

Montreal

SPVM

'Zero Accidents'
Pedestrian Safety Campaign

Nomination of Officer Sophia Provost
Lead Officer for Pedestrian Safety at the SPVM

CCMTA – POLICE PARTNERSHIP AWARD

CCMTA CCATM
CANADIAN COUNCIL OF MOTOR TRANSPORT ADMINISTRATORS
CONSEIL CANADIEN DES ADMINISTRATEURS EN TRANSPORT MOTORISÉ

Sponsor:
Chief Inspector Stéphane Lemieux
Road Safety and Traffic Division
City of Montreal Police Services (SPVM)

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1. BACKGROUND

In Quebec, pedestrians are typically less inclined to comply with the Road Safety Code. In addition, Quebec drivers do not generally cede priority to pedestrians, so pedestrians must be doubly attentive and careful as they use the roadway. In Montreal, the scale of urban development has resulted in major changes in ordinary citizens' way of life, and authorities must continually respond to evolving needs by providing new ways to ensure public safety.

In 2005, there were 1,818 collisions in Montreal involving pedestrians, including 24 fatalities. In response to this major issue, Officer Sophia Provost, as the Lead Officer for Pedestrian Safety, worked with SPVM Road Safety Division senior management to develop a Strategic Intervention Plan aimed at reducing the number of pedestrian victims. This five-year plan, based on the 3E approach (Engineering, Education and Enforcement), sought to establish strategic partnerships with other stakeholders playing a key role in this process.

Year	Fatalities	Serious injuries	Minor injuries	Total
2005	24	217	1577	1818
2009	19	87	1252	1357
Change	(20%)	(149%)	(26%)	(34%)

In 2009, the Road Safety Division determined that although the overall road safety record is improving, the number of accidents involving pedestrians remains too high. As a matter of fact, pedestrians accounted for 55% of roadway fatalities, and 73% of these victims were over 50 years of age.

A detailed analysis of 2009 collisions indicated that the road safety record had reached a plateau. Officer Provost concluded that pedestrian safety activities should no longer be focused mainly on enforcement, but should also involve other key partners with the capacity to improve pedestrian safety, including the City of Montreal Engineering Department, the Quebec Automobile Insurance Authority (Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec - SAAQ) and the Montreal Transit Commission (Société de transport de Montréal - STM).

The number of traffic tickets issued by police to pedestrians had increased significantly, but this was not having any effect on the overall road safety record. A new focus on prevention and on streetscape improvements was required.

As part of its five-year plan, the SPVM took part in a province-wide pedestrian safety initiative, but this program did not resonate as successfully with Montreal-area residents, given the specific nature of Montreal's traffic issues. For instance, Montreal's aging population weighed significantly in the statistical analysis, and this clearly illustrated the increased vulnerability of elderly pedestrians, as with age comes a loss of mobility and alertness.

2. PREFERRED SOLUTION AND OBJECTIVES

In order to build on previous years' successes, Officer Provost developed the 'ZERO ACCIDENTS' campaign with the objective of bringing together the key stakeholders with the potential to work with the SPVM to improve pedestrian safety.

This new SPVM pedestrian safety campaign, which was launched on April 5 and ended October 31, 2010, within the framework of the overall Active Transportation Initiative, was divided into three periods of varying intensity:

Spring Campaign: April 5 - May 2

Intensification Period: July 1 - July 31

Fall Campaign: October 4 - October 31

The campaign objectives were to encourage mindful pedestrian behaviour, to reduce the number of collisions involving pedestrians and to support police officers in their dealings with pedestrians.

3. ROLES OF THE MAIN PARTNERS

- QUEBEC AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE AUTHORITY (SAAQ)

The SAAQ provided financial assistance to the SPVM for this prevention initiative. Specifically, the SPVM Road Safety Division requested assistance with a public awareness campaign to help with officers' interactions with pedestrians.

- COMMUNICATION TOOLS

In order to promote the campaign, the SPVM suggested various media platforms tailored to the specific nature and expectations of the target audience. Several different communications tools were developed, including:

- Retaining the services of a specialized agency to develop the concept

- Increase visibility by placing ads on public transit vehicles and billboards at key intersections.

The Montreal Metro subway system is the best location where the largest numbers of pedestrians can be reached. Indeed, most subway users reach their final destination by walking, and this is a very 'urban' clientele. Therefore, placing ads in subway cars was a priority. In addition, it was essential to establish a strong visual presence for the Zero Accident Campaign outside of subway stations, to ensure message continuity and to provide a timely reminder to pedestrians.

- Signs and posters in Montreal Metro cars
- Posters displayed in 64 selected bus shelters in key Montreal neighbourhoods
- 268 "trompe-l'oeil" style, 36"-diameter self-adhesive ads placed on the sidewalk surface
- Ad teaser posted on Canoe website

The use of new electronic media is becoming a key component of any new ad campaign. In keeping with this new trend, an animation ad was broadcast on Canoe websites showing the public the number of pedestrians injured in vehicle collisions last year, and also mentioning that the awareness campaign was developed in cooperation with the City of Montreal and the SAAQ.

- Promotional material – bookmarks handed out by police officers during the awareness operations.

The signage strategy could not succeed on its own. It needed to be supported by another key component of the messaging process, namely street-level police involvement with the public. A total of 100,000 bookmarks were printed for police officers to hand out in their contacts with the public. A survey conducted to identify the least understood aspects of pedestrian regulations illustrated a need to explain the details of the pedestrian crossing signal, specifically pedestrian obligations during each phase of the crossing signal. The bookmark format was chosen after consulting police officers, who stated they needed something easy to carry and with clear and succinct explanations.

- Creation of a "Zero Accidents" campaign safety vest.

The SPVM gave itself an additional innovative and high-visibility, awareness-building tool by purchasing specially designed safety vests featuring the campaign slogan.

These safety vests were worn by police cadets during foot patrols, special events and festivals throughout the summer. Over 24,700 bookmarks were handed out during operations organized by the SPVM Urban Brigade.

- Development of the interactive tools targeting senior citizens' conferences, including a DVD titled "Zero Accidents –The Game", reusable bags and the Sherriff's guide (distribution support for the interactive game).

Officer Provost proposed an interactive game as an outreach tool specifically designed for seniors. As this vulnerable population segment is over-represented in pedestrian accident statistics, a targeted approach was certainly warranted. Developed by Orange Tango, the "Zero Accidents – The Game" DVD is an interactive game featuring a black-and-white image of a retro game show. This tool provides visual support to police officers as they give their pedestrian safety presentation. It also includes pedestrian safety vignettes for use by community health services personnel.

- PROVINCE-WIDE VISIBILITY

In its fall Driver Courtesy Campaign, the SAAQ used the SPVM-developed "Cross at the right place, Cross at the right time" slogan in ads that were broadcast throughout Quebec on major television networks. This recognition was a major team-building boost and gave a strong sense of accomplishment for all SPVM officers involved.

In October, as part of Pedestrian Safety Month, the SAAQ and SPVM again worked together to remind pedestrians to be more vigilant and to obey the Highway Safety Code, with reduced daylight hours and winter conditions fast approaching.

4. MONTREAL TRANSIT COMMISSION (STM)

The STM plays an important role in the daily life of many Montreal residents. It is critical that this essential partner take concrete action to encourage its users to adopt safe travel habits. Officer Sophia Provost played a key role in establishing a partnership aimed at increasing awareness of pedestrian safety rules among transit users. The Montreal Transit Commission wanted to focus on pedestrians who run to catch a moving bus, as this particular behaviour is the cause of most collisions involving STM vehicles resulting in pedestrian fatalities or serious injuries.

Working with the SPVM Road Safety and Traffic Division, the STM produced a bookmark with the Zero Accident logo on one side and a message relating to the dangers of running after a moving bus on the other.

In addition, the SPVM Subway Unit (Unit 50), which polices the Montreal Metro system, was asked to provide a stronger presence and additional support at key subway exits during the week of April 19-23. Conducting two awareness operations per day, police officers and subway security personnel held a total of 10 joint awareness activities. The Subway Unit also conducted additional awareness operations throughout the summer, at key locations, as needed.

The STM also published an article in METRO, a daily newspaper available at no cost in all Montreal subway stations. This newspaper has a large readership and is a valuable and effective information tool.

5. CITY OF MONTREAL INVOLVEMENT

The SPVM and City of Montreal are working in close cooperation to implement the City of Montreal Transportation plan. One of the plan's core objectives is to reduce the number of traffic fatalities by 40% over a 10-year period. To achieve this objective, several programs and initiatives have been developed, including an intersection improvement program to enhance pedestrian safety. Initiated in 2007, this program will improve a total of 50 intersections per year over a ten-year period. This will involve simple and effective changes. Selection criteria are as follows: the improvements must address the needs of pedestrians and cyclists first, and drivers second; the improvements must reduce the number and severity of accidents.

By the end of 2010, the City of Montreal had completed improvements at 114 intersections. This investment by the City of Montreal is of great importance to the SPVM campaign to enhance the safety of pedestrians.

The upgrade and continual improvement of the transportation infrastructure is essential to enhancing the safety of all users of the road system.

The City of Montreal Transportation Division maintains close contact with the Road Safety Division to ensure the coherence of individual programs and initiatives, with the ultimate goal of making Montreal a safer city.

6. TANGIBLE RESULTS

The project developed and implemented by Officer Sophia Provost has produced results, including an improved road safety record and new sustainable partnerships. In 2010, the number of pedestrian fatalities was down 10% from the previous year. Over 44,000 tickets were issued to pedestrians and drivers for road safety violations, and numerous information meetings were held with seniors' groups.

We must also include all the programs and initiatives implemented by our various partners to enhance the safety of all users of the road network. In addition, the 3E approach used in implementing our pedestrian safety strategy closely ties in to the Road Safety Vision 2010 objectives of reducing the number of traffic casualties across Canada.

7. CONCLUSION

In 2010, the SPVM focused its energy on building upon the gains achieved since 2005. Officer Provost displayed exemplary initiative and creativity in providing the means for the Road Safety Division to implement concrete actions that had a measurable positive impact in reducing the number of roadway collisions involving pedestrians.

Without SAAQ's involvement, the Road Safety and Traffic Division could not have developed and implemented such a comprehensive campaign. The status quo would have probably negated previous improvements. Sustaining past achievements would have proven difficult. In addition, it is important to acknowledge the involvement of the Montreal Transit Commission, with its actions focusing on transit users who reach their final destination by walking.

The strength of this innovative campaign resides in the variety of media tools that were used, providing citizens with a recognizable visual signpost highlighting the message: "Cross at the right place, Cross at the right time".

The SPVM is continuing with its efforts to achieve the Zero Accidents goal. Although this goal is unlikely to be reached, it points up the need to work relentlessly to avoid traffic accidents resulting in loss of life, especially among pedestrians. No pedestrian should risk their life simply by using the road, and every pedestrian fatality is one fatality too many. The marked improvement in Montreal's road safety record clearly shows that there have been changes in pedestrian and driver behaviour as a direct result of targeted police activities. Indeed, the commitment and involvement of all SPVM officers is the key to the success of the Zero Accidents Campaign.