Contact: Jemilah Magnusson, ITDP Communications Manager

jemilah.magnusson@itdp.org | 212-629-8001

**Santiago, Chile to Win International Sustainable Transport Award**

*Windhoek, Namibia and Curitiba, Brazil to receive honorable mention*

New York (June 27, 2016) – Santiago, the Chilean capital with an urban population of five million, and a metro area population of over seven million, is a beautiful old-world city enjoying a modern day renaissance. In 2006, the city opened [Transantiago](http://www.transantiago.cl/), an efficient service and the backbone of its transport system, but has since lagged behind other cities in the region on cycling and walking.

Over the past year, Santiago made major improvements in pedestrian space, cycling, and public transit. Windhoek has modernized their bus system, and Curitiba improved access to the city for people with disabilities. All three cities will be honored at an award ceremony in Washington, DC in January 2017 during the [Transport Research Board](http://www.trb.org/AnnualMeeting/AnnualMeeting.aspx) annual meeting.

Santiago’s Calle Aillavilú, in the central market of the city, has been transformed from a derelict, car-congested and unregulated parking lot to a pedestrian-friendly oasis. The street was repaved, the lighting improved, new trees were planted, and most importantly, cars were removed. Except for the scheduled delivery of goods, no motorized traffic is allowed. Calle Placer, one of the busiest pedestrian streets during a popular weekend market, is now completely closed to cars on the weekends, with a 2.2 million USD investment by the city for improved sidewalks, lighting, and sanitation.

Other public space improvements include an investment in 100 sq meters of new green spaces in historic residential neighborhoods, revitalizing a previously abandoned area, and the re-design of the Historical Center’s main streets, featuring more sidewalk space, improved lighting, beautification, and a “complete streets” redesign for public transport exclusive corridors in the most active pedestrian zone in the country.

The City has backed up these achievements with new sustainable transport policy changes and education programs. In April 2015, the National Ministry of Housing and Urbanism created a detailed standard of design for high quality cycle lanes, even piloting it in a major street near the presidential palace. The policy redistributes road spaces to create more space for cyclist. This standard was quickly adopted by Santiago, and the city has managed to increase cycling trips from a negligible 150 per day to over 5000 per day. This number is expected to increase with the growing popularity of [BikeSantiago](http://www.bikesantiago.cl/), the city’s bike share program, which is responsible for 50 percent of the increase. Santiago also gave support to [BMov Trici](http://trici.cl/), a free bicycle taxi in the historic city center operated by a private company, supported by advertising, that encourages cycle use and provides a non-motorized alternative to taxis. Santiago has adopted a pilot program of cycling games in kindergarten to helps to introduce cycling early in life and a traffic education program at primary schools is helping to create better cyclist behavior.

“We are proud of this recognition to the municipality, but it’s certainly also a

recognition to the whole city. Our commune has been actively promoting

coordination processes with Santiago’s Board of Public Transportation, the

Ministry of Environment, the Regional Government, civil society organizations and

other municipalities” said the Mayor of Santiago, Carolina Tohá, “Thanks to this coordination and collaboration we have been able to move forward in local projects with greater metropolitan impact, such as the System of Public Bicycles, the Plan Centro, the Green Zone and to double the bicycle’s path network”.

“We received many interesting nominations this year, but Santiago stood out for their wide range of achievements, and demonstrates the benefits of a strategic focus on improving walking conditions as a top priority,” said Michael Kodransky, Chair of the [Sustainable Transport Award Committee](http://staward.org/committee/), “We look forward to spotlighting Santiago in the coming year as an international best practice.”

Windhoek, Namibia will receive first honorable mention for implementing their Sustainable Urban Transport Master Plan. The city added 26 modern new buses on seven bus lines, running on a schedule for the first time in Namibia. The buses cover underserved urban areas and run during off-peak hours, meeting a substantial need. In addition, they have created a non-motorized strategy to make cycling and walking safer for the Namibian Capital’s 350,000 residents.

The iconic Brazilian city of Curitiba is also recognized for improving walkability for Curitibanos with disabilities. The “Respect Card”, a smart card carried by people with reduced walking abilities, which, when the card is sensed by the traffic light, increases pedestrian cross time by 50 percent. They have also created an open data system for their transport data, and implemented an electric bike share program.

Santiago will also be the site of **Mobilize 2017**, ITDP’s new annual Sustainable Transport Summit, supported by the Volvo Research and Education Foundations. This event will give international transportation researchers and professionals and opportunity to experience this emerging city as a learning lab for best practice in sustainable transport. For more information, visit [staward.org](http://www.staward.org/).

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