Make a Place for People

MAIN ST. PEDESTRIAN AREA, WASAGA BEACH

8-80 Cities®

Parks Streets Public Places for all
Make a Place for People
MAIN STREET PEDESTRIAN MALL, WASAGA BEACH

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8-80 Cities is a non-profit organization based in Toronto, Canada. We are dedicated to contributing to the transformation of cities into places where people can walk, bike, access public transit and visit vibrant parks and public places.

Our approach is to engage communities at all levels and across multiple sectors to inspire the creation of cities that are easily accessible, safe, and enjoyable for everyone. We have working experience in urban areas across Canada, the United States, Latin America, Europe, Asia, Australia, and New Zealand.

Why 8-80?
We are convinced that if everything we did in our public spaces was great for everyone from 8 years old to 80 years old, we would end up with healthy and vibrant communities for all.
This project is partially funded by the Ontario government’s Healthy Communities Fund.

Wasaga Beach contains 14 kilometres of pristine beaches, a scenic river and dramatic sand dune system, all surrounded by the Wasaga Beach Provincial Park. The Town is a fast growing community of 17,500 residents, made up of retirees, families and young couples alike. The community offers numerous recreation trails for hiking, cycling, snowshoeing, cross country skiing and snowmobiling.

The Town of Wasaga Beach is a beautiful community on the south shore of the Georgian Bay, and is known as one of the premier vacation destinations in Ontario.

OUR PARTNERS
The Make a Place for People Project

Make a Place for People is a project based on the idea that community participation is key to the creation of vibrant and healthy public spaces.

The overall goal of the project is to inject new life into currently underperforming public spaces to encourage physical activity and promote mental health while also contributing to creating more sustainable and people-friendly communities.

How to use this report

By working closely with local partners in identifying community stakeholders, 8-80 Cities has endeavored to tap into the imagination of the diverse people who use or would like to use the space. This document is the culmination of those efforts.

The recommendations and visualizations are a representation of what we heard from the various stakeholders we engaged.

We see this report as a tool for community members, elected officials and public sector staff alike to generate action and to help sustain community participation in the space.
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In 2012, 8-80 Cities selected the Main Street Pedestrian Area in Wasaga Beach, Ontario, to be a site for the Make a Place for People project.

8-80 Cities engaged community members through focus groups, workshops, interviews and a public forum, and collected more than 300 community-based ideas and recommendations for improving the Main St. Pedestrian Area.

Many people in Wasaga Beach view the Main St. Pedestrian Area as run-down and neglected. However, with equal conviction, people believe the area has great potential. It’s an area that was once a vibrant community destination, and there is no reason it cannot become that again.

The town of Wasaga Beach has created an excellent long-term vision for the site in the planning and vision document ‘Opportunity Wasaga’. But the community needs to see action in the short term. Improvements can be achieved through community-focused infrastructure improvements, high-visibility temporary projects, partnership-based management, and consistent programming, activities and events.
Based on the ideas and recommendations collected through the project, 8-80 Cities identified six overall themes that need to be addressed to improve the Main St. Pedestrian Area:

1. Leadership & Action
   The Town of Wasaga Beach owns a significant amount of land near the Main St. Pedestrian Area. It should seize the opportunity to lead by example by creating high-impact, fun and engaging pilot projects in the short-term and invest in high quality, well-designed infrastructure improvements in the long term.

2. Accessibility & Safety
   Improving accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists is key to making the Main St. Pedestrian area a successful place.

3. Community-Focused
   Future developments in the area need to first and foremost be appealing to the local community. The local community should be involved as much as possible in programming and activities.

4. Retail, Shops, & Markets
   To attract a wider range of users, the retail experience at the Main St. Pedestrian Area must be improved and diversified.

5. Entertainment & Attraction
   More family-friendly activities and attractions can be used to diversify visitors and attract community members.

6. Embellishment & Comfort
   The harsh environment of the Main St. Pedestrian Area should be countered with interesting seating options and gathering spaces, greenery and high-quality public infrastructure.

Local students brainstorm ideas for the Main St. Pedestrian Area
This section of the report provides a description of the Make a Place for People project methodology, as well as an overview of the Main Street Pedestrian Area.
We know that parks and public spaces play a vital role in our communities; they create nodes where people meet, relax, and play. But many parks and public spaces in Ontario are under-performing, with very few uses and activities, and lack funding, management, and community participation.

The goal of the Make a Place for People project is to educate and empower communities across the province with the tools to transform under-performing parks and public spaces into vibrant and active destinations that promote social interaction, mental health, and well-being for all.

What is the Make a Place for People Project?

Our goal is to develop vibrant public spaces that encourage physical activity and promote mental health while contributing to more sustainable and people-friendly communities.
Our Partners: 
The Town of Wasaga Beach

The Town of Wasaga Beach is a popular vacation destination with 14 kilometres of pristine beaches, a scenic river and a dramatic sand dune system, located at the southern end of Georgian Bay.

The beach itself is owned and operated by Ontario Parks as the Wasaga Beach Provincial Park and is the primary attraction to the town. Of the six main beach areas, Beach Areas One and Two, and the adjacent private/public lands, have historically functioned as the main destination for tourism activity. Due to the economic climate, losses due to fires, and recent failed private redevelopment plans, Beach Areas One and Two have been in steady decline. The area is so important that the Town undertook an in-depth community visioning exercise, called Opportunity Wasaga, to develop a long-term vision for the future of the public and private lands in this area.

During the development of Opportunity Wasaga, the Main St. Pedestrian Mall was identified as an area that would be ideal for an event space/community gathering space. To further the long-terms plans laid out in Opportunity Wasaga, the Town selected the Main St. Pedestrian Area as the site for the Make a Place for People Project.

“The site is important because its current condition reflects the ‘undevelopment’ of the main tourist beach areas as a whole. The Main Street (and potentially the surrounding lands) has been identified through the Town’s visioning process as a potential location for a landmark public square, which can be used to program events and hold gatherings through all four seasons.”
- The Town of Wasaga Beach

“The Town feels that the Make a Place for People project can continue the positive momentum by assisting in the recreating of a very important space within the larger context of Beach Areas One and Two: the Main Street Pedestrian Area.
- The Town of Wasaga Beach
The Main St. Pedestrian Area

The project site is a municipal street, Main Street, located between Mosley Street and Beach Drive (the main commercial strip and tourist area) and is approximately 150 metres long and 15.5 metres wide. Its southernmost point is the intersection of Mosley Street with Beach Drive, from which it continues north to Beach Drive, providing a beautiful view of Beach Area One and the Georgian Bay.

Main Street was once a traditional small-town Ontario ‘main street’ with pedestrian and vehicle traffic and bustling commercial activity. It was closed to vehicle traffic in the late 1970’s and has remained a pedestrian mall to date.

The Fire

In 2007, a fire destroyed the majority of the commercial buildings that lined both sides of the pedestrian mall, resulting in property vacancy and an unenclosed pedestrian space. Another smaller fire in 2011 destroyed one of the few remaining buildings on Main Street. The unenclosed characteristic of the pedestrian space remains to this date, although several small buildings were constructed at the north and south ends of the street, and a steel-framed, plastic-sheathed dome structure was constructed in 2009.

“This is a focal point. When you come across the bridge, it’s the very first thing you see.”

“We have seen over the last six or seven years all kinds of plans for Beach One and Two. Is this really going to happen?”

“The town has been more proactive, with buying up some properties, but I don’t have much confidence anything will actually change.”

Voices from the Community
Current Conditions

After the larger 2007 fire, Main Street was refurbished with interlocking paving stones and some benches, lampposts, and shade structures were installed. It is currently used as a pedestrian thoroughfare, providing a path for foot and bicycle traffic from the Main Street Bridge, which crosses the Nottawasaga River to the beach in summer months.

Little redevelopment/replacement of the historic commercial buildings lost to the fire has occurred, so the Main Street no longer functions as a vibrant gathering place. The site is well-used by pedestrians as a thoroughfare in the summer, but not as a gathering place. In the spring and fall ‘shoulder-season’, when tourism visitor numbers drops off significantly, and the winter, the site is greatly under-used.

+ STRENGTHS

PEDESTRIAN SPACE
In the 1970’s Main St. was closed to cars and opened to people!

EXCELLENT LOCATION
The Main St. Pedestrian Mall is a vital link to the beach and the businesses on Beach Drive.

HISTORIC RELEVANCE
In the past, the Main St. Pedestrian Mall was a central shopping area and meeting place. There is no reason it cannot become a vibrant place in the future!

DEDICATED COMMUNITY MEMBERS
There are many dedicated community advocates in Wasaga Beach who are willing to give their time and energy to improving the area. The Town must find a way to harness this great energy!

- WEAKNESSES

UN-DEVELOPED
Since the fire in 2007, the Main St. Pedestrian Mall has not attracted adequate investment or business development.

DESERTED IN THE ‘OFF-SEASON’
Almost no-one visits the Main St. Pedestrian Area in the cooler weather. All the business on Main St. and Beach Drive close in the off-season.

AMBIENCE OF DECLINE
Boarded-up-businesses and deteriorating facades add to a general ambiance of decline at Beach Areas One and Two.

DIFFICULT TO ACCESS BY FOOT AND BIKE
Many community members said they found the crossing at Main St. and Mosely St. difficult and dangerous.
3 WORD ACTIVITY

8-80 Cities asked Wasaga Beach community members to write down three words that they associate with the Main St. Pedestrian Area today. Examples of their responses are shown below.

The vast majority of words were negative and expressed people’s concern and displeasure with the state of the pedestrian mall and Beach Areas One and Two in general.
BUT...

The word ‘potential’ was consistently used by community members and represents the great hope and confidence people have that the space can be transformed.

The fact that the site is currently under-performing, but also has fantastic potential is what makes it perfect candidate for the Make a Place for People Project.
The Make a Place for People process aims to tap into the imagination of the diverse people who use a public space to create a vision and cultivate a culture of community participation in the space. The process involves three phases:

1. PARTICIPATORY PLANNING
   Working with the local project partner to identify stakeholders to be involved in the project and develop a strategy for engagement.

2. SITE ASSESSMENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
   Assessments of the existing site, including both “hardware” (physical infrastructure) and “software” (uses, activities, and management). Community engagement with diverse stakeholders through a variety of activities such as workshops, focus groups, interviews and on-site conversations.

3. VISION DEVELOPMENT AND ACTION PLANNING
   Data collection and analysis to inform the creation of the Make a Place for People report. Reporting and action planning synthesizes the data collected into a user-friendly format that reflects the community’s vision of the space.
# The Main St. Pedestrian Area Project Timeline 2012

## 1 Planning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUG</th>
<th>SEPT</th>
<th>OCT</th>
<th>NOV</th>
<th>DEC</th>
<th>JAN/FEB</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Identification of community stakeholders.</td>
<td>- Analysis of data and documentation of initial findings.</td>
<td>- Various community engagement sessions.</td>
<td>- Review of findings from previous on-site sessions and site assessment.</td>
<td>- Development of schedule and coordination of logistics for 2nd on-site visit.</td>
<td>- Develop initial vision and recommendations for the site.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Site research and context assessment.</td>
<td>- Development of content and materials for 2nd on-site visit.</td>
<td>- Outreach and promotion of events and activities for 2nd on-site visit.</td>
<td>- Collection of data from community engagement sessions.</td>
<td>- Draft report issued to local partner.</td>
<td>- Feedback incorporated into final report.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Development of schedule and coordination of event logistics for first on-site visit.</td>
<td>- Debrief of first on-site visit and planning for 2nd on-site visit.</td>
<td>- Data analysis and report development.</td>
<td>- Collection of data from community engagement sessions.</td>
<td>- Public forum with keynote by Gil Penalosa.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Outreach and promotion of events and activities for first on-site visit.</td>
<td>- Collection of data from community engagement sessions.</td>
<td>- Development of content and materials for 2nd on-site visit.</td>
<td>- Debrief of 2nd on-site visit.</td>
<td>- Analysis of data and documentation of findings from community engagement and site assessments.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Development of content and materials for community engagement sessions.</td>
<td>- 1st On-Site Visit: Site assessment and photo documentation.</td>
<td>- Various community engagement sessions.</td>
<td>- Development of content and materials for 2nd on-site visit.</td>
<td>- Feedback incorporated into final report.</td>
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### 1st On-Site Visit:
- Site assessment and photo documentation.
- Various community engagement sessions.
- Collection of data from community engagement sessions.
- Debrief of first on-site visit and planning for 2nd on-site visit.

### 2nd On-Site Visit:
- Various community engagement sessions.
- Review of findings from previous on-site sessions and site assessment.
- Collection of data from community engagement sessions.
- Debrief of 2nd on-site visit.

### Data analysis and report development

#### 345 ideas collected

### The Main St. Pedestrian Area selected as project site by 8-80 Cities through project application process.

### Sept. 20th: Community members and business owners share their ideas about how to improve the Main St. Pedestrian Area.

### More than 100 ideas collected during a visit to the Wasaga Beach Youth Centre.

### Nov. 30th: 8-80 Cities visits local school to hear students’ ideas about how the site could be transformed.

### Nov. 29th: Representatives from local community organizations create a plan for how to animate the site through activities and events.

### The 8-80 Cities team brainstorms ideas for the project report.
This section includes international research, evidence, and tools to support improving parks and public spaces in Ontario.

We hope that the people of the Wasaga Beach and beyond will be inspired to use this report to help “make the case” for improving parks, squares and streets so that we can create healthier, happier and more sustainable neighbourhoods across the province.

2. PLACES FOR PEOPLE
“GREAT PUBLIC SPACES DON’T HAVE TO BE COMPLICATED. A FANCY DESIGN CANNOT MAKE UP FOR A SPACE THAT’S BORING, INACCESSIBLE, UNCARED FOR OR UNSAFE.”
Parks and public spaces define our greatest cities and shape our most vibrant communities. Imagine Ottawa without the Rideau Canal, Montreal without the cobblestone streets of the Old Port, Toronto without the St. Lawrence Market, or Vancouver without the seawall at Stanley Park.

Putting the Public Back in Public Space

Public spaces are our community’s most valuable assets, and they belong to all of us. We have a right and a responsibility to be involved in decisions related to their use, management, and design. But, in many cases, the public has been left out of this decision-making process, and we’ve stopped asking to be involved.

Our experience shows that the best parks and public spaces have a high level of community involvement, foster a sense of stewardship and ownership, and are sensitive to the changing needs and desires of the community they serve.

1. The idea for NYC’s renowned Highline Park was originally conceived by two community members who objected to the destruction of the elevated rail bed where the park now stands.
2. While not technically a park, Guadalajara’s weekly open streets program “Via Recreativa” was spearheaded by three successful business leaders, now known as the NGO “Guadalajara 20/20”. Every week, the program sees more than 300,000 people use the city streets to bike, run, walk, and play.
3. Dufferin Grove Park in Toronto is one of the city’s unique and most successful public spaces, thanks to the on-going coordination and partnership between the “Friends of Dufferin Grove” and the city of Toronto.
Engaging people in decisions related to their parks and public spaces is what 8-80 Cities strives to do. We never cease to be impressed by the creativity, knowledge, and know-how that community members possess about their communities. The great diversity of people and perspectives in any community is its greatest resource. Finding creative ways to “tap the collective brain” is the first step in creating public places that are people-focused, and people-friendly.

By understanding what the community wants and needs, decision-makers can work together to offer appropriate programming, infrastructure, and design.

The most effective management of parks and public spaces involves what we call “the three-legged stool”---a balanced combination of elected officials, public sector staff, and the local community (including residents, businesses, non-profit organizations and community groups).

8-80 Cities works to bridge the gap between these actors to facilitate a process of meaningful and successful change. We use reports like this one to articulate the community’s vision and work with decision-makers to develop strategies for implementation.
Streets for People!

*Streets are our cities’ largest public spaces. We need to re-think how these spaces can be used to create healthier, more sustainable and equitable cities.*

Streets can be places that not only facilitate mobility, but also provide space for community building, physical activity, forming neighbourhood identity and contributing to people’s quality of life. Cities around the world have been taking back the streets! In an effort to create communities that encourage healthy lifestyles and sustainability, many cities have been transforming vehicular streets into people-friendly public spaces.

Providing safe, extensive infrastructure for cyclists and pedestrians has also proven to alleviate congestion. Such infrastructure paves the way for affordable, convenient transportation, which in turn can have a profound impact on the economy. Traffic congestion contributes to delays in moving goods, lost productivity and higher fuel costs. Congestion costs Ontario over $5 billion in lost GDP every year.*

Cities such as Copenhagen and Amsterdam have invested heavily in bicycling infrastructure and have achieved significant results. In Copenhagen, the bike mode share has gone from less than 10% in 1975 to 36% in 2004, superseding the automobile mode share.** With 329 km of cycling tracks in place, Copenhagen has continuously been improving its infrastructure.

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1. In 2007, New Road in Brighton, England, was transformed into a shared space where pedestrians, motorists and cyclist are sharing the same street. The project has shown a 62% increase in pedestrian traffic and 600% more staying activities.
2. Only a few years ago, this stretch of Broadway Ave. in Times Square was a frantic street full of taxis and buses. Now it’s a place where people rest, relax and steal kisses.
3. In the summer of 2012, “Celebrate Yonge” transformed Toronto’s iconic Yonge St. into a place for people by turning traffic lanes into patios and pop-up parks.
How Healthy is Wasaga Beach?

42.9% Are Not Physically Active ***
20% Have High Blood Pressure ***
56.5% Are Obese or Overweight ***
25.8% Feel Stressed ***

Active Places, Healthy People

Today, health experts agree that 30 minutes of moderate physical exercise can cut vulnerability to heart disease in half, control blood pressure, and reduce cholesterol. Experts say that exercise also increases energy levels and improves mood, sleeping habits and digestion*.

Building convenient and accessible pedestrian and cycling infrastructure makes it easier for physical activity to become a part of our daily routine. A study from the American Journal of Preventative Medicine published in 2004 found that every additional hour spent in a car was linked to a 6% increase in a person’s chances of becoming obese. Conversely, each kilometer walked was linked to a 4.8% decrease in the chance of becoming obese.

Furthermore, obesity rates for several highly industrialized countries consistently drop when alternative forms of transportation, such as walking, cycling, and public transit are used.

“STUDIES SHOW THAT CITIES WITH HIGHER RATES OF WALKING AND BIKING HAVE LOWER RATES OF OBESITY.”

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*Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario, Basic Principles of Physical Activity
**Journal of Physical Activity and Health, 2008
*** Statistics Canada, Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit, Health Profile June 2012
“Health inequalities” refers to the general trend that people living in poorer areas are more likely to be unhealthy, and die earlier. Researchers have found that living near parks, woodlands or other open spaces helps to reduce health inequalities.**

Studies have demonstrated that neighbourhood design is associated with increased levels of physical activity among residents because of its impact on their travel choices.****

A Toronto-based study showed that the lower the walkability score of the neighbourhood is, the higher the body mass index (BMI) of the residents will be.****

A study in Japan showed that seniors living in cities with access to walkable green spaces lived longer regardless of socioeconomic status.*

Studies show that for every 10 minutes a person spends commuting by car, time spent participating in community activities falls by 10%***

* CABEL, Using Community Green Spaces to Tackle Inequality and Improve Health
** Mitchell & Popham, The Lancet. Effect of Exposure to Natural Environment on Health Inequalities: an Observational Population Study
*** Cascadia Score Card 2006, Focus on Sprawl & Health
**** Toronto Public Health, The Walkable City
“HAVE DOCTORS ADDRESS DIET AND EXERCISE ISSUES BEFORE REACHING FOR THE PRESCRIPTION PAD WHEN DEALING WITH HEALTH ISSUES SUCH AS CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE AND LATE-ONSET TYPE 2 DIABETES.”

- A RECOMMENDATION FROM THE DRUMMOND REPORT
This section includes a summary of the results of the site assessment as well as the ideas and recommendations generated by the community about how to improve the Main St. Pedestrian Area. The visualizations in this section are used to help people re-imagine the Main St. Pedestrian Area and to highlight specific recommendations, programs, or improvements.

In addition to many focus groups, meetings, interviews, and casual conversations with community members, more than 300 specific recommendations and ideas were collected during the project. Trends, priorities, and compatible best practices are highlighted in this section. To find a complete list of results from the project, please visit:

www.8-80cities.org > Resources > 8-80 Tools > Community Reports
MY WISH...
A Park and music to dance to.

MY WISH...
Drive in movie centre

MY WISH...
A really big playground park

MY WISH...
Stak rack

Winter activities

MY WISH...
BMX Show!

MY WISH...
Make it more wheelchair accessible.

MY WISH...
Gym!

MY WISH...
Youth Center
Making a mural

+ Playground

My wish...
Kodaid Fountain

My wish...
My Clown

SEASONAL MARKET.
Why Bother with Engagement?

Community engagement is time-consuming and sometimes challenging. However, engaging people in the early stages of a project will always result in a better public space. The community can help to define priorities, talk through challenges, brainstorm solutions, and negotiate with each other about specific ideas.

But community engagement is about much more than talking about what types of benches people want. The simple act of being engaged—having someone ask your opinion, or discussing a community issue with your neighbour—helps to raise people’s level of interest in community projects and builds a sense of neighbourhood pride and belonging.
By categorizing more than 340 ideas collected during the project into broad themes, we can see that more than a third of the ideas were related to community events and activities.

This is an important reminder that the Main St. Pedestrian Area area will have to be consistently programmed with events and activities for the space to reflect the vision of the community and be truly successful.

### Ideas by Theme

- **56% Infrastructure & Facilities**
- **41% Community Events, Activities & Programs**
- **81 Ideas Related to Family-Oriented Activities**
- **13% Accessibility & Connectivity**
- **36 Ideas Related to Encouraging Physical Activity**
- **82 Ideas Related to Family-Friendly Infrastructure**
- **45 Ideas Related to Arts, Culture & Entertainment**
- **14 Ideas to Prioritize Pedestrians**
- **27 Ideas Related to Improving Accessibility for All**

**Children’s Activity Area** - Temporary Playground - Better Seating - Vendors - Unique Shops - Spa - Bowling alley - Arcade - Ferris Wheel - Family restaurant - Gazebo - Rotating Sign with Events - Pop-Up


Employ Volunteer Groups - Music - Family Tactile Activities - Clowns - Magic Shows - Local Artists and Lessons (Wasaga Artists Club) - Learning Centre - Speakers’ Corner - Evening Entertainment - Spring Clean-Up - Family Fire pits - BBQ - Art on the Beach - “Back to the beach” Festival (geography, history, music, dancing under the stars) - Winter Family Activities (with seniors, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, races, food (chili or BBQ) - Blizzard Walk - Cultural Activities Taking Place in Wasaga Beach - Rib-Fest - Food Festival - Exercise Groups (All ability, free, dance classes/hiphop/zumba/yoga)


**47% of all ideas were related to family-oriented activities & infrastructure**
By analyzing the community information collected through the engagement process, 8-80 Cities was able to identify six key themes mentioned by community members. These themes will be explored in the following pages.

1. LEADERSHIP & ACTION
2. ACCESSIBILITY & SAFETY
3. COMMUNITY-FOCUSED
   3.1. A PLACE TO MOVE
4. RETAIL, SHOPS & MARKETS
5. ENTERTAINMENT & ATTRACTION
   5.1. CELEBRATE CANADIAN CLIMATE
6. EMBELLISHMENT & COMFORT
‘MY PLACE’ ACTIVITY
The map above was created by students who were asked to create their ideal the Main St. Pedestrian Area. 8-80 Cities used these maps, along with hundreds of ideas and suggestions developed by community members, to form a plan for the site.

This map reflects many of the major themes that 8-80 Cities identified in the community data.
1. Leadership & Action

Above all else, the community expressed a desire to see the Town of Wasaga Beach take a stronger leadership role at the Main St. Pedestrian Area. The community expressed a frustration with the slow speed of change at Beach Area One and Two, and many community members seemed resigned to the belief that nothing would change at the Main St. Pedestrian Mall and the area around it.

There is an opportunity for the Town to lead the change at Beach Area One and Two, by undertaking innovative projects, partnering with local service providers and community groups to animate the space, and working with the business community to improve the look and feel of the area.

One of the most important steps in improving the Main St. Pedestrian Mall and the surrounding areas of Beach One and Two, is to show visible action on the ground in the short term.

PRESCRIPTIONS

> Use temporary projects to transform the space and test new ideas.
> Develop fun, community-based events that can be held at the space. Use these events to help restore the community’s faith in positive change.
> Use traditional media, social media, and innovative strategies to communicate with the public about plans for the space.
> Work with local business to improve their physical appearance and adopt their business strategies.
> Lead by example. Improve existing town resources and infrastructure, such as the public washrooms.
> Actively seek out partnerships with local community organizations to implement programs and activities. Support these organizations with easy access to permits, as well as resources.

Improving the look of the public washrooms at Beach Area One would be an opportunity for the Town to lead by example. Currently, the public washrooms feature oversized and unattractive signage, and low-quality infrastructure. This lowers the standard for the urban realm, and sends a message to surrounding businesses that it’s okay to have loud, visually distracting advertising, and low-quality facades.
If New York can do it, Wasaga Beach can do it! Under the strong leadership of Mayor Bloomberg and the Department of Transportation Commissioner, Janet Sadik Khan, New York City has been transforming parking lots and well-known streets into vibrant public places. In the example above, it took a lot of guts, some low-cost materials (paint, planters, umbrellas, movable tables and chairs), and less than a month to create this new pedestrian plaza and send the message to the people of New York that pedestrians come first.

Opportunity Wasaga is a planning and vision document put together by the Town of Wasaga Beach. The process to develop the report involved significant stakeholder engagement and lays out a thoughtful and thorough long-term strategic vision for Beach Areas One and Two that should be carefully and closely followed. While the document lays out a commendable long-term vision, one of the most important steps will implementing short-term and medium-term actions that will improve the area within the next 1 to 5 years. The Main St. Pedestrian Mall, which was identified in the document as the location of a future public event space, is a highly visible location and an important area to focus these efforts on. Short-term improvements at this site will help to restore the confidence of the community and create buy-in for future projects.

“If we were able to do something NOW... it could be a great boost for recognition of what could be done on the Main Street section we talked about.”
2. Accessibility & Safety

More than two million people visit Wasaga Beach every year, and most of them go to Beach Areas One and Two to enjoy the beach front, the liveliness of the area and the nightlife. However, the area, including the Main St. Pedestrian Mall, is difficult to access by foot or by bike, and the streets and parking lots often become gnarled with cars.

The area also has a large amount of surface parking, which encourages more driving in the area and creates a large, hard, vacant space in the off-season. Finding ways to encourage more walking and cycling, creatively using surface parking lots in the off-season and reducing the overall amount of surface parking in all seasons is a vital step in improving the quality of the public realm.

“Our hotel is a five-minute walk to the beach, but the bridge and the crossing at Main Street are really unsafe for people who want to walk or bike. It’s such a mess with cars and parking—it’s crazy to have people driving down there when it’s so close, but it’s the safest way to get around. They need to fix it and make it more accessible for pedestrians and cyclists.”

- Local Hotel Manager

“With all the cars around, it’s just not pleasant to walk down there.”

“There is so much congestion on Beach Area One and Two during the summer; there should be fewer cars, and pedestrians should be prioritized.”

PRESCRIPTIONS

> Make Beach Areas One and Two a Pedestrian Priority Zone. Implement traffic-calming measures to keep vehicle speeds below 30km/hr on all streets in the area.
> Install a signalized crossing at the intersection of Mosley St. and Main St.
> Use vibrant cross-walk markings to increase safety.
> Expand and improve sidewalks on Main St., Mosley St. and Beach Drive.
> Add a separated bicycle lane on Main St. and Mosley Street, including the Main St. bridge.
> Install ample bicycle parking at the entrances to the Main St. pedestrian mall.
> Make it more appealing and easier for visitors to take the bus to Wasaga Beach. In the short term, improve the bus stop at Daisy Mart. In the longer term, create a public transportation hub at Beach One or Two.
> Investigate the feasibility of bicycle rentals with locations at the beach and other important destinations, such as restaurants, hotels/motels, and transit stops.
> Continue implementation of the existing Wasaga Beach Active Transportation Wayfinding Strategy, and continue to develop the strategy with new infrastructure.
> Undertake a review process to begin reducing the number of cars that enter Beach Areas One and Two by reducing parking and encouraging active transportation and public transit. Use recovered parking space and street space for pedestrians and cyclists.
> Create better linkages with the river and trails.
The Main St. bridge is one of only two access points to Beach Areas One and Two. Unfortunately, the crossing at Mosely St. and the Main St. Pedestrian Mall does not have a pedestrian signal or stop sign, and is unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists.

Beach Drive and Mosley St. are bustling with pedestrians and cyclists in the summer time. To keep pedestrians and cyclists safe and to improve the ambiance of the area, traffic calming measures are needed to keep speeds below 30km/h, and to tell drivers that they are in a Pedestrian Priority Zone.

In Odense, Denmark, a ‘play street’ has been created using low-cost materials. The traffic-calming humps and narrowed street not only slow cars down, but also add a fun visual play element to the space. The street is further enhanced with concrete bollards, that act as fun stools for children, and permanent game tables.

For the last four years, Sainte Catherine Street in Montreal has been closed to vehicular traffic and given back to pedestrians. All summer long, Sainte Catherine St. is programmed with streets festivals, patios, street vendors and temporary art installations.

A free bike-sharing program was launched in Denver to promote active transportation and to reduce traffic congestion in the downtown core. Locals and tourists have free access to the bikes as long as they are back at the same station by 10 a.m. of the next business day. The program was founded by the city and VISIT DENVER, the convention and visitors’ bureau. Privately operated bike share systems have also been successful and could be a good model for Wasaga Beach.
3. Community-Focused

Through the engagement process, 8-80 Cities found that community members want a public space that is multi-functional and community-focused. While community members supported the idea that the space should enhance the tourist experience, they didn’t want that to be the primary purpose of the space. They expressed a desire to have a place that contributes to a healthier and sustainable community—a place that provides recreational opportunities, encourages social interaction and helps to build community identity.

Highlighting the need to create a community-focused space, is the fact that the neighbourhoods around Beach Areas One and Two rate the highest on the social deprivation index. This reinforces the fact that the space should address community needs, while enhancing the visitor experience and encouraging more families to visit Wasaga Beach.

“This end of town doesn’t have a lot of stuff. The other end has the Recplex and the Youth Centre, but we don’t have anything for families.”

PRESCRIPTIONS

- Simplify the permit process for special events. Make permit acquisition information available at the Main St. Pedestrian Area and promote or provide incentives for hosting events at the space.
- Set up a The Main St. Pedestrian Area working group to develop consistent, year-round programming for the site. Make sure local community groups and service providers are involved.
- Create a community information board and use traditional and social media to provide up-to-date information about events and activities taking place at the square.
- Use events to build stewardship and ownership at the square. Get community members involved in activities that help improve the space, such as painting or planting flowers.
- Focus on activities that contribute to healthy lifestyles.

This social deprivation index classifies Canadian regions by their social and material deprivation levels. Social deprivations look at family structures and demographics, while material deprivation studies household income, access to education and employment rates. According to this study, the areas of Beach Area One and Two rate among the highest in terms of the social and material deprivation index.

No idea is too small or too silly! Test different types of events and activities and don’t be afraid to try something new. Who would have guessed that a ‘water-war’ in Dundonald Park in Ottawa would be such a success that it would make national news!

A community board and wayfindings are an effective communication strategy to inform community members about upcoming activities and events.

Public spaces can be used as a place for community learning and education—they can operate as an out-door community centre. Parks and squares can offer community-oriented programs, such as early-childhood education, painting lessons, language classes, or storytelling. In the photo above, community members tried to create the world’s largest story-telling session.

Dance lessons are an excellent way to animate a public space because they bring together physical activity, music, culture, and social interaction. Dancing is also enjoyable for a range of ages and is a perfect ‘spectators sport’.

The Charity Road Hockey Challenge on Danforth Ave. in Toronto, is an annual event that raises money for various charities. The title sponsor for the event is the Danforth BIA.

Events like this one are an excellent way to bring together a community, contribute to a good cause, and get people moving. They also remind us that the roads and parking lots can be used for different things depending on the season, day of the week, or time of day. Our streets can be places that contribute to healthy lifestyles by providing space for people to walk, bike and play.

A community board and wayfindings are an effective communication strategy to inform community members about upcoming activities and events.

“You do a food thing with different people’s backgrounds, like an international food festival. I’d like to do it after the tourists go home. Something just for the community.”
3.1. A Place to Move!
Because of the lack of development and abundance of hard surfaces, the Main St. Pedestrian Mall and the surrounding areas are almost ‘a blank slate’. There are endless possibilities for encouraging more physical activity and providing opportunities for recreation. Any of these ideas could be adapted to the area.

1. A climbing wall is part of the Factoría-joven, Skatepark in Merida, Spain, and helps keep youth and adults busy and healthy.

2. The Rommen School and Cultural Center in Oslo, Norway, is specially designed to encourage physical activity and creativity.
3. Artist Jacob Dahlgren designed the Primary Structure for the contemporary art festival at Wanås, Sweden. A good example of a playful, inexpensive temporary play structure.

4. Swings at Quartier des Spectacles, Montreal, is a great example of a healthy playscape for all ages.

5. Nip Paysage used cost-efficient pavement design to activate a school playground in Montreal.

6-7. Temporary playgrounds are used in Guadalajara during the weekly Cyclovia.
4. Retail, Shops & Markets

While interventions, such as community events and pilot projects, can be used to improve the Main St. Pedestrian Area in the short-term, the space will never be truly vibrant if the commercial environment isn’t improved. Most community members we talked to felt that the shops and restaurants at Beach One and Two appealed to a very narrow demographic of users and offer little for families or community members.

In the short term, temporary markets and mobile food trucks can be used to enhance the space in the summer. In the longer term, a few key destinations, such as a name-brand cafe, would help to create an ‘anchor’ establishment that would draw people to the space year-round.

“The honestly, I’d love somewhere to get a good coffee. A good cappuccino at a nice cafe... all you can get down there is fast food. Wasaga needs something different”

The types of businesses at Beach Area One and Two appeal to a very narrow range of users and offer little for families and community members. Greater diversity and higher-quality selection of goods and services must be provided at the Main St. Pedestrian Mall and the surrounding area if it is to become a great place for people of all ages. During our November site visit, only one of the 35 business was open.

In addition to offering a good variety of shops, restaurants and services, Collingwood has implemented urban design guidelines that imposes restrictions on business’ appearance on major arterials downtown. Implementing a facade improvement plan and design guidelines is a good ways of enhancing the look and comfort of a street.
Food trucks and fruit stands have come a long way from offering just french fries and hot dogs. Due to their flexibility, food truck/carts are a great way to introduce a healthy, affordable, gourmet experience and would help to satisfy people’s desire for ‘something different’ at lunchtime in Wasaga Beach.

Specialty shops can become a consistent, year-round attractions. The Wakefield Bakery in the small town of Wakefield, QC, has become a destination. With its quaint facade and excellent coffee and treats, it’s a place that’s worth a ‘special trip’ in winter or summer!

No-one was observed at the Main St. Pedestrian Mall on a cold Friday evening. However on the same night just down the street, more than 100 people per hour were observed coming and going from the corner of 2nd St. and Mosley St.

Why? The corner has three year-round businesses, the LCBO, the Beer Store, and Pizza Pizza. It is a strong example of how a popular business can entice people to the area regardless of the season. If you have a product people want, they will go there to get it. A popular cafe or restaurant at the Main St. Pedestrian Area would have the same affect.
5. Entertainment & Attractions

Many community members reminisced about the activities and attractions that used to be available to visitors and community members near the Main St. Pedestrian Areal, such as out-door bowling and an arcade. While tastes may have changed over the years, there is no doubt that more family friendly attractions should be incorporated at the Main St. Pedestrian Area and Beach Area One and Two.

Community members felt that new entertainment and attractions would encourage families and visitors to stay for a number of days, rather than just ‘day-trips’, and that different types of attractions could attract a new type of visitor.

PRESCRIPTIONS

> Focus on attracting a new group of users and visitors. Use temporary games and activities to attract families in the short term.

> Focus on activities that contribute to healthy lifestyles, such as those that offer an educational, physical or cultural experience.

> Use events and activities to extend the seasons and make the Main St. Pedestrian Area area more vibrant year-round.

> Protect and enhance sight lines and physical connections to the Nottawasaga River.

> Ensure that the natural beauty of the waterfront—the main attraction of Wasaga Beach—is not compromised by visual pollution caused by unattractive business facades, loud advertising, or a low-quality public realm.

A popular topic of discussion was the possible casino. 8-80 Cities talked to community members both for and against. Some people felt that the casino would bring jobs and tourism, while others, particularly health-care professionals and community service providers, felt that a casino in Wasaga Beach, especially at Beach Area One or Two, would lead to gambling addiction and other social problems. Some people felt that if the Town were serious about changing the face of Beach Area One and Two and fulfilling the vision of Opportunity Wasaga, it should focus on more family-friendly activities.

“We should build on one of the nicest features down there, and that’s the Nancy Island Welcome Centre”

In keeping with the findings of Opportunity Wasaga, many community members expressed an interest in an indoor space, as well as a place that would be educational and highlight the rich natural history of the area.

This example is a Nature Education Centre in the Netherlands, which features a public information centre, classrooms, observation deck, restaurant and conference rooms.
“You know those thingamabobs where you can go outside and watch a movie? I want one of those.”

Free outdoor movie nights would be perfect at the Main St. Pedestrian Mall. Showing family friendly movies would help to attract a greater diversity of users and be attractive to community members looking for something to do on a warm evening. Movie nights like these are easy and affordable to organize and implement.

Create a tradition. The Wolf Island Music Festival is an excellent example of building a new tradition and attracting a new visitors. Established in 2007, the festival is now considered one of the best music festivals in Canada. The Main St. Pedestrian Mall and the surrounding area would be an excellent place to accommodate medium-scale concerts and other events.

“There used to be so much to do down there. Now, there’s nothing. We need some attractions for families.”

Many people talked about the brutal winds and storms that whip across Georgian Bay into Beach Area One and Two. A few community members even thought there might be a way to turn the harsh winter weather into a marketing opportunity—and they aren’t the first!

In communities like Tofino, BC, and Cornwall, UK, they have all turned their inclement weather into a tourist attraction. This quote from Travel.bc.ca is a fantastic example of turning lemons into lemonade:

“Storm-watching is best experienced from ocean-front hotels and B&B’s where a good book, a fireplace and maybe a down duvet across your lap are really all you need to experience the fury and the force of the pounding Pacific Ocean on the other side of your rattling, double-paned window.”

Shuffle-board could quickly and easily be incorporated at or near the Main St. Pedestrian Mall, and it’s an activity that is accessible to anyone regardless of their age or ability!
5.1. Celebrate Canadian Climate

People called Beach Area One and Two a ‘ghost town’ in the winter. While the area will probably never be as busy as it is on a sunny summer weekend, it can certainly be a lot more inviting and exciting than it is today. Making the area more attractive year-round will serve to benefit the local community and bring additional tourist revenue by extending the visiting season. Any of the ideas below could be adapted to the area.

Evidence shows that during the winter, people tend to be less physically active and suffer a greater risk of social isolation, especially older adults!

Getting people out, active and energized in the cold weather can be challenging, but physical activities like tai chi, snow-shoeing, skating and skiing can still be safe and enjoyable in the winter months.
01. Pleasure skating ice rink, Harbour Front, Toronto

02. Winter tai chi lesson, unknown location

03-04. Free hot chocolate and roasting marshmallows at the Park Hyatt fire pit, Beaver Creek, Colorado

05. Christmas market, Toronto.


08. Temporary ‘Tunnel of Light’, Kuwana City, Japan

We need to put greater effort into creating great public spaces that are attractive in the winter and entice people out of their homes with activities and events.
6. **Green & Comfortable**

People used the words ‘hard’, ‘barren’ and ‘concrete’ to describe the Main St. Pedestrian Mall. Community members agreed that the space would be greatly improved by incorporating more greenery and flowers, as well as elements of comfort and beauty.

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**PREScriptions**

- Provide diverse seating options that encourage different uses and activities. This should include traditional benches, as well as moveable tables and chairs, informal seating and playful sitting areas.

- Use umbrellas, trees and shade structures to protect people from the harsh sun.

- Diverse species of native trees and shrubs should be used. Select species that are attractive throughout the seasons.

- Improve the washrooms. Make them attractive and comfortable.

- Interesting and inviting lighting should be used to create a safe space, that is inviting and enchanting.

- Improve visual and physical connections to the Nottawasaga River, The Nancy Island Welcome Centre, and active transportation trails.

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**Comfortable means attractive, safe, welcoming and enjoyable**

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*http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dnr/22_benefits_208084_7.pdf*
Permanent or temporary lighting installations can be used to add visual interest as well as an element of safety. In Montreal, ATOMIC3 created a playful illuminated maze that offered a unique immersive experience to its visitors, and a vibrant display of colour to passersby.

Architects Ralf Erskine and Jan Gehl have studied the significant effect that city furniture can have on the sociability of a public space.

As seen above, most of the benches at the Main St. Pedestrian Mall are not positioned to encourage social interaction or conversation.

More flexible seating, like the examples below, encourages conversation and interaction by allowing people to sit face to face, stretch out, or get close and cozy. They can also accommodate larger groups of people and families.

“These multifunctional tree pits designed by Claude Cormier + Associates are a great way to introduce more green into a space, while providing additional ‘secondary seating’ along the edge of the planters.”

“Nature. It’s where we live. It’s what it’s all about”
This section uses images to show how some of the ideas presented in the report can be applied to the Main St. Pedestrian Area in the short term and the longer term. Unfortunately, creating a great place can’t be achieved by doing just one thing -- it is the culmination of many actions, large and small, that create a great place. We hope that the Town of Wasaga beach will make an effort to fulfill all the recommendations in this report, not just the ones noted on the following pages.

**SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Establish a working and management group.
- Use pilot projects to transform the space in the short term and show the community that the area is changing.
- Host small-scale, community-focused activities year-round.
- Involve the community in physically transforming the space.
- Invest in infrastructure that is useful and fun, such as recreational equipment, games, lighting, and seating.
- Improve accessibility and safety for cyclists and pedestrians at Mosley St. and Beach Drive.
- Improve the look of businesses with incentives and enforcement.
- Diversify shopping and dining options by encouraging creative retail such as gourmet food trucks, or fruit carts.
- Make the most of what’s already there through communication.
- Provide electrical and water hook-ups.
- Add a community information and events board.
- Add bicycle parking.

**LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Follow Opportunity Wasaga’s urban design guidelines.
- Include family-friendly and recreational infrastructure in the final design, such as a children’s play area.
- Restrict business types, opening hours and appearance at Beach Area One and Two.
- Program the space with events and activities year-round.
- Incorporate social services for people in the nearby neighborhood.
- Improve public transportation options to Beach Area One and Two and find ways to reduce vehicle traffic and surface parking.
- Create a BIA for Beach Area One and Two.
From our conversations with community members, it’s clear that the Town should take action as soon as possible. The lack of visible progress is a source of discontentment among the residents. There are many cost-effective, high-visibility actions that the Town of Wasaga Beach can implement immediately to improve the quality of the Main St. Pedestrian Area.

* The conceptual plan to the left illustrates possible temporary changes. It highlights the various options available to the Town of Wasaga Beach to quickly improve the vibrancy and comfort of the Main Street Pedestrian Area. It is intended to help re-imagine what the space can be in the short term, but options should not be limited to the following recommendations.

**WHAT CAN BE DONE NOW?**

MAKING IT HAPPEN
USE PILOT PROJECTS TO TRANSFORM THE SPACE

Studies show that playful street furniture, such as movable tables and chairs, attractive benches and umbrellas, helps to create a comfortable pedestrian environment, attract and retain visitors, improve the local economy and help to create a sense of belonging. These improvements can easily be incorporated on town-owned land or through partnerships with local landowners.
MAKING IT HAPPEN

HOST SMALL-SCALE ACTIVITIES ALL YEAR
Create a year-long program calendar in collaboration with community members and stakeholders and start implementing activities this spring. Use fun, creative and family-friendly activities, such as wall painting, chalk drawing, a bubble festival or a community BBQ, to attract people of all ages.

IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY AND SAFETY ACROSS MOSLEY ST. & BEACH DRIVE
Use speed bumps, bike lanes, stop signs, highly visible pedestrian crossings and lower speed limits to improve comfort and safety for pedestrians and cyclists all year.

MAKING THE MOST OF WHAT YOU HAVE THROUGH COMMUNICATION
Highlight local businesses, recreational facilities, events, activities and services with simple and clear way findings, maps and community boards to promote what already exists and highlight new projects.

ESTABLISH A WORKING & MANAGEMENT GROUP
Establish a Main St. Pedestrian Area working group with representation from the city, community-based organizations, and local service providers. Ensure a diversity of gender, age and ethnicity within the group. Use the group to program and manage the space based on the recommendations in this report.

> The Back to the Beach Festival (below), which was spear-headed by community advocate Joe Bickerstaff, is an excellent example of using an event to activate Beach Area One and Two. Incorporating activities where community members can improve and transform the space, such as pavement painting, mural making or a community clean-up, would be a great addition.
MAKE THE FACADE IMPROVEMENT PLAN MORE EFFECTIVE

Oversized and loud signage and advertising are viewed as a source of visual pollution in Beach Area One and Two. The Town of Wasaga Beach has a voluntary facade improvement plan; however, it has had low up-take at Beach Area One and Two. The Town should find ways to strengthen this plan by making it more attractive to business, and enforce or create by-laws pertaining to advertising and signage that will help to reduce visual pollution and improve the town’s image.
WHAT CAN BE DONE IN 2 TO 5 YEARS?

2. INCLUDE FAMILY-FRIENDLY AND RECREATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE FINAL DESIGN

Community members expressed the need for more family-friendly activities and infrastructure at Beach Area One and Two. The final design of the Main St. Pedestrian Area needs to include infrastructure that supports healthy lifestyles, such as a splash pad, exercise equipment and recreation facilities.

1. FOLLOW OPPORTUNITY WASAGA’S URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

The goal of creating a vibrant Main St. Pedestrian Area in the long term will only be achieved by looking at the bigger picture and addressing the needs of Beach Area One and Two as a whole. The Town of Wasaga Beach should start by developing a five-year implementation strategy based on the concepts laid out in Opportunity Wasaga.
4. VIBRANT YEAR-ROUND
A vibrant public space is a constant work in progress. As said by Project for Public Spaces in New York, ‘You are never done’. After longer-term design improvements are finished, it will be essential to continue animating the space with activities and events year-round. It will be important to provide activities that appeal to all age groups, and adjust to changing tastes and community needs.

5. INCORPORATE SOCIAL SERVICES
As the social deprivation index map illustrates on page 29, the area nearby the Main St. Pedestrian Area suffers from high social isolation, low access to public services, and poorer health outcomes. Integrating community-oriented services, such as a youth or senior center, a community center, and recreational services and programs within 500 meters of the Main St. Pedestrian Area is an important step toward creating a healthier and vibrant community.

6. CREATE A BIA FOR BEACH AREA 1 & 2
A BIA benefits more than just its business members. Often, BIAs support public realm improvements, organize community events, and assist with management and maintenance. They help create more vibrant communities that attracts visitors and help retain local customers.

> The Streetsvills BIA in Mississauga understands that a comfortable pedestrian environment will attract customers. The group plays a key role in creating a beautiful street—it invests in high-quality benches, plants lush flowers and provides maintenance services.
This section contains a variety of simple tools that can be used by the community to continue assessing and improving the Main St. Pedestrian Area.

We also hope that the Make a Place for People Project at the Main St. Pedestrian Area will inspire other communities to use these tools to develop community-led improvement strategies at other parks and public spaces across the province.
Public Space Observation Table
This tool can be used to assess the people and activities at any park or public space. By analyzing the data, you can begin to identify trends and build a picture of how the space is working.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Target Area/Sub Unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time of Arrival</th>
<th>Time of Departure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Weather

**Directions**: Each observation recording session should be no less than 1hr long. Sessions should be conducted in the morning, afternoon, evening and night on both a weekday(s) or weekend. If the site is too large or too busy to observe effectively, the site should be broken into smaller sub-units. If people are in groups, fill in the user information individually then circle the members of the group. Feel free to add new codes in the 'other codes' section if you feel it is important.

**Ethnicity Codes**: B = black, W = White, A=Asian, SA = South Asian, L=Latino  U= undetermined

**Other Codes**: Homeless = H, Disabled = D

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Fem 0-6</td>
<td>7-12</td>
<td>13-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Action Planning Instructions
Creating a doable plan is the key to turning an idea into reality. In your group, come up with a plan for how your idea can be implemented within the next year or two.

The majority of your planning time should be spent on the HOW? question.

1. What?
In the space below briefly explain what your idea is.

2. Why?
Briefly explain why your idea is important.

3. Who?
Who needs to be involved in the project? What partnerships need to be established for it to be successful?

4. When?
When will it be implemented? When will it be used? How frequently? What season? What day of the week? What hours?

5. Where?
On the map provided indicate where your idea will take place/be located

6. How?
Without writing anything down, take a few minutes to discuss as a group what needs to be done to implement your idea. After you have discussed your plan, try to break it down into manageable steps. It might be easiest to think in chunks of time, but it is up to you. You can add more steps if necessary, but try to limit yourselves to no more than six steps.
One of the simplest ways to collect information about a park or public space is by asking community members to “share an idea”. Provide small sheets of paper and a bunch of colourful markers and let the ideas flow!
Simple Site Evaluation Tool

When thinking about any park or public space, from a small neighborhood square to a large urban park, ask yourself the questions below. By thinking carefully about how people will get to the place, what they’ll do when they get there, what kind of infrastructure exists, and who manages or takes care of the space, you can start to assess what’s working, what’s not, and what could be improved.

**WHO TAKES CARE OF THIS PLACE?**

- Is there evidence of volunteerism?
- Do you see any maintenance workers or staff?
- Is there a contact information so you can reach someone in charge of the space?
- Is there an active or passive security presence?

**HOW DID I GET HERE?**

- Is the place visible from a distance?
- Is it accessible to wheelchairs and strollers?
- Can you easily walk or bike to the place?
- Is there a paved path?
- Is the path clear of snow, debris, and water?
- Are there “desire lines” or beaten paths?

**WHAT’S THERE TO DO?**

- Is there a mix of stores and services nearby?
- Are there opportunities for people to be physically active?
- Are there inviting places for people to rest or relax?
- Is there a diversity of people?
- Are there activities for people of all ages?

**WHAT’S HERE?**

- Are there comfortable places to sit?
- What kind of lighting is there?
- Is there a paved or gravel path?
- Are there public washrooms? Are they clean and inviting?
- Is there somewhere to get a snack or drink?
Software Program Calendar

Use this template to plan an effective range of activities, events, and programming for your public space throughout the year.
8-80 Cities is a non-profit organization based in Toronto, Canada. We are dedicated to contributing to the transformation of cities into places where people can walk, bike, access public transit and visit vibrant parks and public places.

Our approach is to engage communities at all levels and across multiple sectors to inspire the creation of cities that are easily accessible, safe and enjoyable for all.

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The Back to the Beach Festival at the Main St. Pedestrian Area, seen here, is a wonderful example of how a community events and activities can transform a space.