

DOT's Holiday Gift For Prospect Park

FOR YEARS, THE DEPARTMENT OF Transportation has issued a Holiday Traffic Mitigation Plan to deal with the "unusually heavy vehicle traffic" that appears annually between Thanksgiving and Dr. Martin Luther King Junior's birthday. One particularly irrational aspect of this plan has always been "holiday hours" in Prospect Park which open the park's Loop Drive to cars 24 hours-a-day, five-days-a-week despite the irregularity of congestion around the park and the seemingly minimal impact it has on surrounding streets.

This year, quite unexpectedly, the Mitigation Plan brought a very special present home to Prospect Park users: no "holiday hours." For this great gift, we all should send a thank you note to the DOT.

The halt of "holiday hours" is a sure-footed step in the right direction for the DOT. No negative effects were reported and safe and serene recreation time was left intact through this holiday season.

Thank you DOT!

By allowing residents and visitors safe and uninterrupted access to the Borough's prize park, the DOT encourages healthy lifestyles, improved quality of life and sensible transportation throughout Brooklyn.

The next step in the right direction is to close the park to motor-vehicles in the evening. Much like the mysterious "holiday" traffic near the park, the evening commute traffic volumes are extremely variable and far lower than in the morning. An evening closure of the loop



PAUL S. WHITE

Prospect Park in Brooklyn remained closed to motor vehicles during the day this winter, as the DOT put an end to so-called "Holiday Hours" in the park.

road would have little to no negative effect on traffic in surrounding neighborhoods while greatly improving the quality of life for surrounding communities. □

TakeAction!
Contact your City Councilmember and the DOT to ask them to request an evening closure of the Prospect Park Loop Drive
City Council Look up your Councilmember and find their contact information at: nycouncil.info/constituent
DOT Commissioner Iris Weinshall
 NYC DOT
 40 Worth Street
 New York, NY 10007

Close It for Science's Sake

THERE IS NO SHORTAGE OF reasons why the Central Park loop drive ought to be closed to automobile traffic: safety, serenity, history, symbolism-these are the most obvious. A recent Department of Transportation letter shows one less frequently mentioned: sound science.

In a response to dozens of groups and thousands of individuals who requested a three-month trial closure of the Central Park loop drive to automotive traffic, DOT Commissioner Iris Weinshall found it reasonable to reference a fifteen year-old traffic study. This antiquated study predicts, among many other fallacies, traffic nightmares upon the closing of several Central Park entrances and exits that have been shut now for over a decade with no problem. Her response also employed car counts taken during "The Gates," an event that brought at least 4,000,000 visitors to the Park, to discuss increases in vehicle volumes while ignoring the fact that travel time around the Park decreased during "The Gates," in spite of the volume increase.



GRAHAM BECK

Drivers will learn to take a different path or perhaps a different mode if Central Park's loop drive is closed.

The letter provides examples that rhetorically run, but factually limp. In the end

"The Department of Transportation has examined this idea at length and our studies indicate that closing the Central Park Loop completely (for any period of time) would adversely affect congestion and pollution levels throughout Manhattan."

DOT'S FORM RESPONSE TO WRITTEN REQUESTS FOR CLOSURE OF CENTRAL PARK'S LOOP DRIVE

Weinshall and the DOT make only one point crystal clear: the city needs a three-month trial closure of the Central Park loop drive to study the area's traffic patterns in a sensible manner. Three months will give traffic patterns time to normalize; drivers time to acclimate and park visitors ninety days of uninterrupted joy.

On Sunday March 26th at noon, Transportation Alternatives will rally at City Hall.

For science's sake, tell New York that Central Park needs three-months without cars. **Take action: RSVP for the Rally for a 3-Month Trial Closure at City Hall transalt.org/rsvp/centralpark/.** □