

High Park Movement Strategy – Online Public Survey Summary



Introduction & Study Background

High Park is one of Toronto's largest public parks, combining environmentally sensitive areas with maintained parkland, recreational facilities and popular attractions. As a regional destination offering a range of travel options, High Park is one of the most visited parks in Toronto.

The City has launched the High Park Movement Strategy to rethink the travel network within the park in the context of growing populations, shifting travel patterns, and impacts from COVID-19. The goal is to improve the travel network to better serve park users and the surrounding community, with a focus on safety and accessibility while prioritizing the park's ecological integrity.

The High Park Movement Strategy considers the travel network within park including existing roads, driveways, parking lots, and paved pathways. The current weekend road closures within the park will also be assessed as part of the Study.

This Study focuses on mobility and on the existing travel network within High Park. Proposed improvements will be informed by the unique park context and the sensitive environmental areas it includes. Protection and preservation of naturalized areas will be a key criteria for evaluating options. However, larger park planning matters such as land use, conservation practices and facility maintenance will be not addressed through this study. Feedback received on matters out of scope will be recorded and directed towards appropriate staff.

A comprehensive engagement plan will be delivered through the Study and will support meaningful consultation early on and throughout the process, with a focus on key stakeholder groups active in the park, rights-holders and Indigenous communities, and the general public.

This document summarizes the results of an online survey that was launched as part of the first round of public consultation for the High Park Movement Strategy.

About the Survey

As part of the first phase of engagement, the City launched an online survey in June 2021 to gather information on people's experiences and priorities for traveling to, from and within High Park. The survey prompted respondents to consider how the COVID-19 pandemic may have changed their experiences in visiting the park and their priorities for longer term improvements to the travel network.

The survey ran from June 30, 2021 to October 12, 2021 and received 6,717 responses (of which 5,627 were fully completed). The survey was promoted through a variety of online channels including the City's website, City Twitter and Instagram accounts, targeted Facebook advertisements, and through newsletters from the Local Councillor. Physical decals with a link and QR code to the survey were also placed in approximately 15 high traffic areas around the park.

The survey was comprised of 25 questions, including standard socio-demographic questions, which help the City understand who is filling out the survey, and whose feedback we may be missing. All responses were voluntary.

Feedback collected through the survey will help to shape the outcomes of the High Park Movement Strategy. The survey represents the first of several consultation opportunities that will be offered throughout the study process, ensuring early and ongoing participation from park users.

This summary provides a highlight of the survey responses. A final consultation report will be delivered as part of this study and will present detailed analysis of the survey results including text-based responses and sociodemographic information.

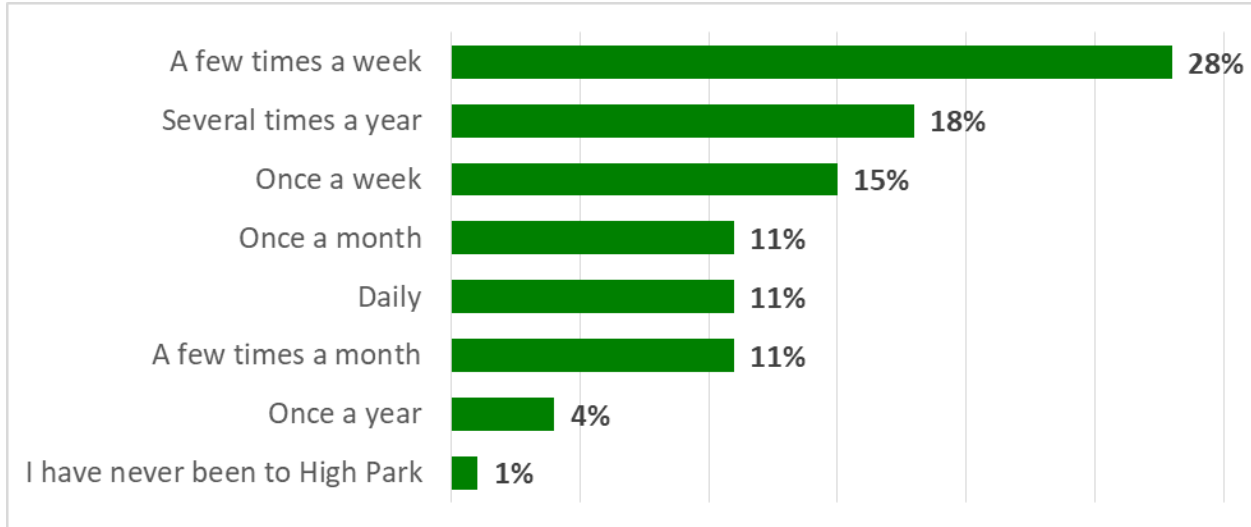
Survey Highlights

- The majority of respondents agreed that the weekend road closures had a positive impact on their experience visiting the park (75%). When asked about the benefits of the closures, most respondents noted a quieter and more pleasant park experience (74%), feeling safer walking within the park (69%), and having more space to physically distance (66%).
- Most respondents (59%) said that the weekend road closures have not impacted them. For those who did report an impact, most noted that the road closures have increased street parking (33%), and increased traffic (25%) in the neighbourhoods around the park.
- When asked about priorities for the High Park Movement Strategy, most respondents placed a high priority on enhancing and conserving the park's ecological integrity (77%) and reducing the impact of vehicular traffic within the park (60%). Lowest priority was placed on offering direct vehicular access to park destinations and improving connections to surrounding areas.

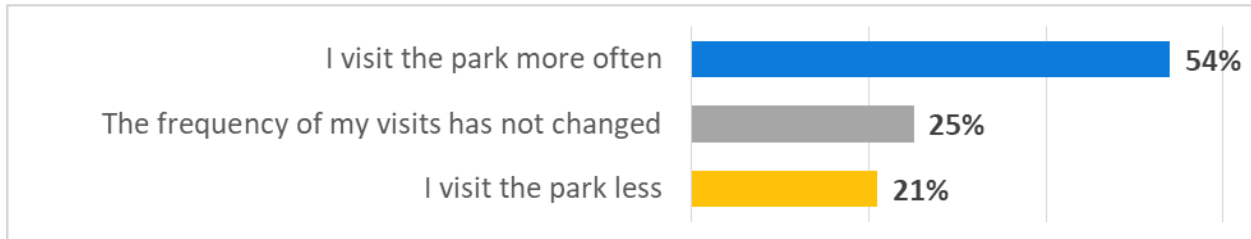
- The majority of respondents said they most often travelled to and from High Park by foot (59%), followed by cycling or other non-motorized devices such as rollerblades (38%). Most respondents did not report a change in this travel preference during the pandemic. For those who did report a change, 26% said they were more likely to walk to the park and 23% said they were more likely to cycle to the park, while 17% said they were less likely to drive.
- The majority of respondents indicated that they travelled between destinations within the park by foot (83%). Most respondents did not report a change in this travel preference during the pandemic. For those who did report a change, 19% said there more were likely to travel around the park by foot, while 12% said there were less likely to drive between destinations.
- Most respondents indicated that they entered or exited the park through a main roadway such as High Park Boulevard or Colborne Lodge Drive (66%). Most respondents did not report a change in this travel preference during the pandemic. For those who did report a change, 14% said they were more likely to access to park through an unpaved trail, while 9% said they were less likely to access through a main roadway.
- Most respondents said they visited the park once a week or more before the COVID-19 pandemic (54%). Over half of the respondents (54%) said they visited the park more frequently during the pandemic, compared for 21% of respondents who reported visiting the park less.
- The most popular times for visiting the park prior to COVID-19 were weekend afternoons and weekend mornings. Most respondents did not report a change in this preference during the pandemic. For those who did report a change, 34% said they visited during weekday mornings more often, while 22% said they visited during weekend afternoons less often.
- When asked about their destinations in the park prior to COVID-19, respondents said they most often visited to park to enjoy nature such as gardens and bird watching (66%), followed by trails and hiking (63%).

Summary of Responses

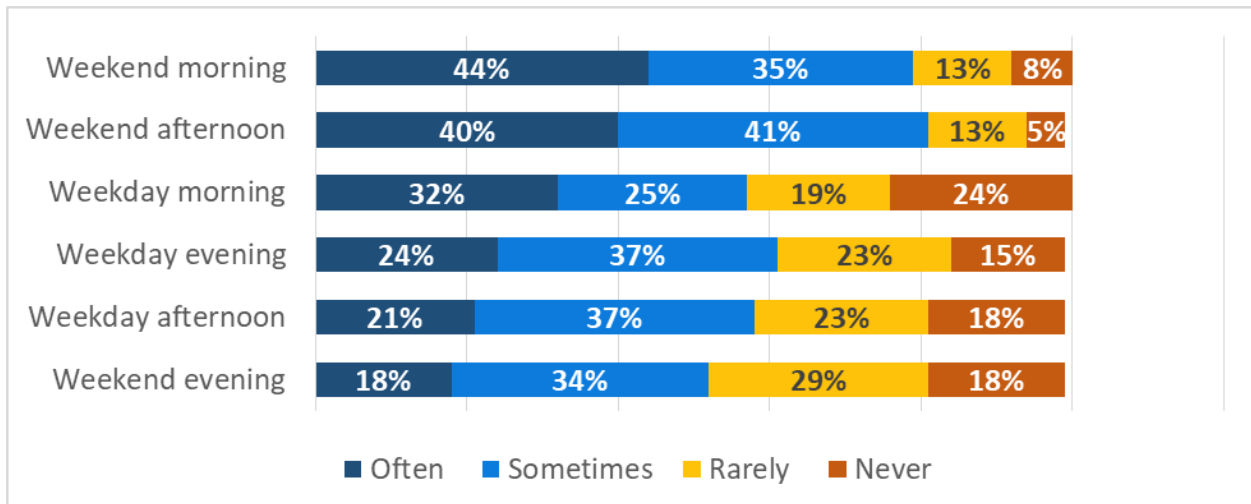
How often did you visit High Park before the COVID-19 pandemic?



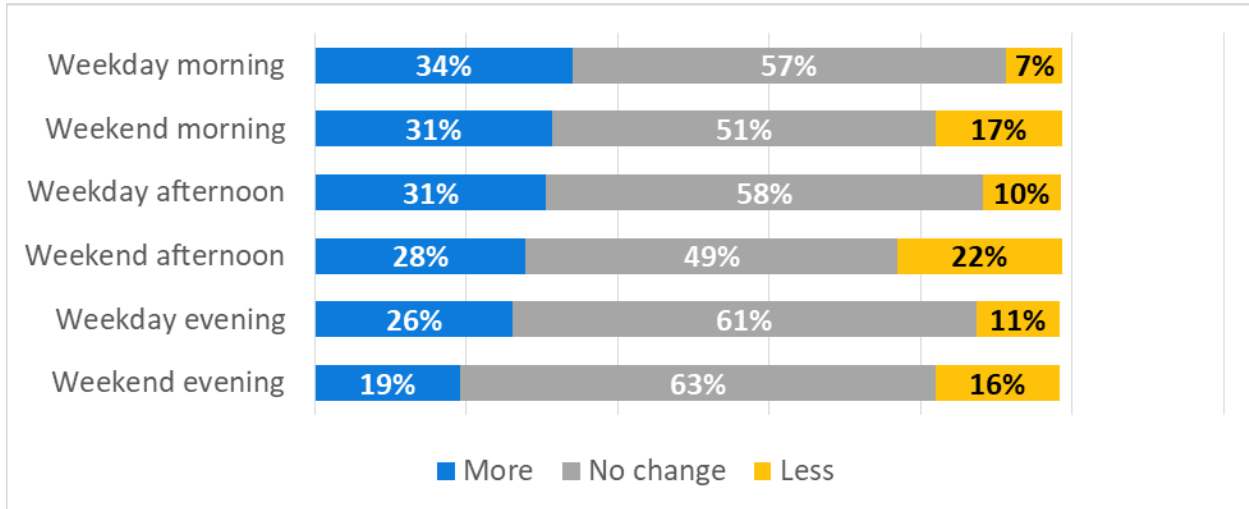
Compared to your experience before the COVID-19 pandemic, how has the frequency of your visits to High Park changed?



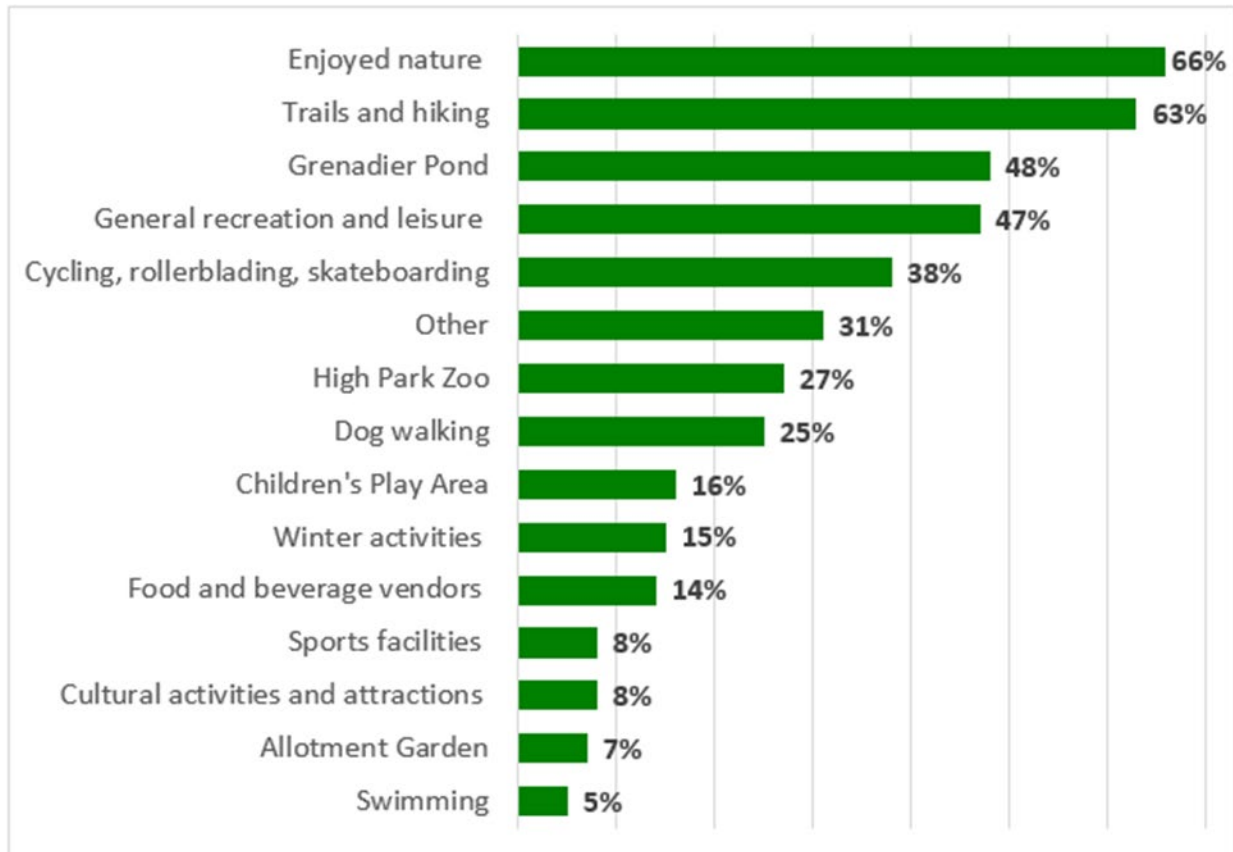
When did you typically visit High Park before the COVID-19 pandemic?



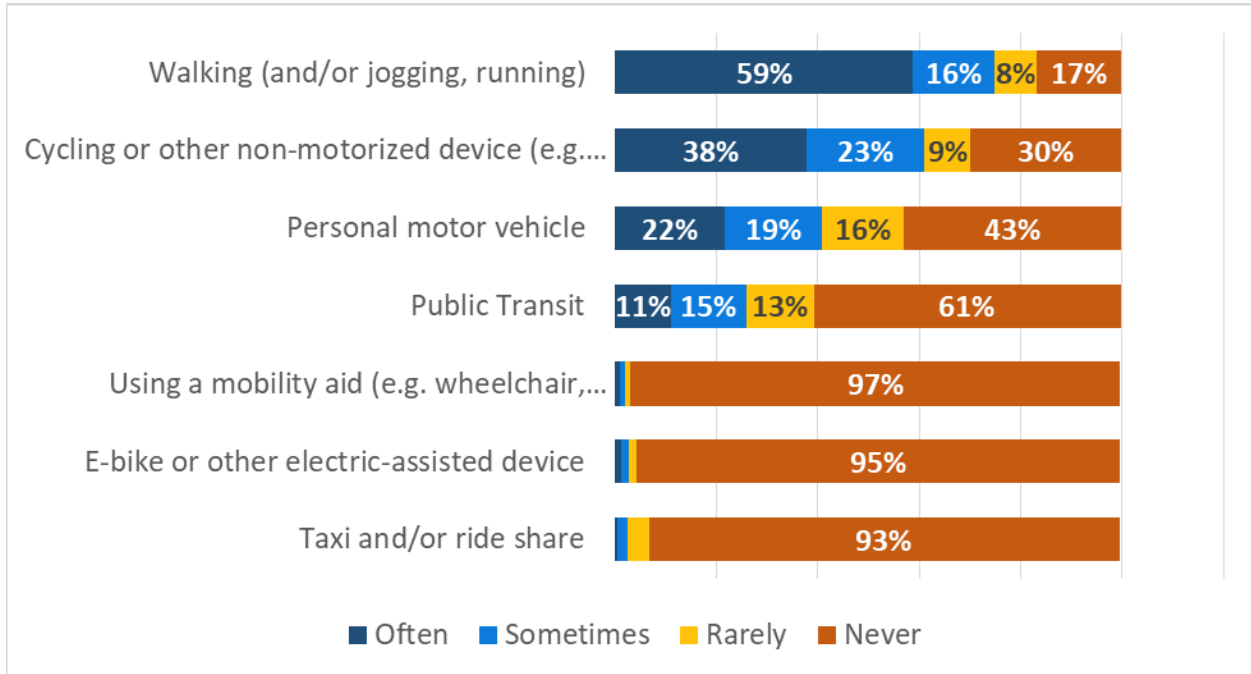
Compared to your experience before the COVID-19 pandemic, how has the day or time that you chose to visit High Park changed?



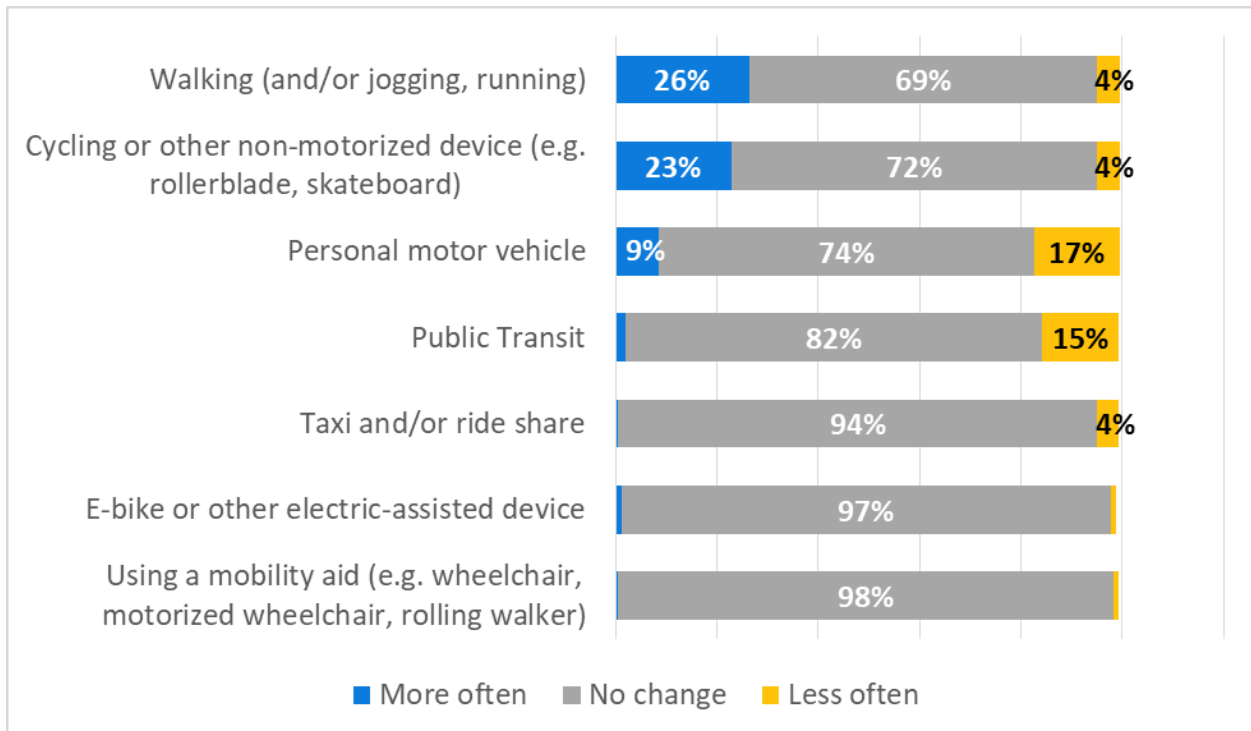
What did you typically do or visit in High Park before the COVID-19 pandemic and when all facilities were available? (Table shows responses for "I often did this")



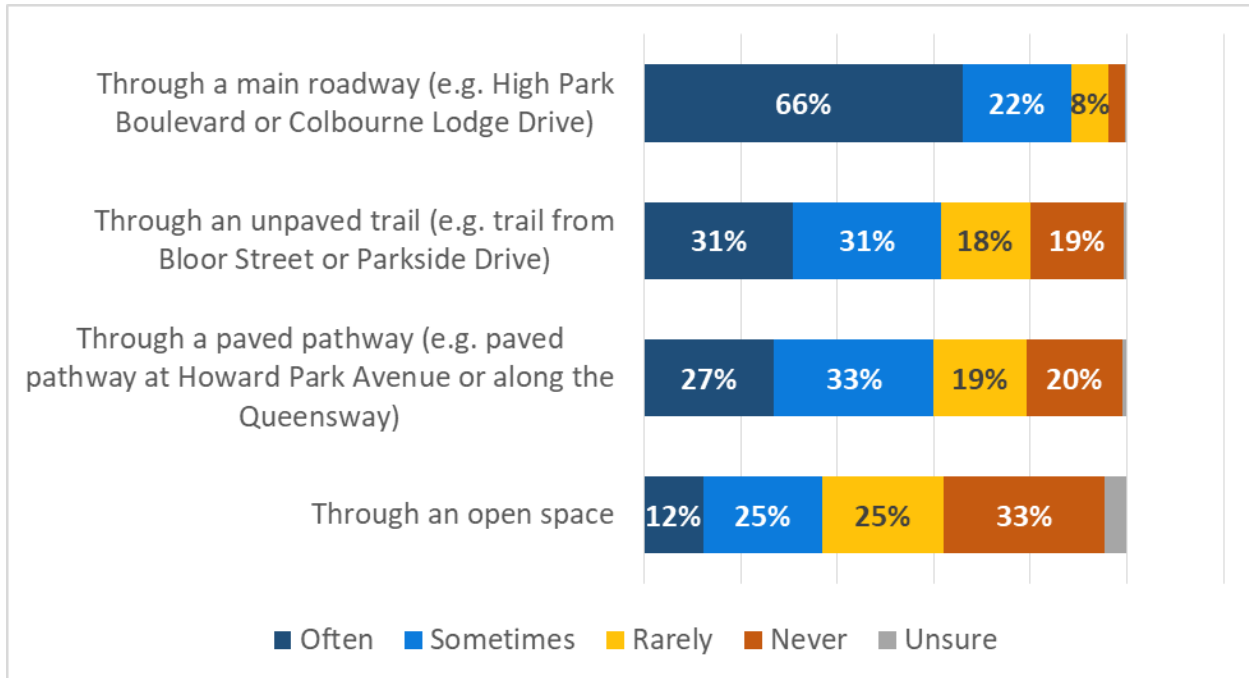
What mode of travel did you typically use to get to and from High Park before the COVID-19 pandemic?



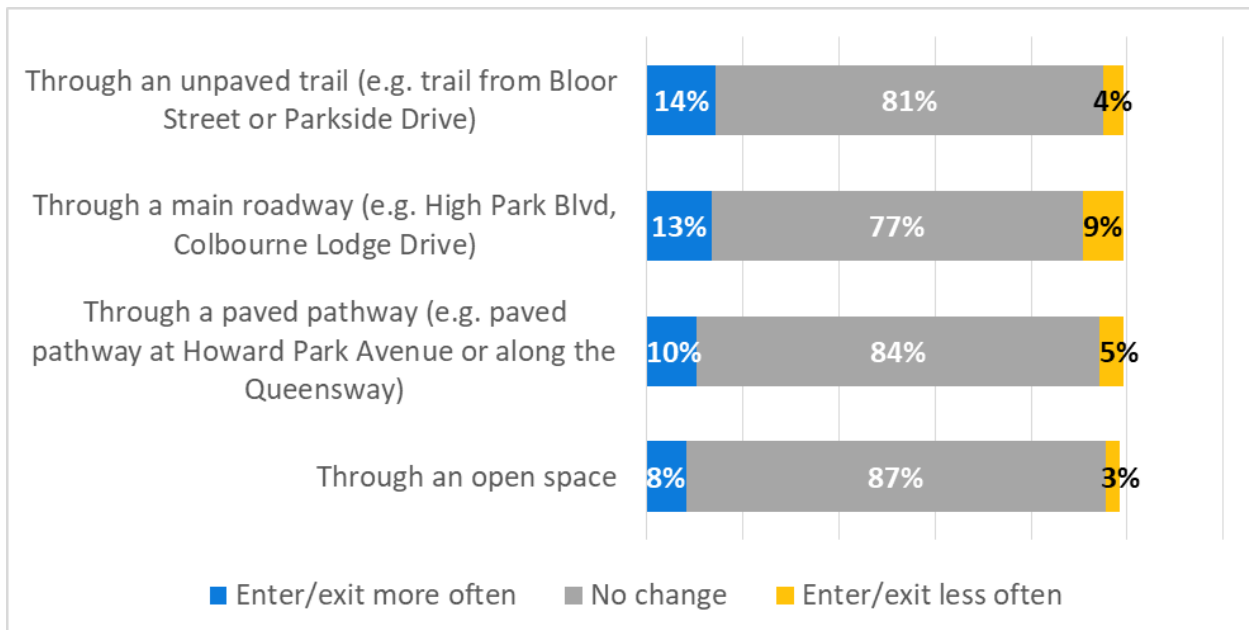
Compared to your experience before the COVID-19 pandemic, how has your mode of travel to and from High Park changed?



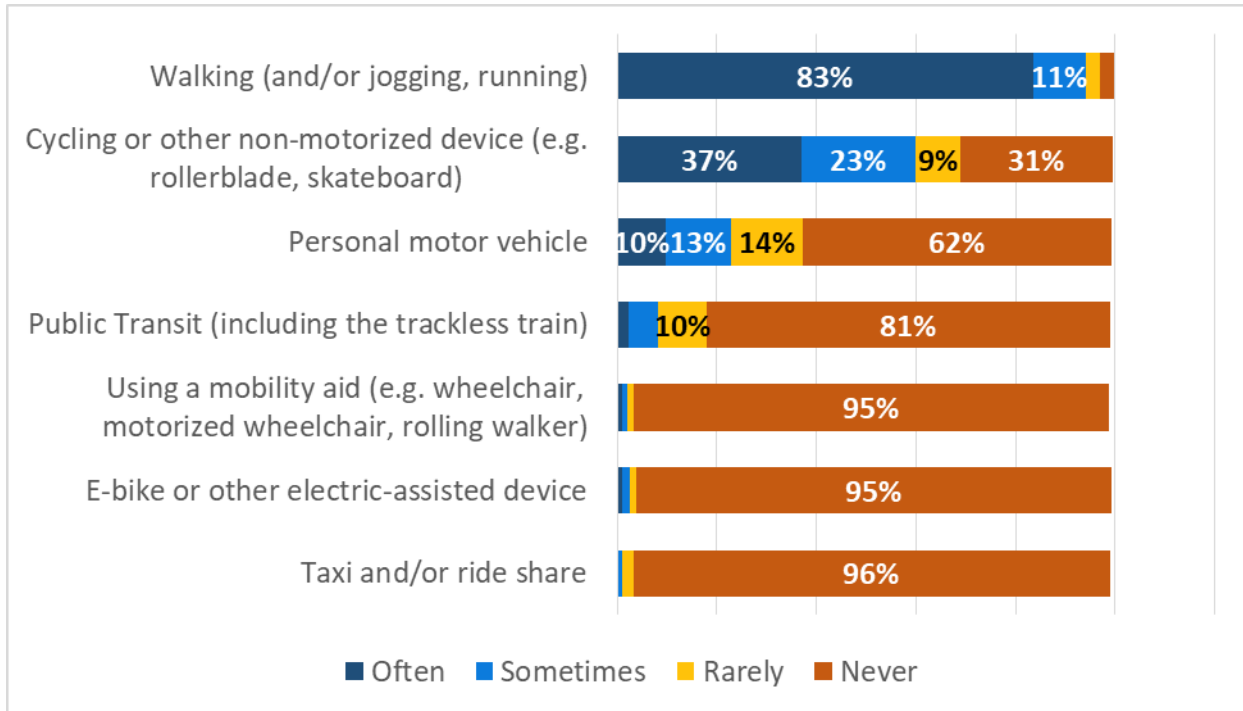
What type of route did you typically use to enter or exit High Park before the COVID-19 pandemic?



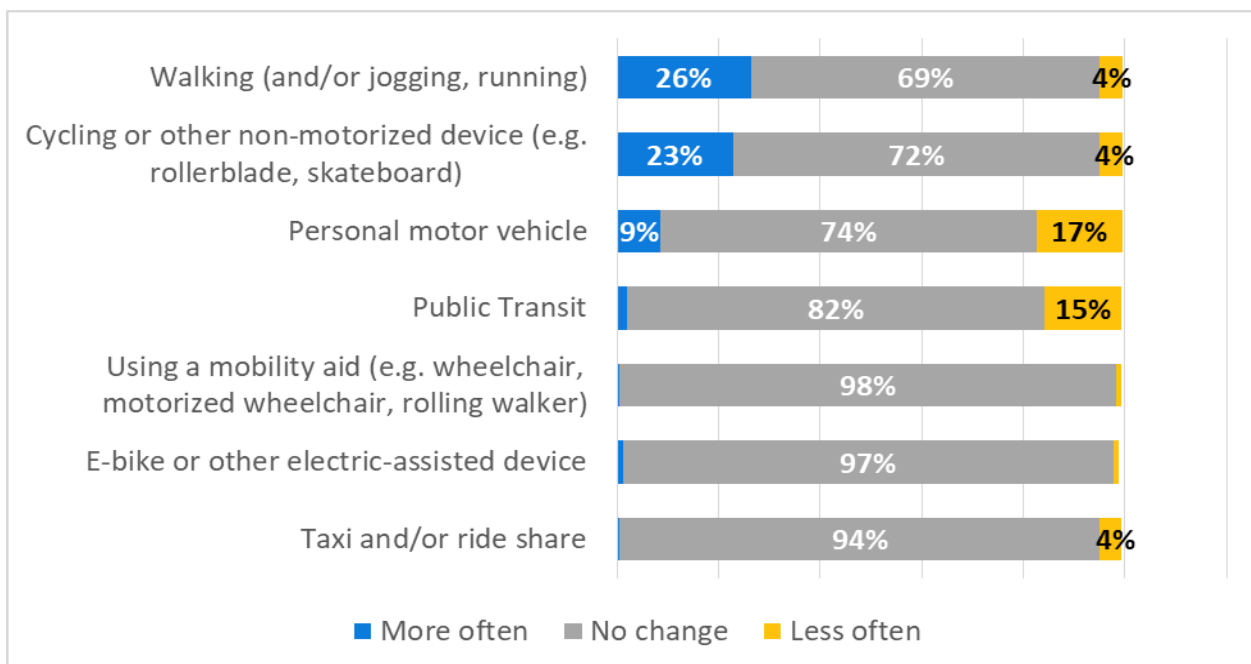
Compared to your experience before the COVID-19 pandemic, how has your route to enter or exit High Park changed?



What mode of travel did you typically use to get between destinations within the park before the COVID-19 pandemic?

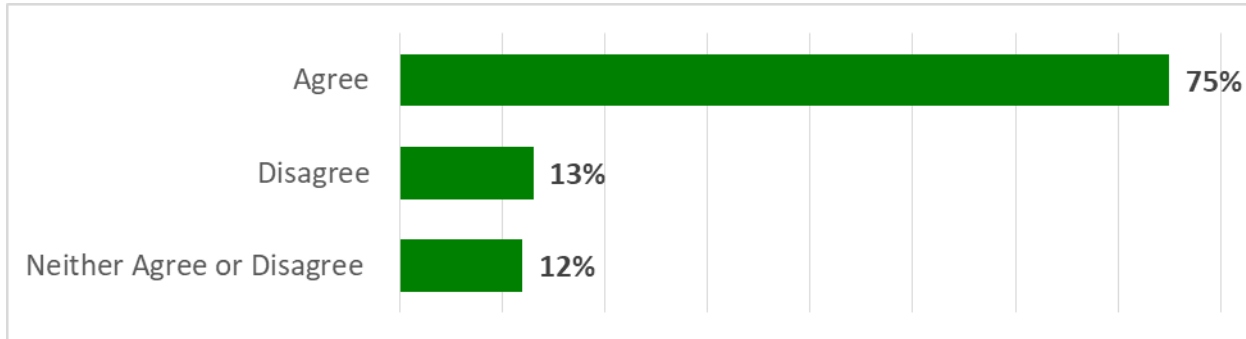


Compared to your experience before the COVID-19 pandemic, how has your mode of travel between destinations in High Park changed?

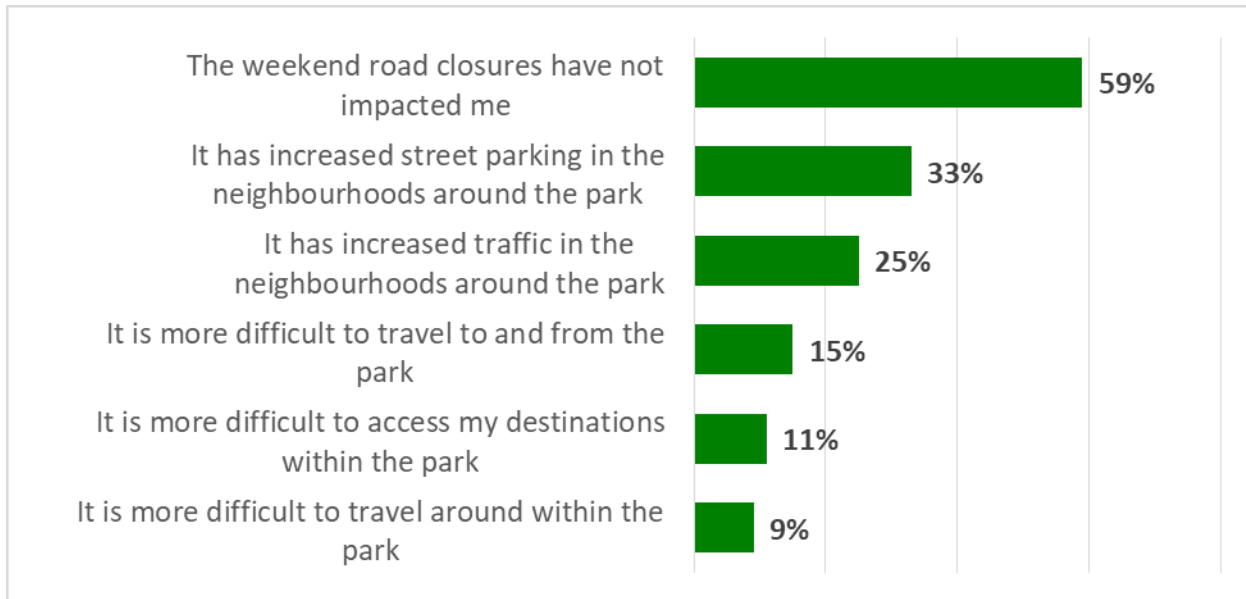


To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

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



How have the weekend road closures in High Park impacted you?



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



What priorities would you like to see reflected in the High Park Movement Strategy?

