

**Car Free High Park**  
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## RE: IE3.7 - HIGH PARK MOVEMENT STRATEGY

### WHO WE ARE

We are Car Free High Park, a coalition of 21 organizations ranging from environmental, health, accessibility & disability, street safety, urban design, active transportation, and public transit advocacy.

Brown + Storey Architects  
Car Free High Park  
CHASE (Canadian Health Association for Sustainability & Equity)  
Community Bikeways (TCBC)  
Cycle Toronto  
David Suzuki Foundation

Friends and Families for Safe Streets  
Midweek Cycling Club  
No More Noise Toronto  
Parkdale High Park for Climate Action  
Park People  
Parks Not Planes  
Roncy Reduces

Saddle Sisters of High Park  
Safe Parkside  
StopGap Foundation  
The Biking Lawyer LLP  
The Centre for Active Transportation  
Toronto Bike Brigade  
TTCriders  
Walk Toronto

### OBJECTIVES OF A CAR-FREE HIGH PARK

To transform High Park into a natural refuge from the stresses of city life – a healthy environment where people can enjoy the park free of motor traffic and the accompanying air pollution, noise, and threat of injury. Creating a park that is safer, more accessible, and better protects the natural environment and wide array of wildlife that call it home.

### WHY A CAR-FREE HIGH PARK IS NEEDED

We are living through a climate emergency, through a struggle for street safety, through the challenges that come with a growing population, limited green space, and the ever increasing importance of protecting and preserving what is left of the natural environment around us. These are goals the City of Toronto has set for our future:

- **TransformTO** - City of Toronto's climate action/emissions reduction strategy launched back in 2017, and accelerated in 2019 when City Council unanimously declared we are in a climate emergency. To quote the City of Toronto: "Achieving the targets set out in TransformTO will require transformational changes in how we live, work, build and commute."
- **VisionZero** - City of Toronto's road safety plan launched in 2016 with a focus on significantly reducing traffic-related injuries and deaths.
- **ActiveTO** - City of Toronto program to contribute to the health and wellbeing of residents by providing extra space to be physically active.

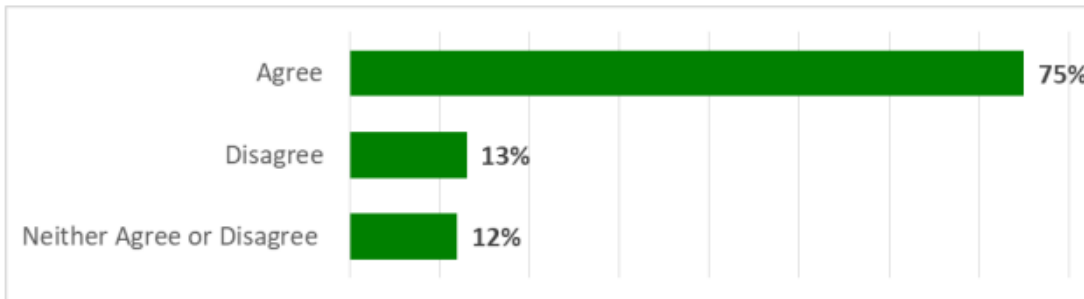
A car-free High Park will fully support all of these important and increasingly urgent goals.

## SUPPORT FOR A CAR-FREE HIGH PARK

The overwhelming support for a car-free High Park is well represented in the various City of Toronto High Park Movement Strategy surveys and reports:

### 1. High Park Movement Strategy 2021 Survey (6,717 respondents)

*Overall, the High Park weekend road closures have had a positive impact on my experience in visiting the park.*



### What do you like about the High Park weekend road closures?



## 2. High Park Movement Strategy 2022 Public Engagement Report (10,384 respondents)

- **Strategy 1 (car-free) was strongly supported** by 44% of respondents compared to 15%, 12% & 17% for all other strategies respectively.
- **Respondents agreed most strongly that Strategy 1 (car-free) would make the park safer, more accessible and improve the natural environment.**
- **Of the 2,030 respondents who identified as having a disability** or living with someone with a disability, the majority preferred a car-free High Park.
- **Of the 2,700 respondents who identified as having children** under the age of 12, the majority of families with young children preferred a car-free High Park.
- Respondents placed highest priority on reducing the amount of motor vehicle traffic within the park and **lowest priority on offering direct vehicular access to interior park destinations**, which was the lowest priority for families with young children, park users with disabilities, and seniors out of a total of 13 possible options.

High Park Movement Strategy poll:



### ACCESSIBILITY IN A CAR-FREE HIGH PARK

The majority of the 2,030 respondents who identified as having a disability or living with someone with a disability preferred a car-free High Park. This view is shared by Luke Anderson, the co-founder and executive director of the StopGap Foundation, one of the country's leaders in accessibility advocacy. It is also echoed by Walk Toronto's disability and accessibility committee, which is headed by their members with disabilities: Daniella Levy-Pinto and Adam Roy Cohoon.

The parking lots at Spring Road and by Colborne Lodge would remain open even in a car-free High Park. They currently consist of 40 parking spaces with only 2 being accessible parking spaces. They should be re-imagined as exclusively accessible, family with young children, and senior parking. These parking lots also provide space to support convenient pick-up and drop-off locations.

## LOW-CARBON MODES OF TRAVEL TO A CAR-FREE HIGH PARK

High Park is well supported by public transit with 2 subway stops (High Park and Keele), 2 streetcars (501 Queen and 506 College) and a bus (80 Queensway), which drop visitors off at various park entrances. The Bloor Street bike lanes and Martin Goodman Trail provide safe passage to the park for people choosing active modes of transportation. There are also 12 Bike Share stations in and around High Park totalling over 200 available bikes/docks.

## CONCLUSION

If a park can't be car-free, then what hope do we have of prioritizing low-carbon modes of transportation, meeting our climate goals, and putting the health and safety of people first? Closing parks to cars is not a radical idea, but rather a sensible one that is being implemented all around the world, including our close neighbours in Montreal and New York City. It is the logical path forward in today's climate, it is the direction the world is heading in, and it is what the strong majority of people in this city want.



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