

The Sound Foot, Sound Eye Project

Concerned for the safety of its residents, the City of Sherbrooke, through its police service and in cooperation with the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec (SAAQ) [Quebec automobile insurance association], has implemented the **Sound Foot, Sound Eye** Project. It is a three-year pilot project in Sherbrooke (2005 to 2007). Therefore, it is a long-term strategic process that focuses on making an important behavioural change among Sherbrooke road users to decrease the risk of accidents involving pedestrians and vehicles. In the future, the City of Sherbrooke will establish a permanent project; this is a commitment in its 2007-2010 strategic plan to improve safety (and the feeling of security) among its residents.

The Sound Foot, Sound Eye Project is part of the Sherbrooke Police Service development plan, specifically with regard to developing road safety programs. It also part of Sherbrooke's strategic plan: one of its objectives is to improve safety by promoting safe travel. Furthermore, in 2007, an Sound Foot, Sound Eye is a yearly road safety objective of the Transports Québec [transportation department] and the SAAQ; pedestrian protection is one of the chosen targets.

Rationale:

During the October 2005 pilot project launch, it was mentioned that 45% of Québec accidents involving pedestrians happen in or near intersections.

More specifically, in the City of Sherbrooke in 2004, 68 pedestrians were victims of accidents: three of them died.

Of the 20 municipalities with the most accidents involving pedestrians in 2000-2004, Sherbrooke was in sixth place with 321 accidents. These accidents could have been avoided. Furthermore, a study of call logs for accidents involving a pedestrian and a vehicle in 2004 led us to conclude that most accidents involving pedestrians occur between intersections and not in pedestrian crosswalks. This shows that pedestrians are not always crossing streets at intersections or crosswalks.

Therefore, the Sound Foot, Sound Eye Project is well timed for improving road safety in our city. A three-year pilot project focusing on prevention, awareness-raising, education, enforcement and taking responsibility can only be beneficial for residents.

The goal is to ensure pedestrian safety through pedestrian and driver observance of regulations and to attempt to change well-entrenched attitudes.

The project focuses on all Sherbrooke residents but especially the elderly and youth, the age groups most at risk.

The police operation consists of meeting pedestrians and drivers on the ground to raise their awareness and educate them. Leaflets and other promotional items with the campaign image are distributed to pedestrians and drivers displaying good or poor behaviour. However, a prevention period requires an enforcement period, so tickets are given out to crack down on poor road user behaviour among pedestrians and drivers.

Such an awareness-raising campaign will increase the sense of security among Sherbrooke road users while gradually decreasing accidents involving pedestrians and drivers. Therefore, it is important to remind both pedestrians and drivers that only increased vigilance and respect for *Highway Safety Code* regulations will reduce the number of accidents.

Objectives:

The Sound Foot, Sound Eye Project pursues the following objectives:

- Raising pedestrian and driver awareness about respecting traffic regulations, being courteous and sharing the road, vigilance at intersections and crosswalks, and mutual respect;
- Decreasing the risk of accidents;
- Increasing the perception of the risk of arrest via greater police presence on the ground;
- Increasing the legitimacy of police control in pedestrian-driver interactions;
- Improving existing infrastructure; and
- Applying regulations.

Procedure:

The first project of its kind in Quebec, the Sound Foot, Sound Eye Project was born from an initiative of a police service safety division officer who, in 2004, was trying to raise pedestrian awareness about crossing at the right spots. The officer then realized that it was a struggle she could not manage all by herself. Supported by her police service, which believed in the wisdom of the project, she turned to the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec (SAAQ) and various City of Sherbrooke municipal departments for expertise and support. It was agreed that a three-year pilot project be conducted in collaboration with SAAQ.

A multidisciplinary committee was struck. It was comprised of several partners, specifically Université de Sherbrooke, Bishop's University, Sherbrooke CÉGEP, the Société de transport de Sherbrooke [Sherbrooke transportation association], Contrôle du transport routier [road transportation control], Sherbrooke University Hospital and the Sherbrooke Area School Board. These key partners demonstrated a lively interest in the project; they believed in the importance of raising the awareness of their clientele about pedestrian-driver safety. They actively participated in various activities to publicize the Sound Foot, Sound Eye Project. Numerous private businesses (restaurants, taxi companies, trucking companies, tow truck companies, retirement homes, etc.) also contributed to publicizing and recognizing the project in their respective environments.

Furthermore, during project development, and specifically, when problematic intersections were being considered, the committee considered many complaints from Sherbrooke residents about pedestrian safety.

The project also benefited from the implementation of original communication methods such as fortune cookies for pedestrians and drivers, and football and basketball game tickets in partnership with Bishop's University. Students took to the intersections to distribute these items to people displaying proper behaviour. Streamers were also put up across the city and paper place mats illustrating the campaign were distributed to various restaurants and retirement homes. Awareness-raising letters were also sent to private businesses for their employees to distribute in the city's streets. All police officers who were to have hands-on participation in the project met with the Chief of Police, the project leader and SAAQ representative to be informed about the project and so their support could be ensured.

Measures:

Three main measures were featured:

1-Information and Awareness-Raising Campaign

To reach the above-mentioned goals, the City of Sherbrooke and the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec jointly developed and launched a huge information and awareness-raising campaign. Key communication methods were advertising campaigns, public relations and educational activities and partnerships. Permanent communication methods were preferred because they can be used over the long term and be revised as needed.

INFORMATION AND AWARENESS-RAISING CAMPAIGN

To support the police service in the pilot project, the City of Sherbrooke Communications Department and the SAAQ jointly developed an information and awareness-raising campaign. Here are the selected methods:

Fall 2005

METHODS	CITY	SAAQ
Press conference	X	X
6,000 leaflets		X
2005 promotional tool: police and some partners distribute 5,000 fortune cookies with prevention messages		X
17 [trestles]		X
Article in <i>InfoSherbrookois</i> (municipal newsletter)	X	
Article in the internal City of Sherbrooke newspaper + distribution of a message from management to all personnel	X	
Letters sent to public vehicle drivers and business owners	X	
50 streamers put up across the city	X	
5 Astral billboards for 8 weeks	X	
2 ads on TVA-Télé 7 : 15 and 30 sec.	X	
2 local and post-intervention phone surveys		X

Fall 2006

METHODS	CITY	SAAQ
Note: The above-mentioned methods were used again in 2006 except the TV messages and promotional tools, which were reviewed each year. Other methods were added:		
Safety Committee resolution	X	
60,000 fact sheets distributed by mail to all residences		X
100 posters distributed to schools and other institutions	X	
2006 promotional tool: police and some partners distribute 5,000 small magnets		X
18 exterior signs on Société de transport de Sherbrooke buses		X
200 stickers on Société de transport de Sherbrooke buses and paratransit vehicles	X	
Messages broadcast on Rock Détente and Énergie radio and participation of hosts on the ground	X	
Announcement in the weekly paper, <i>La Nouvelle</i>	X	
Post-intervention phone survey		X

Fall 2007

METHODS	CITY	SAAQ
Note: Methods listed for 2005 and 2006 were repeated in 2007 except the fact sheets and promotional tools, which were reviewed each year. Other methods were added:		
2007 promotional tool: 5,000 buttons distributed by police and some partners		X
10,000 place mats produced and distributed in restaurants and retirement homes		X
8 city bus shelter displays and increased (from 18 to 30) bus boards (signage on outside of buses)		X

2-Police Strategy

The strategy that the police service adopted brought officers into direct contact with road users. For two intensive weeks in October, police, patrol, motorcycle and safety officers informed and educated road users to improve their behaviour.

This strategy was divided into three facets:

A- Prevention: one week in October in each project year focused on informing and raising the awareness of road users (Appendix B, p. 11).

Surveillance (Patrol Officers):

The patrol officers were mandated during their shifts to stop all pedestrians and drivers violating the *Highway Safety Code* and municipal regulations (pedestrians). Violators received an explanation of their violations and were given the *Piétons et conducteurs vigilants pour la vie!* [pedestrians and drivers, vigilant for life!] leaflet (Appendix A, p. 10), the *Piéton et conducteur au passage, on se fait de l'œil* [pedestrians and drivers: watch out on the crosswalk] leaflet (Appendix C, p. 12) and promotional tools. They also told them that enforcement would continue all year.

Operational Support (Motorcycle Officers):

During that week, Operational Support Division members were assigned to assist safety officers at targeted intersections for prevention efforts with pedestrians and drivers. Of course, as the patrol officers did, these squads stopped pedestrians and drivers at fault. Violators received an explanation of their violations and were given the *Piétons et conducteurs vigilants pour la vie!* leaflet (Appendix A, p.10), the *Piéton et conducteur au passage, on se fait de l'œil* leaflet (Appendix C, p.12) and promotional tools. They also told them that enforcement would continue all year.

Safety Officers:

Safety officers were assigned to targeted intersections for connection and prevention efforts with pedestrians and drivers. To do so, SAAQ installed Sound Foot, Sound Eye signs at all the targeted intersections. Each of the five targeted intersections was visited twice during the week, two intersections a day for about an hour and a half.

At each intersection, safety officers stopped pedestrians and drivers, whether or not they were at fault, to discuss the regulations with them. They gave them the *Piétons et conducteurs vigilants pour la vie!* and

Piéton et conducteur au passage, on se fait de l'œil leaflets and promotional tools. They also told them that enforcement would continue all year.

Operational Support Division personnel assisted safety officers by stopping non-compliant vehicles the latter could not stop.

Preventive Intervention of Project Partners:

Several partners joined the preventive intervention, thus helping to reach the widest possible audience and as many people as possible.

Here are their respective contributions:

Sherbrooke CÉGEP police science students participated in the prevention facet of the Sound Foot, Sound Eye Project by talking to pedestrians and drivers on the Sherbrooke CÉGEP campus about road safety.

During their awareness-raising campaign, the students used different methods to raise people's awareness about the Sound Foot, Sound Eye Project. They publicized it in college halls, in the school's paper, CÉGEP-*Inter*, and Web site. They handed out mock violation notices, promotional items, Piétons et conducteurs vigilants pour la vie! leaflets and leaflets detailing violations and fines.

Université de Sherbrooke students participated in the prevention facet of the Sound Foot, Sound Eye Project by talking to pedestrians and drivers on the Université de Sherbrooke campus and handing out Piétons et conducteurs vigilants pour la vie! leaflets and promotional items.

Bishop's University students participated in the prevention facet of the Sound Foot, Sound Eye Project by talking to pedestrians and drivers on the Bishop's University campus and handing out Piétons et conducteurs vigilants pour la vie! leaflets and promotional items. Furthermore, two university football players and two safety officers handed out 50 tickets to football games at a targeted intersection in Lennoxville near the campus to drivers and pedestrians displaying good road usage behaviour.

Société de transport de Sherbrooke (STS) participated by putting stickers with the Sound Foot, Sound Eye image on all their vehicles. The STS also distributed a letter we provided to all its personnel describing good road usage behaviour that pedestrian and drivers should adopt.

Contrôle du transport routier participated in the prevention facet of the Sound Foot, Sound Eye Project by handing out Piétons et conducteurs vigilants pour la vie! leaflets and various promotional items to drivers of heavy vehicles.

We also called on other partners, such as the **Sherbrooke Area School Board, Sherbrooke University Hospital and other private businesses**. They distributed a letter we provided to all their personnel describing good road usage behaviour that pedestrians and drivers should adopt.

B- Enforcement: The week after the prevention facet, tickets were issued to pedestrians and drivers at fault (Appendix B, p. 11).

Surveillance (Patrol Officers):

The patrol officers' mandate during their shifts was to stop all pedestrians and drivers at fault and issue tickets.

When stopping minor-age pedestrians, officers had to ask for identification (name, date of birth, address, phone number and parents' names) and then contact the parents of all minors stopped (under 14) for a violation.

Operational Support (Motorcycle Officers):

During this week, Operational Support personnel were assigned mainly to targeted intersections for enforcement. Safety officers assisted them at these locations.

Each of the five targeted intersections was visited twice during the week, two intersections a day for about an hour and a half.

Safety Officers:

Safety officers assisted Operational Support with enforcement. They issued tickets to pedestrians and drivers at fault.

C- Continued prevention and enforcement throughout the year: During this facet, patrol and motorcycle officers were asked to ensure project continuity and success.

3-Improvement of pedestrian crosswalk and intersection infrastructure

The municipal council clearly identified public safety, in all its forms, as a priority. Therefore, the project received the full support of elected officials and City management and so could meet residents' safety desires.

Sherbrooke has the honour of being a college town, which means that there are lots of pedestrians.

Therefore, to ensure the safety of its entire population, the City of Sherbrooke is very involved in road safety. In fact, since 1996, Sherbrooke has invested more than a million dollars in designing and laying out 21 school corridors. Furthermore, the Ville won a prize from the Association québécoise du transport et des routes (AQTR) [Quebec transportation and road association] for this innovative project.

Over the last few years, several other projects have been carried out: the installation of overhead light signals at some intersections, curb extensions and special lights.

During the Sound Foot, Sound Eye pilot project, Sherbrooke invested more than \$174,000 in the urban infrastructure phases; a list is provided in this document under project benefits.

Obtained or Expected Results:

The project produced advantages for residents such as an increased feeling of security created by greater police presence at problematic intersections and on the road. It also contributed to decreasing the risk of accidents and so the number of injuries.

(Appendix D, p. 13)

The advantages are also reflected in long-term improvements in the road system and infrastructure due to the City's significant investments associated with the project (overhead light signals, pedestrian and traffic lights, pedestrian right-of-way signs, etc.).

Since the Sound Foot, Sound Eye Project began, the City of Sherbrooke has demonstrated great interest in its progress, following it very closely. The public safety committee has asked for a presentation of the summary of operations for each project year. After these presentations, the City weighed the safety improvements it could make to the various intersections and pedestrian crosswalks.

The City of Sherbrooke invested more than \$174,000 to improve urban infrastructure. Here is the breakdown of all improvements:

- ❖ Installation of 182 signs indicating pedestrian right-of-way and fines at 91 City of Sherbrooke crosswalks and schools: \$9,000 (Appendix E, p. 14)
- ❖ Installation of overhead lights at the intersection of Portland Boulevard and Wood Street: \$23,000 (Appendix F, p. 14)
- ❖ Installation of overhead lights at the intersection of Portland Boulevard and Wilson Street: \$43,000 (Appendix G, p. 15)
- ❖ Installation of traffic lights and replacement of a crosswalk (deemed to be dangerous for users) at the intersection of University Boulevard and Prunier Street: \$85,000 (Appendix H, p. 15)
- ❖ Installation of a pedestrian light at the intersection of Belvédère Nord and Frontenac streets: \$15,000 (Appendix I, p. 16)
- ❖ Transport Quebec installed a curb extension at the Queen Street crosswalk near Bishop's University to ensure pedestrian safety.

SAAQ survey results show that pedestrians who heard about the project are much more likely to assert that they are now more careful (79% in 2006 compared to 69% in 2005). Furthermore, 87% of drivers who have heard about the project say they are now more attentive to pedestrians on the road, compared to 82% in 2005. The significantly improved recognition of the project name is also a salient fact in the survey because 23% of respondents could identify the project by name (Sound Foot, Sound Eye) compared to 7% in 2005.

Conclusion:

The Sound Foot, Sound Eye pilot project that the City of Sherbrooke and the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec developed had, from its beginnings, the objective of being applicable to other municipalities.

The numerous public relations activities and the positive evaluation of the first year of operation are such that several other municipalities have noticed the project. The City of Montréal was one of the first municipalities to show an interest in the project. In 2007, the Montréal Police Service implemented a project with a similar concept. The same year, the cities of Granby, Trois-Rivières, Saguenay and Québec jumped on the bandwagon and joined the Sound Foot, Sound Eye program.

Drummondville, Saint-Georges-de-Beauce, Victoriaville, Gatineau and MRC de la Haute-Yamaska also want to take part, starting in the fall of 2008.

Therefore, we believe that the Sound Foot, Sound Eye Project has already proven itself because it is easily applied to other municipalities. Furthermore, the project is now an official Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec program (Appendix J, p. 16).