

Transportation **ALTERNATIVES**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Statement on New Car-Free Hours in Central Park

Transportation Alternatives congratulates the NYC Department of Transportation and the Department of Parks and Recreation on their recent announcement of increased car-free hours in Central Park. Closing the west loop drive between 7 and 8 am on weekday mornings will provide much-needed car-free space for the thousands of New Yorkers who pack the park each morning to exercise.

“Any increase in the number of car-free hours in Central Park is welcome news to the millions of New Yorkers who use our parks to recreate and exercise,” says Paul Steely White, Executive Director of Transportation Alternatives. “In this age of soaring obesity, diabetes and asthma car-free parks simply make sense. They offer safe recreational opportunities to exercise, and these new car-free hours will avail safe space at a time of day when many New Yorkers need it most.”

Increasing car-free hours in Central Park will boost physical activity, reduce thru-traffic in surrounding communities and prioritize the needs of people, not cars. Improving access to parks, reducing greenhouse emissions and ensuring New York has the cleanest air of any large American city are goals of Mayor Bloomberg’s PlaNYC; increasing car-free hours in Central Park advances all of these goals.

Transportation Alternatives has long advocated for the complete closure of Central Park’s loop drive to cars. A recent Transportation Alternatives study showed that 78% of Central Park users would exercise more often if the park were completely closed to automobile traffic.

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