



# Managing Social Media For Your City's Open Streets Program Where to Start - Tips & Strategies

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# Why Should My Open Streets Program Use Social Media?

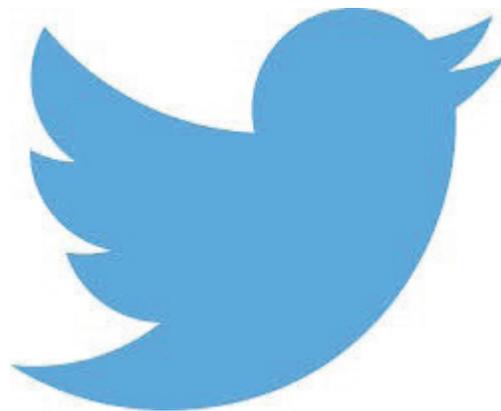
The use of social media is an integral part of developing an audience for your open streets program. Social media can...

- Allow you to access new audiences (increase the exposure of your brand, encourage feedback and conversation)
- Expand your network
- Build momentum and excitement leading up to each date of your program
- Demonstrate to decision makers and leaders that there is interest in your program
- Help you interact with participants during your program
- Help to collect photos and testimonials from your program dates
- And so much more!

This toolkit has introductions on how to build different social media platforms as well as tips on how to make the most of each of them. 8 80 Cities is happy to help with evaluating your use of social media, developing content, or teaching you how to use specific platforms or websites mentioned in this toolkit, please just ask!

# Twitter: Initial Set Up and Beyond

1. Choose and secure an Open Streets Twitter handle specific to your city. e.g. @OpenStreets <insert the name of your city>.
2. To more easily manage conversations, set up a free Hootsuite or Tweetdeck account (follow online instructions). These platforms allow you to organize and keep track of tweets and followers and auto-post pre-scheduled content according to your calendar.
3. Follow known supporters of your event, prominent members of your community, local businesses/services along festival route, business associations, and any other members of the community who might be interested in your Open Streets program.
4. Use the free online program ManageFlitter.com weekly to unfollow inactive accounts. With this program you can also view which accounts are not following you back. Select a handful of these each day and search their tweets. If possible, retweet or comment on one of their recent tweets. This will often result in a follow back.
5. Aim to keep your following-to-follower ratio fairly even (following a disproportionate number of accounts can make your account appear 'spammy').
6. Set up keyword streams within your Hootsuite account. This will allow you to monitor conversations of interest. e.g. Openstreets or #openstreets (tweets containing these words or hashtag will appear in each designated stream allowing you to share or jump into relevant conversations).
7. Set up a list (within your Hootsuite account, as a stream and set to 'private') of key accounts/friends to follow, e.g. other Open Streets programs. This will make you aware of what other events are promoting and discussing. You may also want to use their content, links and images as inspiration when curating your content.



# Facebook: Initial Set Up and Beyond

1. Set up a Facebook page, ideally with the same/similar name as your Twitter handle.
2. Create an attractive cover photo.
3. You may want to use a free program called Woobox in order to create tabs linking your Facebook page to your other social media accounts (Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram etc.).
4. Follow other pages with similar or related content (e.g. other Open Streets pages).
5. Like and comment on other pages once daily.
6. Use the 'Insights' tab at the top of your Facebook homepage to find out more about your audience, e.g. when they most engaged (= best times for you to post).
7. Facebook is very visual so include a large and engaging photo with each post. Use picmonkey.com to crop, edit and add text to photos.
8. As a rule of thumb one post per weekday is generally sufficient. You may also choose to post once on the weekend. Sunday mornings and evenings are usually a good time to post.
9. Use Hootsuite 'add a link' bar to shrink long URLs before including them in your Facebook blurb. This way, your blurbs will be more visually appealing. Keep Facebook text short.



# Instagram and Pinterest

These are valuable and popular social media platforms. However, you must first decide on where you intend to drive traffic. Do you have a dedicated webpage where the photos you pin will live? Do you have somebody on your team who will be out in the community taking photos on a regular basis? If not, these platforms might not necessarily be worth your effort at this time.



# Content

- First and foremost, refrain from simply pumping out information about your Open Streets program. Followers will soon be turned off by your 'look at me' delivery. Instead, retweet related content, comment on other events or community member's links, and chat casually (use humour when possible) with people in your homefeed.
- Search hashtags for relevant content. For example, searching your city's hashtag (e.g. #toronto) will give you a clue about what other things are happening around your city. Also search hashtags like #cycling, #green, #outdoorfestivals, #openstreets etc.
- Search for influential and active followers (use the search tab within Hootsuite). Look at their recent tweets and then comment or retweet when applicable.
- Try to keep the majority of your tweets short enough that they can be easily retweeted (without having to be shortened by the retweeter).
- Use Google to locate Facebook pages or Twitter accounts to follow. For example search, 'Joan's Deli on Facebook' or 'Mikes Bikes on Twitter' to find pages and handles to follow.
- Use videos to show people what Open Streets look like in other cities
- Another great resource is <http://openstreetsproject.org>