TORONTO

REPORT FOR ACTION

High Park Movement Strategy - Final Report

Date: April 12, 2023
To: Infrastructure and Environment Committee
From: General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation and General Manager, Transportation Services
Wards: 4 - Parkdale-High Park

SUMMARY

This report describes the preferred strategy for travel network improvements in High Park, which have been developed as part of the High Park Movement Strategy (HPMS). Since March 2020, roads in High Park have been closed to visitor vehicles on weekends and holidays. The HPMS is a staff-initiated study that was launched in summer 2021 to evaluate the weekend road closures and address other mobility matters in High Park, focusing on existing paved areas. The goal of the HPMS is to better serve park users and the surrounding community, while prioritizing improvements to safety, accessibility and the park's natural environment.

The HPMS is a multi-phased planning study co-led by the Parks, Forestry and Recreation and Transportation Services divisions. The outcome of the study is a comprehensive strategy to manage the mobility needs of park users. Early and ongoing engagement, research and analysis, and Council-approved plans and policies informed the development of the preferred strategy.

The preferred strategy would take bold, immediate-term actions to improve the travel network in High Park. The proposed changes acknowledge High Park's designation as a legacy park through the City's Parkland Strategy, serving as both a local amenity and regional outdoor destination and respond to the mobility needs presented by the many different activities and park user groups it supports.

The changes proposed in the immediate term are guided by area-based and time-based road closures. West Road and portions of Colborne Lodge Drive would be permanently closed to visitor vehicles at all times and dedicated to non-motorized travel. Full road closures within the park would continue year round on Sundays. Road closures would be supported by traffic calming measures and improvements to pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, transit and shuttle service, changes to parking, public realm and re-naturalization opportunities and a recreational cycling pilot.

Staff are not recommending that full road closures at all times be implemented as part of this phase of work. However, the preferred strategy recognizes the potential benefits of full road closures in High Park and upholds this approach as a desirable future goal for the City to pursue once key conditions are met. These conditions are described in this report and include improved transit and shuttle service within the park to provide affordable, accessible service to interior park destinations, and an automated gating solution to ensure safe and effective traffic operations at key entry and exit points.

This report recommends that staff report back following the full implementation of the preferred strategy to provide direction on further travel network changes in High Park, including consideration of further road closures.

The current travel network in High Park presents challenges for park users and City operations alike. The preferred strategy addresses this urgent need for comprehensive changes with a clear path to full implementation. A phased implementation approach would start with immediate changes that would be made in 2023 using existing resources with Parks, Forestry and Recreation and Transportation Services divisions. The remaining improvements require new physical infrastructure and new operating agreements, which must be supported by further work, including detailed design, costing and funding approvals. Subsequent improvements and longer-term opportunities identified in this report as part of the preferred strategy are currently unfunded and the development of a funding strategy is necessary for these unfunded priority capital projects to fully improve the travel network in High Park.

This report presents a rough order of magnitude costing estimate for the preferred strategy based on industry standard cost per metre calculations and other inputs. Following Council decision, detailed design and costing estimates will be developed as part of the next stage of work on implementation and will inform future budget submissions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, and the General Manager, Transportation Services recommend that:

1. City Council approve the preferred strategy for travel network improvements in High Park as described in this report.

2. City Council direct the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to advance detailed design, costing estimates and consider funding strategies for the preferred strategy and advance implementation as part of the 2024 and future year budget processes.

3. City Council request the Toronto Transit Commission Board to investigate the feasibility of improving routing and/or service frequency of transit service within and around High Park as part of the TTC’s annual service planning process.

4. City Council authorize the traffic and parking regulations for the City Council approved High Park Movement Strategy, as generally described in Attachment 9 to this report.

5. City Council authorize the amendments to *City of Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 950*, and By-law accuracy for the City Council approved High Park Movement Strategy, as generally described in Attachment 10 to High Park Movement Strategy Final Report April 26, 2023.

6. City Council direct the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to develop and undertake a pilot program to support recreational cycling opportunities in High Park in 2023, informed by the parameters and principles outlined in this report, and in consultation with cycling groups and other park user groups in High Park.

7. City Council authorize the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to extend the existing license agreement with the current High Park Trackless Train operator (Carla Construction & Maintenance Ltd.), through the end of the 2023 operating season, and to be further extended as required on one-year extensions for a further two seasons, to maintain service while the RFP for a new shuttle service solution aligned with the High Park Movement Strategy is completed.

8. City Council direct the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to consult with the Executive Director, Corporate Real Estate Management, and Director, Corporate Security, and other City divisions on appropriate long-term staffing arrangements to manage and enforce authorized vehicle access during road closures and other closures.

9. City Council request the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to, consult with the Deputy City Manager, Corporate Services, and President, Toronto Parking Authority, on potential alterations to the areas made available for parking of motor vehicles by park users on lands currently assigned for which Parks, Forestry and Recreation has been provided operational jurisdiction for operating parkland and recreation operations; and, to report back jointly with the City Manager to Infrastructure and Environment Committee on alternative arrangements concerning the use and nature of these lands, including but not limited to arrangements concerning the management thereof, or transfer of operational jurisdiction for these lands to the Toronto Parking Authority to be operated as parking facilities.

10. City Council direct the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to undertake ongoing monitoring of the preferred strategy and report back to Infrastructure and Environment Committee upon full implementation and no later than 2027 to provide direction on further travel network changes and improvements, including the potential for full road closures at all times in High Park.

11. City Council direct the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to continue consultation with the ward Councillor and park user groups as part of the detailed design and implementation process.

12. City Council authorize and direct the appropriate City Officials to take the necessary action to give effect to City Council's decision, including the introduction in Council of any and all Bills that may be required.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The implementation of the preferred strategy outlined in this report proposes a series of immediate changes that would be made starting in 2023 using current resources within existing divisional budgets. Details of 2023 work improvements have been identified and are discussed under Section 6 of this report.

The resources required to advance further due diligence, planning, programming and support the immediate proposed changes in 2023 (including the recreational cycling pilot) are included in the 2023 Council-approved Operating Budgets for Parks, Forestry and Recreation and Transportation Services. These current resources within the existing divisional budgets will be available in 2024 and future years until completion for these work improvements advanced in 2023.

The existing trackless train service provided by a private operator as well as seasonal TTC bus service in High Park will continue in 2023. Funding for these services is included in the 2023 Council Approved Operating Budgets for Parks, Forestry and Recreation, and the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC), respectively. Should service improvements be necessary to the seasonal TTC bus service, any additional costs would be identified by the TTC and submitted through future budget submissions.

There are future financial impacts for the full implementation of the preferred strategy. A rough order of magnitude cost estimate has been developed based on standard cost per metre estimates for comparable transportation projects and other public realm precedents. The preliminary cost estimate for full implementation is within the range of $10 to $15 million in capital investment, which is expected to be phased over approximately four years. This initial estimate assumes full road reconstruction to support new infrastructure. The full implementation requires new physical infrastructure and new operating agreements, which must be supported by further work, including detailed design, costing, and funding budget approvals through annual budget processes. The next phase of due diligence will include continuous development of full cost estimates, cash flow funding requirements, and associated future operating impacts. There are no incremental and direct operating impacts in terms of costs (or savings) identified upon completion of the preferred strategy at this moment.

Prior to budget submissions, any unfunded projects need to be further scoped and assessed in terms of their financial impacts, strategic capital planning and coordination among City divisions, and more importantly, funding strategy subject to City priorities, affordability, and alternative funding sources within the context of growth-related funding tools as part of the longer term reviews.

The City's ability to continue to deliver parkland improvements is at risk due to the significant financial implications arising from the recently enacted More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 (Bill 23). Bill 23 will challenge the City's ability to collect development charges and Section 42 parkland levies. Without the committed reimbursement from the Province, PFR's capital program will face a funding gap to support anticipated growth and fund necessary infrastructure over the long term.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has been advised of the preliminary infrastructure requirements and the full implementation associated with the preferred strategy to be considered along with other City priorities in future budget processes.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The City of Toronto values inclusion and diversity and aims to improve the quality of life for all Torontonians through the provision of facilities and services that are welcoming and accessible. Achieving equity in Toronto’s parks system means addressing or removing barriers so that all people have equal opportunity to the use and benefit from public services, facilities, and spaces. Parks play a significant role in the quality of life and livability of the city. Equity means not only access to opportunities, but also equitable benefit from the City’s parks system. Parks are for everyone, and park spaces need to be inclusive for all.

The High Park Movement Strategy was developed through an equity and diversity lens to address or remove access barriers and provide equitable opportunity to all people to use and benefit from High Park. The High Park Movement Strategy considers the spatial, temporal, economic, physiological and social barriers that impact park access and was developed to ensure that High Park is an inclusive and inviting space accessible to people of all ages, cultures, genders and abilities.

CLIMATE IMPACT STATMENT

A connected, healthy and resilient parks and open space system is crucial to supporting the City's mitigation and adaptation to climate change. Toronto's parks provide a range of critical ecosystem services that directly respond to the pressures of climate change. As Toronto continues to grow, expanding, improving and maintaining the City's parks system will be critical to supporting the City's strategic climate objectives. The High Park Movement Strategy supports the City's natural systems targets for net zero and takes immediate actions to enhance greenspace.

Transportation is a major contributor to local greenhouse gas emissions in Toronto. Reducing motor vehicle trips and increasing modal shift to active transportation and transit is crucial to achieve net zero. The High Park Movement Strategy supports the City's transportation targets for net zero and takes immediate actions to encourage visitors to access the park by walking, cycling, or taking transit.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on May 25, 2022, the Infrastructure and Environment Committee received Item IE30.16 Interim Report for the High Park Movement Strategy. This report provided an update on the HPMS, summarized early engagement efforts and commented on next steps in developing strategy options.
https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2022.IE30.16

At its meeting on December 15, 2021 City Council adopted item IE26.16 TransformTO - Critical Steps for Net Zero by 2040 and endorsed a set of targets and actions to reach net zero. Actions included expansion of cycling and pedestrian infrastructure; increase to transit service levels; implementation of city-wide transportation demand management strategy; and increase to canopy cover and biodiversity and enhancements to greenspaces.
https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2021.IE26.16

At its meeting on November 9, 2021 City Council adopted item MM37.1 Parkside Drive Safety Measures, directing staff to implement a number of traffic safety measures on Parkside Drive and to include the development of a redesign of Parkside Drive as part of the High Park Movement Strategy public consultations.
https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2021.MM37.1

At its meeting on April 7, 2021 City Council adopted item IE20.12 ActiveTO – Lessons Learned from 2020 and Next Steps for 2021 with amendments, directing staff to continue to pursue opportunities to provide more space for pedestrians, cyclists and public transit riders to allow for better physical distancing through ActiveTO Major Road Closures and Cycling Network Expansion Projects in consultation with active transportation experts, Business Improvement Areas, resident associations, the Toronto Transit Commission and local councillors.
https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2021.IE20.12

At its meeting on January 29, 2020, City Council adopted item EX12.1 Ravine Strategy Implementation with amendments. This report identified ten Priority Investment Areas (PIA) across Toronto's Ravine System that will be the focus for capital investments to advance the implementation of the Ravine Strategy over the next ten years. High Park was one of ten PIAs identified.
https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2020.EX12.1

At its meeting on November 26, 2019, City Council adopted item EX10.3 Parkland Strategy with amendments. The Parkland Strategy, is a 20-year plan that guides the planning of Toronto's park system – including new parks and expansions, improvements and enhanced access to existing parks. It supports decision-making and prioritization of investment in parkland across Toronto.
https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2019.EX10.3

COMMENTS

This section is organized as follows:

1. Background & Park Context
2. Study Process
3. Preferred Strategy
4. Strategy Rationale
5. Engagement
6. Implementation Approach
7. Financial Strategy
8. Next Steps for 2023

1. Background & Park Context

A jewel in Toronto's park system, High Park is a unique greenspace that serves local residents and visitors from across the region. The park spans over 160 hectares, much of which is recognized for its environmental significance. It accommodates a wide range of activities, amenities and ecological, recreational and cultural functions. These distinctive features contribute to its classification as a legacy park in the City's Parkland Strategy. Legacy Parks are iconic open spaces that significantly contribute to the quality of life in the city and promote Toronto as a destination.

Beginning in March 2020, all roads within High Park were closed to visitor vehicles on weekends and holidays in order to provide more space for park users while respecting physical distancing. The road closures initially served as a public health measure during the peak of the pandemic, but quickly sparked interest from park users about permanent improvements that could be made to the travel network in High Park. In addition to the weekend closures, High Park has a long history of restricting vehicular access, including during cherry blossom season, prescribed burns and special events such as the Pan-Am Games.

Mobility issues in High Park extend beyond the question of vehicular access and have existed prior to the pandemic. Other challenges, such as limited transit service, inconsistent wayfinding, and conflict between pedestrians, cyclists and motorists, require a resolution. The connection between mobility and environment should also be recognized. The travel network can contribute to broader environmental goals by encouraging the reduction of emissions and providing clear and convenient pedestrian connections that avoid sensitive areas.

The HPMS was co-led by the City's Parks, Forestry and Recreation, and Transportation Services divisions. The study was launched in the summer of 2021 and aimed to develop a comprehensive response to the transportation challenges and opportunities in the park. The City retained a consultant, WSP, to provide technical support with expertise in transportation and environmental planning to provide technical support. The first stage of work included detailed background analysis on existing and future conditions of the park: park utilization, facilities and programming, applicable plans and policies including environmental regulations, Indigenous significance, parking infrastructure, utilization and capacity, accessibility audit, traffic patterns, multi-modal

mobility assessments, and road safety with a focus on vulnerable road users (for example: people cycling and pedestrians).

Key findings from the existing conditions and background analysis were presented in an Existing Conditions Report, which is available on the project website. These findings provided an important foundation for the development of the preferred strategy and are summarized below:

- High Park is a legacy park that serves as a major City-wide and regional destination with over one million visits per year.
- High Park accommodates a wide range of activities, facilities and operations with varying mobility needs. Interior destinations can present a challenge to access given the size and topography of the park.
- The majority of the park is designated as part of the Natural Heritage System, and many areas are recognized as Environmentally Significant Areas, Provincially Significant Wetlands, and Areas of Natural or Scientific Interest. Any changes to the travel network must respond to these designations.
- Public realm improvements such as wayfinding elements, landscaping, and public art present a valuable opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the long history of Indigenous land stewardship in High Park.
- Operating speeds of motor vehicles often exceed the 20km/hr speed limit.
- Traffic volumes for all modes of travel are heaviest around the High Park Loop (West Road and Colborne Lodge Drive). Cut through traffic can occur from Bloor Street West to the Queensway.
- Angled, on-street parking configurations force motor vehicles to reverse into live travel lanes creating dangerous conditions, especially for people cycling.
- There are no formal pick-up/drop-off areas in the park and no paid parking. Parking spaces on West Road, close to Bloor Street West are sometimes used by subway commuters.
- Sub-standard pedestrian infrastructure presents accessibility and safety concerns in a number of areas across the park. Many pedestrian crossing areas are not appropriately marked and do not give pedestrians the right-of-way when crossing the road.
- Recorded collision data indicates 44 incidents within the broader context area since 2006, of which 68 per cent involve a pedestrian or cyclist. Since 2006, one reported collision resulting in a serious injury took place on roads in High Park; the collision involved a person cycling and a motorist.
- The intersection around Grenadier Café is an area with irregular road geometry, poor sightlines, and conflict among road users.
- High Park is well serviced by transit along its periphery; however, transit service within the park is limited (seasonal and infrequent) and does not appropriately address accessibility needs.

A map of the current travel network in High Park is included in Attachment 3.

2. Study Scope & Process

The HPMS addresses the existing travel network in High Park. This study is exploring design and programming improvements in existing paved areas: roads, sidewalks, parking lots and driveways. Soft-scaped and informal pathways were not included in the scope of this study. Improvements will prioritize safety, accessibility and the park's natural environment. Proposed changes are primarily directed within the park (the Study Area). Impacts and implications of possible changes within the park will be considered for a wider Context Area, roughly bounded by Annette Street, Roncesvalles Avenue, the Lakeshore and South Kingsway. The Study Area and Context Area are shown in Attachment 2.

The HPMS is not intended as a comprehensive master planning exercise for High Park and will not address broader topics such as land use, conservation practices or facility maintenance. These topics and other important park matters will continue to be addressed through established City plans and policies including the Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan, Parkland Strategy and Ravine Strategy.

The preferred strategy described in this report has been developed through several stages of work, illustrated in Figure 1. The engagement process is summarized in Section 5, Engagement in this report.

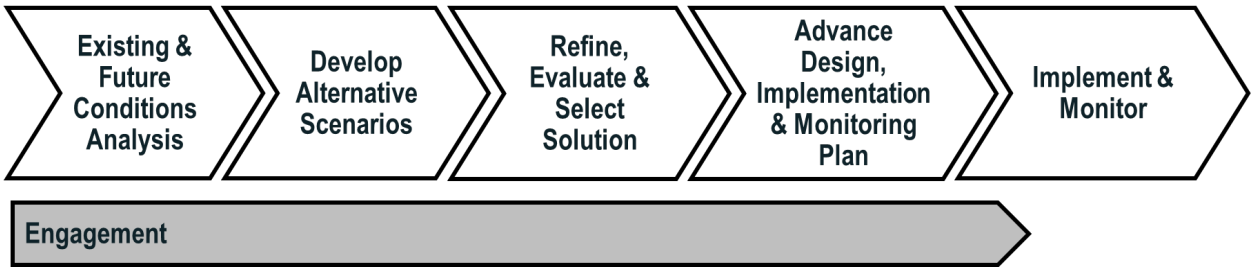

Figure 1 - Diagram of Study Tasks

Initial tasks included the collection and analysis of data on existing conditions in High Park, as described in the previous section. Research was also conducted on similar projects in other jurisdictions where park road closures were recently contemplated (for example: Beacon Hill Park in Victoria, British Columbia, Golden Gate Park in San Francisco, California, Prospect Park in Brooklyn, New York, and the Royal Parks in London, United Kingdom).

Building on initial findings and comments from early engagement, the project team prepared an inventory of possible interventions for improving the travel network in High Park. Interventions fell into the following categories:

- Controlled access interventions that focus on changing how vehicles access the park, either through operational changes, limitations, or restrictions. These are intended to result in minimal physical changes and can be achieved through policies, programs, or signage changes
- Flow management interventions that look to manage traffic speed and volume concerns within High Park, with the ultimate objective of improving safety and comfort for all road users, with a focus on vulnerable road users.

- New infrastructure interventions that consist of more significant physical changes to the existing travel network in High Park. Physical changes would focus on already paved areas but exceptions may be made to meet accessibility standards and if minimal ecological impact can be demonstrated.

These interventions were summarized in the Interim Report for the High Park Movement Strategy, presented to Infrastructure and Environment Committee in May 2022.

Development of Draft Strategies & Strategy Refinement

Four draft strategies were developed based on different combinations of controlled access, flow management and new infrastructure interventions.

- Draft Strategy #1: Full road closures at all times
- Draft Strategy #2: Time-based road closures
- Draft Strategy #3: Area-based road closures
- Draft Strategy #4: Full road re-opening

Each strategy presented a unique approach for managing travel within High Park while responding to the core priorities of safety, accessibility and environment. A complete return to the pre-pandemic travel network in High Park was not advanced given the mobility issues highlighted through the existing conditions report.

While distinct, the draft strategies had common conditions that would be achieved under all options. All strategies included traffic calming measures, though they differed on the precise location and type of measure. All strategies promoted improved transit and shuttle service, removed angled parking and implemented paid parking.

Continued access for service vehicles would be ensured under all strategies. Service vehicles authorized in the park include but are not limited to emergency, waste removal, operations, forestry and transit vehicles. Visitor vehicle access would be maintained to the Children's Garden and Colborne Lodge Drive via the Queensway and the Spring Road parking lot via Parkside Drive. These limited access points are located on the periphery of the park and function independently of the broader travel network.

The draft strategies served as an important starting point for an iterative review and refinement process that took place over the course of several months. This process considered input from the general public, Indigenous-led groups and stakeholders active in the High Park, the Parks, Forestry and Recreation (PFR) Community Disability Steering Committee, City staff operating in the park and staff from other City divisions and agencies. The result of the process was an updated set of refined strategies that met a minimum threshold for viability. Fine-tuning the draft strategies was an important step prior to evaluation to ensure that the best possible version of each approach was fully explored. A summary of the key refinements made under each draft strategy are described in the Executive Summary of the WSP Report in Attachment 1.

Evaluation Process

A comprehensive evaluation process was undertaken to measure the performance of the four refined strategies. A set of seven criteria categories was prepared that reflects the priorities expressed by park users through the engagement process, the issues highlighted in the existing conditions report, and City policies and guidelines such as VisionZero, TransformTO, and the Toronto Accessibility Design Guidelines (TADG). These criteria were used to quantify, contrast and compare the anticipated outcomes of each strategy. The seven categories are defined as:

- User Safety: impact to vulnerable road users and opportunity for conflict mitigation between different road users.
- Access and Equity: opportunity to reduce spatial, economic, cultural, physiological barriers in the immediate and long term.
- Environment: opportunity to improve noise and air quality, preserve and enhance naturalized areas.
- Mobility: supports travel demand management and impacts to surrounding areas.
- Implement-ability: complexity, timing and cost to fully deliver proposed changes.
- Impacts to Programs and Permitting: Meets mobility needs of existing programmatic and permitted groups, and provides new opportunities to support High Park as a destination.
- Technical Viability (pass/fail): confirmation that the strategy will support core operational needs.

Each criteria category includes a set of sub-criteria that were used to evaluate the strategies. A full list of the thematic categories and their sub-criteria can be found in Attachment 1. In total, 40 criteria were used in the evaluation framework. Criteria were distinct, specific and measureable, and allowed the study team to score and compare the strategies. Criteria were defined and clarified based on how they would impact scoring.

Strategies were scored based on anticipated impact, lower scores being assigned where negative impacts were anticipated and higher scores where significant benefits were anticipated. All strategies were determined to be technically viable and received a passing score.

Based on these criteria categories, the Area-based Road Closure strategy performed the strongest, followed closely by Full Road Closures. Area-based Road Closures scored well across all criteria categories and performed particularly strongly under access and equity, mobility, and impacts to program and permitting categories. Full Road Closures scored well under user safety and environment criteria categories, but demonstrated challenges under implement-ability, impacts to programs and permits, and access and equity. Since a shuttle service and automated gating solution would take time to procure and deliver, immediate implementation of full road closures would create significant access, operating and visitor experience challenges in the short term.

It is important to note that the development of a preferred strategy was not strictly limited to one of these four options, but rather sought to identify and integrate the best

elements of all options. Further details on the evaluation process and outcomes area included in Attachment 1.

Coordination with Parkside Drive Study

The City is studying Parkside Drive between Keele Subway Station and the Martin Goodman Trail to identify interventions, in addition to those that have been implemented since November 2021, that could improve safety and mobility along the corridor with a focus on people walking, cycling and other vulnerable road users. The study will determine an action plan for Parkside Drive that responds to existing conditions as well as anticipated conditions that are expected result from changes made to High Park. The Parkside Drive study is a companion to the High Park Movement Strategy, and any changes contemplated for High Park will be considered in parallel with the Parkside Drive Study.

3. Preferred Strategy (What changes are being proposed?)

The preferred strategy incorporates area-based and time-based road closures as well as improvements to pedestrian, cycling and parking infrastructure, transit and shuttle service, and public realm and re-naturalization opportunities. The key components of this strategy are described below and illustrated in Attachments 4, 5, 6, and 7.

Vehicle Restrictions

The main changes to vehicle restrictions are shown in Figure 2, and illustrated in further detail in Attachment 4.

West Road and Colborne Lodge Drive between Centre Road and Bloor Street West would be closed to visitor vehicles at all times. Centre Road would become a one-way route, permitting westbound motor vehicle movements. The main motor vehicle entrance would be located at the Parkside Drive and High Park Boulevard intersection, and the main motor vehicle exit at the Bloor Street West and High Park Avenue intersection. Potential changes to design and signal timing of these intersections are being investigated to align with the reconfigured motor vehicle travel patterns.
Visitor vehicle access would be maintained at all times to the Children's Garden and Colborne Lodge Drive via the Queensway and to the Spring Road parking lot via Parkside Drive. There would be no change to park roads that do not currently allow visitor vehicle access including Spring Road and Deer Pen Road.

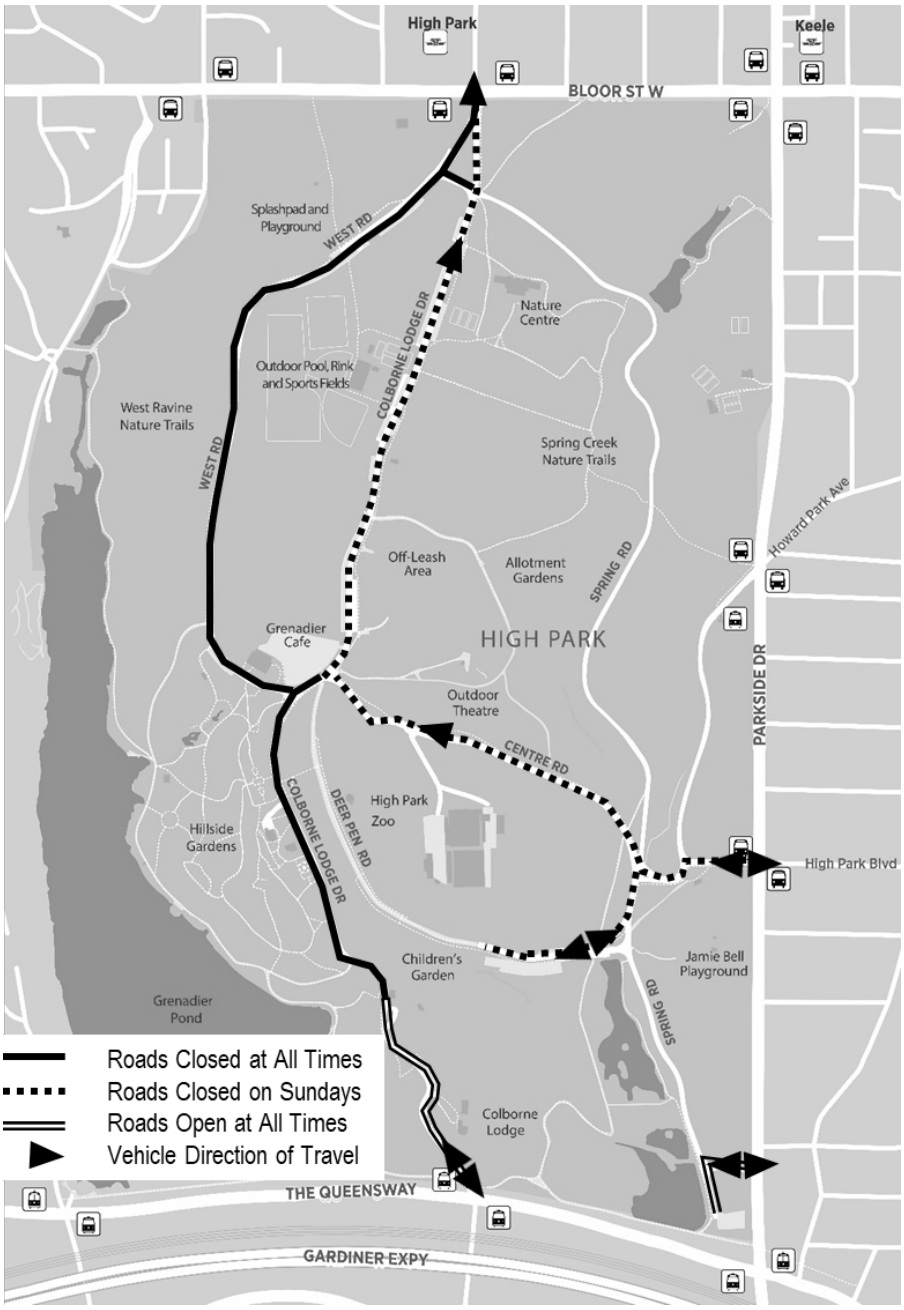

Figure 2 - Summary Map of Proposed Vehicle Access Changes

Full road closures for visitor vehicles would continue on Sundays, except for the independent road networks supporting the Children's Garden and the Spring Road parking lot. On Sundays, authorized vehicles would be permitted to enter at Parkside Drive and exit at Bloor Street West and access park roads as needed. Staff would be required to make reasonable efforts to avoid travel on restricted roads but, when necessary, authorized vehicles would travel with caution and be highly visible to non-motorized traffic.

Pedestrian Infrastructure & Traffic Calming Measures

All existing sidewalks in the park will be considered for widening to a minimum of 2.1 metres, the standard defined in the Toronto Accessibility Design Guidelines (TADG). On roads where vehicles are not permitted, sidewalks would be widened and could accommodate boulevard planting and pedestrian amenities like rest areas and garbage receptacles. On roads with missing sidewalks, new connections would be contemplated. These changes would only be implemented where there is no negative impacts to adjacent naturalized areas.

Improved pedestrian crossing areas would be implemented in key locations throughout the park. Changes would be made to reduce conflict among road users, give pedestrians the right-of-way, and stop vehicles at designated crossing points. Changes would include pedestrian crossovers, necessary signage and accessibility considerations. Other features that are being considered are pavement markings, raised crosswalks, textured pavement and road narrowing. Speed cushions may be introduced along Colborne Lodge Drive where visitor vehicles are permitted. Pedestrian improvements are also planned for Deer Pen Road as part of the ongoing master planning work led by the Friends of High Park Zoo in collaboration with the City.

A map illustrating the proposed changes to pedestrian infrastructure and traffic calming measures can be found in Attachment 5.

Cycling Infrastructure

West Road and the portion of Colborne Lodge Drive between Centre Road and the Children's Garden would be re-designed as a dedicated active-transportation routes to accommodate non-motorized travel. A passing lane will be provided where existing road widths allow to facilitate cycling for people of all ages and abilities.

A cycling by-pass route is proposed north of Grenadier Café. The by-pass would provide a continuous route that connects West Road and Colborne Lodge Drive and would divert people cycling away from the Grenadier Café intersection. This by-pass would be designed in coordination with the Grenadier Café to minimize impacts to operations and would utilize the existing paved area in the parking lot.

Separated bike lanes would be installed on Colborne Lodge Drive between Centre Road and Bloor Street West and on Centre Road. The width and configuration of the bike lanes would vary depending on dimensions of existing paved areas. The physical element that separates bicycle traffic from motorized traffic would be designed to preserve access for essential vehicles and support operational activity such as snow clearing and street cleaning. The bike lane on Colborne Lodge Drive would be one-way northbound and would be re-aligned from the east side of the road to the west side. This alignment would reduce conflict between cyclists and park visitors who are accessing pick-up/drop-off zones, parking spaces or transit stops. The bike lane on Centre Road would be bi-directional, permitting two-way cycling movements. The exact specifications of travel lanes will be determined in the next phase of work through detailed design and will conform to standards outlined in the Toronto On-Street Bikeway Design Guide.

Colborne Lodge Drive from the Children's Garden to The Queensway would continue to be a shared route for people cycling and motor vehicles. Sharrows, pavement markings that indicate a shared route, would be maintained. Sharrows would be added to the southern-most portion of Spring Road where motor vehicle traffic is permitted to access the Zoo parking lot.

Programmatic changes to support recreational cycling would be considered in addition to design changes. A program for dedicated recreational cycling hours would be piloted in 2023 under the preferred strategy. The precise parameters of this pilot would be determined through continued consultation with City staff, cycling groups, and other park user groups. The general intent of the pilot would be to encourage recreational cyclists to safely ride in a designated area in High Park at specified off-peak hours in order to reduce potential conflicts with other park user groups. Recreational cycling will continue to be permitted outside of the hours specified by the pilot and cyclists must obey applicable by-laws.

One option that may be explored is a designated route along the "High Park Loop" (West Road and the northern portion of Colborne Lodge Drive) during some early morning weekday hours (for examples, Mondays from 5:30 to 7:30am).

The recreational cycling pilot will be developed in a manner that maintains the safety and enjoyment of other park users. Safety measures including physical barriers, signage and marshals at key intersections would be required and complemented by broad communication efforts. Operational activities in the park would be scheduled to avoid conflicts. The pilot would require partnerships with cycling groups including development and promotion of a code of conduct and volunteer support for marshalling. The pilot would be open to the public and would not require a payment of a permitting fee. It would not preclude cycling groups from applying for special event permits to host formal races through standard PFR permitting processes including permitting fees.

Staff would monitor the impacts of the recreational cycling pilot in 2023 and upon its conclusion would provide recommendations on the continuation or alteration of the initiative. This may include consideration for other locations in the City that could safely support recreational cycling.

Pending Council approval and coordination with key park user groups, the pilot could target launch for later this summer following the implementation of more immediate travel network changes as described in Section 6 of this report.

A map illustrating the proposed changes to Cycling Infrastructure under the preferred strategy is included in Attachment 6.

Transit & Shuttle Improvements

The TTC will continue to offer seasonal bus service in High Park on weekends and holidays this summer, with operation planned to start in mid-June and conclude on Monday, September 4.

A newly numbered 203 High Park bus will be replacing the former 30B route that provided seasonal service in previous years. The 203 High Park is planned to operate every 20 minutes between 8:00 am and 7:00 pm. This will be a circular route traveling to and from High Park subway station to various destinations within the park. The exact routing and stop locations will be determined by TTC and will be shared on the TTC website. The TTC will also be implementing service changes to the weekend schedule for the 80 Queensway bus to improve frequency and reliability of service. The 80 bus provides service along Parkside Drive and connects to Keele subway station, which has elevator access. The construction of accessibility upgrades is currently underway at High Park Station as part of the TTC Easier Access program and are targeted for completion by the end of 2024.Wheel-Trans may offer service on any road that is open to visitor vehicles.

PFR will be initiating a procurement process for a new shuttle to service destinations within High Park. While this process is underway, the current trackless train service will continue to operate. The train will continue to offer weekend service in shoulder months (April, September and October) and seven days-a-week service during peak months (May, June, July and August). The trackless train generally provides service every 30 minutes.

The requirements for a new shuttle service operator will be outlined in the RFP process and informed by the High Park Movement Strategy. Guiding principles for this new shuttle service include the following:

- **Accessible design:** the shuttle vehicle and stop locations should be designed to be fully accessible.
- **All-season service:** the operating season should be expanded to the extent possible, noting that peak season may have a more frequent service.
- **Low to no emission vehicles:** shuttle vehicles should employ green technology to reduce emissions within the park.
- **Affordable fare:** shuttle fare should be affordable, and opportunities to work with the Vendor to offer discounts or targeted free service will be explored through the RFP.

Changes to Vehicle Parking

Angled, on-street parking configurations exist in multiple locations throughout the park and often create dangerous conditions where drivers are forced to wait for a gap in live traffic and reverse into bicycle and motor vehicle travel lanes with poor visibility. All angled parking spaces on West Road would be removed, since it will no longer support the movement of motor vehicles. All angled parking on the west side of Colborne Lodge Drive would be removed to accommodate the bike lanes. The angled parking on the east side of Colborne Lodge Drive would be reconfigured to accommodate parallel parking spaces or pick-up/drop-off (PUDO) areas.

The main parking lots at Grenadier Café, High Park Zoo and Spring Road would be maintained. The Grenadier Café parking lot would be reconfigured to accommodate the cycling by-pass route and to optimize the safe flow of motor vehicles. The High Park Zoo parking lot would be reconfigured to accommodate a PUDO area and opportunities

for re-naturalization may be explored. Additional accessible and family-priority spaces would be added at key destinations throughout the park.

The preferred strategy proposes the implementation of paid parking for public parking spaces within High Park. Staff are investigating the timing, scope and measures to implement paid parking with Toronto Parking Authority (TPA). TPA is a City Board and Agent of the City of Toronto under the City of Toronto Act, 2006, whose mandate is to construct, operate, manage, and maintain the City's public bike share program, municipal off-street parking facilities and on-street paid parking operations on behalf of the City and in support of local business. Its new mission is to create a seamless customer experience that delivers on choice, ease and speed through the city.

Table 1 summarizes the estimated changes to parking capacity in High Park. The exact configuration and number of parking spaces will be determined in the next phase of work through detailed design. A map illustrating the proposed changes to parking can be found in Attachment 7.

Table 1: Estimated Changes to Parking Spaces

Location	Existing Parking Spaces	Proposed Parking Spaces and PUDO	Proposed Change (#)	Proposed Change (%)
West Road	105	0	-105	-100%
Colborne Lodge Drive N– west side	154	0	-154	-100%
Colborne Lodge Drive N – east side	61	38	-23	-38%
Colborne Lodge Drive S – east side	18	10	-8	-44%
Grenadier Café Parking Lot	130	96	-34	-26%
High Park Zoo Parking Lot	73	62	-11	-15%
Spring Road Parking Lot	21	21	0	0
TOTAL	562	227	-335	-60%

Public Realm & Re-Naturalization Opportunities

The preferred strategy would introduce a pedestrian plaza directly south of the Grenadier Café, transforming the irregular intersection into a programmable public space. The specific design and naming of this space would be determined through a future consultation process, the criteria for which should acknowledge and celebrate the

long history of Indigenous land stewardship in High Park. The pedestrian plaza should prioritize community use and public amenities such as seating areas and public art. The design should also give consideration to people who are riding bicycles southbound and provide a slow and safe connection to the southern leg of Colborne Lodge Drive.

The removal of angled parking spaces presents opportunities for re-programming road space. Parking spaces that are located directly adjacent to recreational facilities could be reprogrammed to accommodate new amenities like seating areas, outdoor fitness equipment, bicycle parking, or temporary activations such as farmers markets or information kiosks. Angled parking spaces that are adjacent to naturalized areas will be prioritized for re-naturalization and restoration efforts.

Public realm improvements would be complemented by a series of wayfinding changes in coordination with the City's Park and Trails Wayfinding Strategy. The strategy aims to make the City a more walkable, welcoming and understandable place for visitors and residents. A unified system of signage and mapping would be installed at key park destinations to help park user plan their visit and navigate to their destination.

4. Preferred Strategy Rationale (Why are these changes being proposed?)

The preferred strategy incorporates elements from the area-based and time-based approaches and upholds full road closures as a desirable and viable long-term option once key conditions are met. The preferred strategy achieves the overarching goals of the HPMS and proposes transformative, immediate-term changes to the travel network that respond to the need to improve safety, accessibility and park's natural environment.

Safety Improvements with a Focus on Vulnerable Road Users

Infrastructure changes that improve conditions for vulnerable road users are a critical element of the preferred strategy. This user groups includes people that are walking, riding a bike, or using a mobility device to get around.

The conversion of roads to active transportation-only spaces provides permanent, car-free spaces and an opportunity to provide separated, purpose-built facilities for pedestrians and people cycling. On roads where motor vehicles are present, separated cycle tracks would provide dedicated space for cyclists with a physical buffer between motor vehicle lanes. This buffer would be appropriately designed to support road maintenance and be traversable in case of emergencies. Improved pedestrian crossings would give pedestrians the right-of-way to safely cross the road at key locations. Opportunities for sidewalk widening will be pursued across the park.

Targeted measures to mitigate conflict among road users are recommended to effectively address safety concerns, specifically those of pedestrians. Throughout the public consultation process, park users identified the area around Grenadier Café as a challenging space to navigate due to the irregular road geometry, angled parking, poor visibility, and non-compliance with stop signs. Community concerns about conflicts between people cycling and pedestrians crossing the street were commonly shared. The preferred strategy would transform the space by creating a pedestrian plaza,

removing motor vehicle traffic and limiting cycling movements by offering a by-pass route.

Appropriate pavement treatments and traffic control measures such as planters and bollards would further establish this area as a pedestrian priority zone and insulate this space. The dedicated cycling by-pass north of Grenadier Café would provide people cycling with a continuous connection from West Road onto Colborne Lodge Drive, the most popular cycling route path, and would reduce the presence of mixed traffic in the pedestrian plaza.

Reducing the Volume and Impact of Motor Vehicles

Reducing the volume of motor vehicles in High Park is an important element of enhancing safety conditions and the park's environment. The preferred strategy would limit where, when and how motor vehicles access the internal road network. The preferred strategy will designate permanent, car-free routes in the park; from Monday to Saturday, approximately 65% of the park roads would be car-free, and on Sundays full road closures would apply to interior park roads.

On roads where motor vehicles are permitted, safety improvements would be pursued; traffic calming measures like road narrowing and speed cushions would help encourage compliance with speed limits. One-way roads would improve the predictability of motor vehicle movements and reduce the number of conflict zones in the park. This condition would also discourage motor vehicles from using park roads for purposes other than park visits. The slow-moving and predictable flow of traffic maintains access to the park's interior destinations and preserves the majority of the park as a car-free space.

Reduced parking capacity and paid parking would also discourage motor vehicle use and contribute to increased modal shift. Park users who have other transportation options will be encouraged to travel though other modes like active transportation and transit, or use the designated PUDO spaces in the park.

Reducing Barriers to Accessing the Park

The goals of accessibility and equity are primarily achieved by reducing barriers, and these present differently for different park users. Consideration was given to how the preferred strategy impacts spatial, temporal, economic, physiological and social barriers (sometimes referred to as the STEPS approach). These barriers are known to overlap and measures to reduce these can respond to multiple barriers at once.

For many park visitors, accessibility is primarily about closing a geographic gap. While some visitors are able to close this gap through walking or cycling, others require options for motorized transport due to the distance they need to travel, the equipment they need for their activities, their own physical abilities, or the physical abilities of friends or family who travel with them. The preferred strategy maintains visitor vehicle access to the key interior destinations to address this need. The preferred strategy also promotes transit and shuttle service as an attractive alternative to private vehicles. Clearly established routes for motor vehicles and designated PUDO spaces would make it easier for park visitors to plan their trip using Wheel-Trans. While the preferred

strategy proposes an overall reduction in parking spaces, the number of accessible parking spaces will be increased.

Barriers to access can also be related to timing; this could be the time of a day a service is available or time-sensitive travel needs. The preferred strategy provides a predictable and straightforward schedule for visitors to plan their trip and provides flexibility on how that trip can best be made. It also acknowledges that weekends are the most popular time for people to visit the park and are often when activities, cultural events, services, and programs are scheduled. Staff heard from many park users who felt that weekends were the only viable time they could visit the park, sometimes due to work hours or the time it may take to travel to the park from other parts of the City. It must also be recognized that current TTC and trackless train service is seasonal and does not yet provide an option for year-round motorized transport. By permitting limited vehicle access on Saturdays, an option for motorized transport into the park on weekends is provided year round. Time-based closures could be revisited once TTC service is expanded or an improved shuttle service is delivered.

Economic barriers exist when the cost of travel prevents access. While paid parking is contemplated under the preferred strategy, free PUDO areas would be provided. The preferred strategy emphasizes the need for an affordable shuttle option that serves destinations throughout the park. Priority is placed on active transportation which is the most affordable mode of travel.

Physiological barriers are often what comes to mind when we consider accessibility broadly. These are barriers presented by a wide range of physical and cognitive challenges, and may require different accommodations to be addressed. Some park visitors may not be physically able to walk or cycle to interior locations and may require motorized travel directly to their destination. People may not own a personal vehicle due to disability or other reasons (including economic barriers), and may rely on transit or ride-sharing. Expanding accessible transit and shuttle travel options is important to address these barriers. For others, walking may be the preferred mode of travel, and a car-free route with pedestrian infrastructure that meets TADG standards may create an environment that feels safer and more welcoming. The preferred strategy provides immediate and ongoing accommodations for a range of physiological barriers, with an emphasis on infrastructure to support vulnerable road users as all park visitors are at some point a pedestrian.

Complexities around communicating information can represent a social barrier which may impact access. The road network changes proposed under the preferred strategy follow a regular schedule that can be easily and clearly communicated. Wayfinding improvements would also be considered throughout the park, making it easier for people of all ages and backgrounds to navigate and enjoy this open space.

The City's Official Plan includes policy direction on public accessibility, stating that a key city-building principle is that public buildings, parks and open spaces should be open and accessible to all members of the public, including people with disabilities. However, important exceptions are recognized including natural heritage areas where public access may jeopardize natural features and functions, and areas with severe topography. The Official Plan also provides direction on development within the natural

heritage system more generally, stating that new or expanding infrastructure should be avoided unless there is no reasonable alternative, adverse impacts are minimized and natural features and ecological functions are restored or enhanced where feasible. The preferred strategy responds to these Official Plan policies, improving site access and pedestrian conditions where appropriate, which can help manage foot traffic and discourage travel through sensitive naturalized areas. Opportunities to re-naturalize paved areas would also be explored.

The significant reduction in motor vehicle traffic will have positive environmental benefits, particularly in noise and air quality. The replacement of the current trackless train with a new shuttle service that employs green technology is promoted through the preferred strategy. The removal and reconfiguration of some parking spaces also presents a significant opportunity for re-naturalization. These efforts would be prioritized where existing parking abuts environmentally sensitive areas.

In addition to benefits related to safety, accessibility and environment, the preferred strategy also supports High Park as a much-loved local amenity, a regional destination, and an important facility for City programs and operations, including cultural events and permitted recreation activities. The proposed changes reflect the multiple functions that High Park serves, respond to the mobility needs presented by these differing activities while taking bold actions to transform the travel network to better serve all park users and the surrounding community.

5. Engagement

The High Park Movement Strategy has been supported by a multi-phase engagement process that has reached thousands of park users through online and in-person engagement events over the course of two years. A summary of these engagement events and the groups that were reached is included in Attachment 8.

The first round of engagement was launched in summer 2021 with an online public survey. The purpose of this survey was to understand how park users were traveling to, from and within the park, and impact of the weekend road closures. The survey ran from June to October 2021 and received over 6000 responses. It was promoted through online channels including the project website, project e-updates and social media, and through physical notices in the park.

Results of this first survey indicated strong public support for the weekend road closures, with many respondents agreeing that they provide a quieter and more pleasant park experience and improve feelings of safety as a pedestrian. Other respondents expressed concern regarding increased traffic and overflow parking in surrounding areas, conflicts between pedestrians and people cycling, and the access challenges created for people who typically visit the park by vehicle on weekends. The majority of respondents reported to access High Park most often by walking or cycling. Further details on the results of the 2021 online survey are available on the project website. This feedback partially informed the City's decision to maintain weekend and holiday road closures as an interim condition while the study was underway, to re-introduce seasonal TTC service through the 30B High Park bus, and to introduce

temporary traffic calming measures at key locations. Survey results also helped to inform the inventory of possible travel network interventions that would be considered in subsequent stages.

A second round of engagement was conducted in fall 2021 and winter 2022, and focused on sharing information about the project and gathering initial feedback from rights-holders (Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation), stakeholder groups (including key permitting and user groups), and City staff and internal partners, including presentation to the PFR Community Disability Steering Committee. These discussions allowed the project team to better understand mobility needs to key park users groups, which influenced the inventory of interventions and the draft strategies.

A third round of engagement was launched in summer 2022 to gather public input. This round included three "talk to the team" events held within the park, one online public open house, and a second online public survey. Over 10,500 people were engaged across these events, the majority of whom participated through the online survey.

Overall, the feedback gathered through the summer 2022 engagement events demonstrated strong public support for road closures in High Park and strong opposition to re-opening the road network to pre-pandemic conditions. Participants expressed concerns about restricted motor vehicle access to facilities and destinations in the park. The question of complete road closures remains a divisive issue. Those in support of closures often point to anticipated environmental benefits and agree that a car-free park will improve safety for vulnerable road users. Those in opposition to full closures have raised concerns regarding site access, particularly for visitors with limited mobility, for interior park destinations and for activities that require equipment such as hockey and allotment gardening. Some participants expressed conditional support for road closures, suggesting that this option should be pursued in addition to improved transit service, accommodations for visitors with accessible parking permits, and measures to reduce conflict between people cycling and pedestrians.

While the topic of road closures can elicit polarizing opinions, feedback demonstrates general public support on several important matters. Many agreed on the need to reduce conflict among different road users, especially around Grenadier Café and near Bloor Street West. However, differing opinions were heard on how this could best be achieved. Some participants were supportive of stricter by-law enforcement while others preferred policy and design solutions to provide clear delineations between modes of travel. Many participants advocated for the park's natural environment as a key feature that must continue to be protected with any proposed changes. General support for improved transit and shuttle service and the implementation of paid parking was noted. Another common point of feedback was the need to coordinate outcomes with safety improvements being considered along Parkside Drive. A Summer 2022 Public Engagement Report is available on the project website, and includes a detailed summary of the results from the 2022 online survey.

It is important to note that the 2022 online survey did not serve as a single determinative source for study outcomes. The feedback gathered through all the summer 2022 engagement events helped to inform revisions and refinements to the draft strategies and to shape the evaluation criteria.

In fall and winter 2022 and the beginning of 2023, further meetings were held with park user groups during a fourth round of engagement. These meetings focused on gathering feedback to inform the evaluation process and to shape emerging directions on a preferred strategy. This round included meetings with internal and external stakeholder groups, a follow-up presentation to the PFR Community Disability Steering Committee, and discussions with Indigenous-led groups active in High Park.

A final public open house was held on April 3, 2023 to share information about the study process and the preferred strategy. This event was held in-person from 4:30 to 7:30pm and materials were shared online in advance of the meeting. The open house was promoted through posters within and around the park, social media advertisements and City social media accounts, the project mailing list and project email and the local Councillor, and was publicized through local media outlets.

The open house was a drop-in format where attendees could review a series of information boards and discuss the project with staff. Staff were positioned throughout the room to answer questions, support discussion between participants and collect feedback. The preferred strategy was described in text, maps and conceptual rendering. Approximately 280 attendees came to the open house and represented a wide variety of interests including local residents and park users. The feedback gathered at the open house was consistent with many of the comments gathered to date through the engagement process and confirms that there continues to be differing opinions on the appropriate level of vehicle access in High Park.

Staff heard from many attendees who were supportive of road closures. Some expressed support for the preferred strategy and others noted a desire to see the closure of all roads at all times. Some who supported further closures suggested that if vehicle access were provided, parking spaces in the park should primarily be accessible spaces. There was also recognition of the need for further service and infrastructure changes to address accessibility including shuttle service and sidewalk improvements.

Opposition to road closures, particularly weekend closures, was a common point of feedback as well. Staff heard from local residents who were concerned about spill over traffic and parking impacts and from park users who rely on vehicle access to travel to their destinations in the park. Some suggested that better transit and shuttle service and more parking around the periphery of the park could help to mitigate concerns about road closures. Staff also heard suggestions for alternative configurations for permanent road closures, such as limiting closures to Centre Road. Some attendees asked about the potential traffic impacts of designating Parkside Drive as the main motor vehicle entrance into the park and emphasized the need to coordinate with the Parkside Drive Study.

Some attendees noted that the proposed changes may not completely align with their personal preferences, but agreed that these present a fair approach that reflects the travel needs of different park visitors. There was notable support for permanent, car-free spaces and for the strategic routing of motor vehicle access to interior destinations. Some expressed support for paid parking but opposition was also noted, including from commercial dog walkers. The proposed pedestrian plaza, cycling by-pass and sport

cycling pilot were popular with some but also raised questions. Some were concerned about potential safety and environmental impacts of recreational cycling and wanted more assurance on mitigation measures. The need for clarification on the design and use of the pedestrian plaza space was also heard.

Some feedback focused on the study process. Staff were asked about the engagement process, who was reached, and how final decisions would be made. Comments were also received regarding future stages of work including suggestions for detailed design and implementation approaches. Many emphasized the need to clearly communicate future changes so that park users could best plan their visits.

Feedback received from the open house demonstrates that public opinion continues to differ on the overall approach to road closures, but also highlights key areas of agreement. This includes the need for better transit and shuttle access, improvements to pedestrian infrastructure, designated spaces to support safe cycling and efforts to support High Park's unique natural environment. These inputs will help to inform the next stage of work, pending Council approval. Many of the comments raised would be addressed through the detailed design phase and will help shape communication and consultation efforts. Staff also observed that a valuable outcome of the open house was the opportunity for park users to hear directly from each other and develop a better understanding of the range of mobility needs that must be addressed.

A full summary of the April 3rd open house will be available on the project website.

Following Council decision, further engagement will be sought with park users groups to ensure travel network changes are effectively communicated. Additional opportunities for engagement will be provided as detailed design work is undertaken.

6. Implementation Approach

The current conditions in High Park present a number of challenges for park users and for City operations. This study process acknowledges that there is an urgent need for improvements that can be implemented in timely manner. The preferred strategy would be implemented in phases, starting with improvements in 2023 that would be completed using current resources within the existing divisional budgets.

2023 Improvements

- New pavement markings: changes to bicycle lanes, parking spaces and pedestrian crossing areas. Removal of pavement markings is included.
- Temporary traffic control measures (e.g. concrete barriers or bollards) at key locations to reinforce changes to permitted motor vehicle movements. This would include closure of West Road and portions of Colborne Lodge Drive to visitor vehicles.
- Temporary road signs at locations throughout and around the park to communicate changes to the travel network, including the shift from weekend road closures to Sunday road closures.
- Improved signage at pedestrian crossings.

- Seasonal service of the 203 High Park TTC Bus
- Pilot program for dedicated sport cycling hours during some off-peak, early morning times

These improvements would be supported by a fulsome communications campaign to ensure park users are aware of changes to the travel network. Access for service vehicles, like emergency services, would be maintained at all times. Subject to Council approval, the above improvements are targeted to be in place after the Civic Holiday (August 7, 2023).

Subsequent Improvements

The remaining improvements outlined in the preferred strategy will require further work on detailed design, costing and funding. Pending Council Approval, this work will begin in 2023, with ongoing implementation efforts over the next three years. These improvements include the following:

- permanent pedestrian improvements including widened sidewalks and installation of pedestrian crossing infrastructure,
- permanent cycling improvements including separated bicycle lanes and installation of the cycling by-pass north of Grenadier Café,
- permanent traffic calming measures such as textured surface, speed cushions or road narrowing,
- permanent re-programming of angled spaces that are no longer used for vehicle parking,
- investigation of paid parking in coordination with Toronto Parking Authority,
- pedestrian plaza south of Grenadier Plaza and other public realm improvements including wayfinding elements,
- intersection adjustments at Bloor Street West and Parkside Drive, in coordination with Parkside Drive Study,
- introduction of a new shuttle service that responds to the need for an accessible, all-season and affordable mobility option in High Park.

Longer Term Opportunities

Following the full implementation of the preferred strategy, the travel network in High Park will look and operate much differently than it does today. Travel behaviours will shift and adjust because of the new active transportation and transit opportunities, and the limitations on motor vehicle travel. Fewer people will drive to the park, and more visitors will opt to walk, cycle, ride transit, and take the shuttle. The park will be a safer, more accessible and greener place to visit.

It is recommended that City staff report back following the full implementation of the preferred strategy to review its success and impacts, and consider whether and where further improvements should be implemented within High Park, including full road closures. The option of full-road closures scored relatively well under most of the criteria categories and garnered public support, and should be upheld as a longer term, transformative goal once key conditions are met. The future review should consider and

comment on conditions that would facilitate further road closures, including but not limited to the following:

Transit & Shuttle Service

- The introduction of a universally accessible, all season and affordable shuttle. A shuttle service would provide direct connection to key destinations in the park, and nearby subway stations. The shuttle would need to provide frequent service with convenient stop locations.
- Expansion of TTC operations to include year-round bus service.
- Completion of the planned accessibility upgrades at High Park subway station to provide elevator access to train platforms and transfers to and from Wheel-Trans and/or TTC accessible buses.

Infrastructure Changes

- Reconstruction of pedestrian infrastructure to ensure that they meet accessibility standards. Sidewalks would be widened to ensure minimum widths are maintained and missing links in the network would be filled to provide a continuous route.
- Delivery of an effective automated gating solution for service vehicles that responds to both day-to-day operational and emergency access needs without relying on active enforcement.
- Coordination with the outcomes of the Parkside Drive Study.
- Implementation of the City's Green Fleet Plan in High Park.

Travel Behaviour Changes

- Modal shift to non-auto modes like active transportation and transit.
- Reduced demand for motor vehicle parking.
- Alternative options for pick-up and drop-off with a motor vehicle.

Public Support

- Strong public support for further road closures, demonstrated through engagement

Any future decision on further road closures will be made through public engagement and City Council's decision making process.

7. Financial Strategy

The preferred strategy outlines immediate changes, as detailed in Section 6 above, to be implemented for 2023 using current resources within the existing 2023 Council Approved Operating Budgets for Parks, Forestry, Recreation, Transportation Services and the TTC.

An initial rough order of magnitude cost estimate to fully implement the preferred strategy over approximately 4 years, is in the range of $10 to $15 million in capital investment. This initial estimate is based on standard cost per metre estimates for

comparable transportation projects and other public realm precedents. The development of a funding strategy for unfunded priority capital projects related to subsequent improvements and longer-term opportunities identified in this report is necessary.

Through 2023, detailed design work will advance, with full cost estimates to be developed, and cash flow funding requirements and associated future operating impacts to be identified. These financial impacts for full implementation of the preferred strategy will be submitted for consideration, through the 2024 and/or future year budget processes. Projects will be assessed based on City divisions readiness and capacity to deliver and more importantly, affordability, with alternative funding sources, including growth-related funding tools, to be explored. In the absence of the City being fully reimbursed by the Province for the lost Section 42 Parks Levy as a result of Bill 23, and without new financial and policy tools, the City will not be able to provide necessary capital investments to support the capital improvements as identified in the preferred strategy.

In addition, staff will explore opportunities for intergovernmental funding programs to support implementation of the preferred strategy. Any additional expenses (or savings) and positions needed to operate and maintain must be clearly articulated and taken into consideration of the cost effectiveness and service delivery to the public prior to budget submissions.

8. Next Steps for 2023

Pending City Council's decision, work will begin immediately to advance the implementation of the preferred strategy. Timing of implementation is subject to change and updates will be regularly communicated through the project website.

- June 2023 onward: A communication campaign will be launched to build awareness of the upcoming travel network changes with park user groups and the broader public. This will include online and in-park notices to communicate improvements. City staff will initiate a procurement process for a new shuttle service and will continue to work with Toronto Parking Authority to investigate paid parking.
- August 2023: Proposed road closures of West Road and portions of Colborne Lodge Drive will be implemented using temporary traffic control measures and the first phase of improvements will be made. This will include updated pavement markings and temporary traffic calming measures. The current weekend road closures are planned to continue until Civic Holiday (August 7, 2023), after which Sunday road closures will be maintained.
- August to October 2023: Dedicated sport cycling times during some early morning, off-peak hours will be considered following implementation of the first phase of improvements.
- Q4 2023 onward: Detailed design work to support new physical infrastructure will begin this year and will determine specifications for road configurations, public realm improvements and parking changes. Costing estimates will be undertaken based on detailed design and will inform future budget submissions in 2024.

CONCLUSION

High Park as a legacy park is a unique and well-loved greenspace that serves local residents and visitors from across the region. It accommodates a wide range of activities and important functions, resulting in different travel patterns and preferences from different park users.

This report presents a preferred strategy for comprehensive improvements to High Park's travel network. The proposed changes are guided in the immediate term by area-based and time-based road closures, while recognizing and upholding the benefits of further road closures as a long-term goal. Road closures would be complemented by improvements to transit and shuttle service, cycling and pedestrian infrastructure, traffic calming measures, changes to parking and public realm and re-naturalization opportunities.

The preferred strategy presents significant yet sensitive changes that respond to the complexity of the current park context. It is informed by principles of travel demand management, which discourages trips by private vehicle by significantly limiting where, when, and how vehicles can access the park while also promoting safe and convenient active transportation and transit routes. It takes a major step forward in reducing the volume and impact of visitor vehicles but acknowledges that some accommodations for motorized transport are necessary at this stage to ensure park access needs are met. The implementation plan laid out in this report will see important changes rolled out in 2023 and further improvements in subsequent years.

The proposed changes have been developed based on findings from background analysis, feedback gathered through a multi-phase engagement process, and by established City policies and objectives.

The current conditions of the travel network in High Park present challenges for park users and City operations alike. There is an urgent need for improvements that can be fully realized in a timely manner. The preferred strategy offers a comprehensive solution which responds to this urgency and prioritizes the study goals related to safety, accessibility and the park's natural environment. These changes will allow High Park to continue to successfully serve its multiple functions and various user groups as Toronto grows and evolves.

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Executive Summary of WSP Consultant Report
Attachment 2: HPMS Study Area & Context Area
Attachment 3: Map of Existing Travel Network in High Park
Attachment 4: Preferred Strategy – Vehicle Access
Attachment 5: Preferred Strategy – Pedestrian Realm & Traffic Calming
Attachment 6: Preferred Strategy – Cycling Improvements
Attachment 7: Preferred Strategy – Parking and Pick-up/Drop-off
Attachment 8: Engagement Summary
Attachment 9: Traffic & Parking Regulations in High Park
Attachment 10: Amendments to Traffic By-laws