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By Anna Greenspan

Since in Shanghai Expo preparation is now ubiquitous, and because I share China's love of numbered lists, here are my top 8 suggestions for how Shanghai could implement its promise—now posted everywhere—of a 'better city, better life.'

I've deliberately not included things that are a) already underway (e.g. more subway stops), b) up to the whim of a single entrepreneur (e.g. a decent bagel shop) and c) too obviously political (e.g. a more open media).

As those of us who love the city know, there is much that Shanghai—with its safe, pedestrian friendly, tree lined streets and spectacular skyline—gets right. Yet in certain areas, especially traffic, parks and migrants, there are easy improvements that would greatly benefit the grand unveiling in 2010.

Here then in no particular order is the list. My hope is that the meme spreads . . .

1. Strict enforcement of traffic rules. In particular, pedestrians should have the right of way on a green light and cars should be forbidden from driving on the sidewalk. Enforcement should not be that hard. Under the principle 'kill the chicken to scare the monkeys,' a very public wave of overly harsh fines should do the trick. In general the rule of 'survival of the fastest,' in which cars take priority over cyclists, which take priority over pedestrians, must be reversed.
2. More pools and water parks. In my hometown in Canada, where it is freezing most of the year, every neighborhood has a public pool and a park with sprinklers and splash pads. My two kids and I can go swimming for Cdn \$7.25 (46 RMB). In Shanghai, where summers are sweltering, it is common for pools to charge 100 RMB per person and the cheapest I've found nearby is 100 RMB for the three of us.
3. A celebration of street vendors. The harassment—occasionally to the point of criminality—of the 'illegal' street peddlers is the most disturbing aspect of Shanghai's development (and the greatest impediment to the hope of establishing of a harmonious society). Small traders (most of whom are migrants) are the most entrepreneurial and creative sector of society and bring color, convenience and most of all great food to Shanghai's streets.
4. Allowing people to stand, play, sit, and sleep on the grass.
5. Insist that all taxis have functional seatbelts. Why the bilingual announcement asking you to buckle your seatbelt when there is almost never anything to be buckled?
6. Preservation and revival of the city's markets (this relates directly to point 3). The past decade has seen the demolition of some of Shanghai's great markets (e.g. the flower market on Shanxi Lu, the bird, insect and fish market on Wanping Lu etc, etc). This trend seems to show no signs of abating as all central markets are pushed further into the suburbs. There are even repeated rumors that neighborhood wet markets are under threat. This at a time when Western cities—tired of the sterile morbidity of the mall—are desperately trying to bring back farmer's markets into the urban core.
7. Bike lanes on major thoroughfares. It is extremely difficult, when cycling downtown, to avoid streets like Huaihai Lu and Hengshan Lu. Forbidding bikes on these streets only pushes them on to the sidewalks (see point 1).
8. A convenient ferry service (like the one in Hong Kong) that provides frequent, cheap and easy crossing between Lujiazui and the Bund. (This might already be in the works but just in case . . .)

Anna Greenspan studies, teaches, and writes about Shanghai. Her website, Waking Giants, can be found [here](#).

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