

TO: City Council

DATE: May 5, 2023

Dear City Councillors,

RE: IE3.7 - High Park Movement Strategy - Final Report

The City of Toronto prides itself in taking a data-driven approach to their decision making process. We ask that City Council take the same approach to the High Park Movement Strategy.

The data collected by the High Park Movement Strategy through their engagement with over 17,000 study respondents overwhelmingly supports a car-free High Park:

- 75% agreed that the car-free weekends in High Park had a positive impact vs only 13% disagreeing
- 44% strongly supported Strategy 1 (car-free) vs only 15%, 12% & 17% for the other 3 strategies respectfully
- **Of the 2,030 respondents who identified as having a disability or living with someone with a disability, the majority preferred Strategy 1 (car-free)**
- Of the 2,700 respondents who identified as having children under the age of 12, the majority of families with young children preferred Strategy 1 (car-free)
- People agreed most strongly that Strategy 1 (car-free) would make the park safer, more accessible, and improve the park's natural environment.

Safety, accessibility, and the natural environment should always be top priorities, especially inside a park. Those 3 priorities also happen to be the High Park Movement Strategy's goals. The data overwhelmingly indicates that a car-free High Park is the best and preferred path to meeting those goals, including among the majority of park users with disabilities and families with young children.

A car-free High Park would also best support our TransformTO, VisionZero, and ActiveTO goals. All of which are important goals that are only increasing in urgency. If we can't even close a park to cars, then what hope do we have of meeting these critical goals on much larger scales? We must make the changes required to achieve them. Changes that our close neighbours in New York City (with Central Park and Prospect Park) and Montreal (with Parc La Fontaine) have already made.

I encourage City Council to follow the data and create a much safer, more accessible, and more environmentally friendly High Park by making it car-free.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

