver's test should relate to the interaction with pedestrians and cyclists on the road.
10. *Implement a Complete Streets policy.* Complete streets are designed, planned, built and maintained to accommodate pedestrians, cyclists, transit users, and vehicles – in that order of priority. Complete streets are an integral step in building *Complete Communities*, which allow people access to their daily needs within a 10 minute walk.

We urge you to take action to make our streets safer for everyone.