

One Step Closer to Closure

PARKS LOVERS GOT good news in December when the New York City Department of Transportation announced that it would re-instate the pilot traffic plan that limits motor vehicle access to Central Park's loop drive and continue the enforcement of a similar plan in Prospect Park. This not only gives New York City residents and visitors more car-free space, but also bodes well for the soon to be released traffic studies that the DOT developed during the initial phase of the pilot program.

The plan, a "fractional closure" that keeps motor vehicles off of the "off-peak" half of the Central Park loop road morning and night and the "off-peak" half of the Prospect Park loop road in the morning, was instituted by Mayor Bloomberg in May of 2006 in response to the City Council's Intro. 276. The "car-free summer" bill, introduced by Councilmember Gale Brewer at the urging of Transportation Alternatives, called for the City to try out a car-free summer in Central and Prospect Parks. Though sponsored by 19 members of the City Council and a super majority of Councilmember's whose districts border on the two parks,



Central and Prospect Parks are used by more and more people every year. In 2007, T.A. will be working to ensure that millions of park visitors have more car-free time to recreate safely.

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the bill never made it out of committee. A similar piece of legislation will be introduced this year and with another push from Transportation Alternatives, our car-free parks committees, tireless volunteers, fevered rally attendees and dedicated partner organizations, car-free park legislation stands a good chance of being passed into law and delivering a long overdue commonsense improvement to New York City. □

TakeAction!
Sign up to be part of the Car-Free Central Park and/or Car-Free Prospect Park Committees by e-mailing parks@transalt.org

And the Survey Says: Cars are the Culprit!

ONE IN TEN CENTRAL PARK VISITORS responding to a recent T.A. study said they had been injured due to a motor vehicle's presence in the park.

While the final results of the study are still being analyzed, the preliminary results have enormous implications for car-free parks supporters. This volunteer administered study also found that a staggering 64% of respondents would use the park more if cars were banned.

What's more, park users from different areas feel the impact of motor vehicles in different ways. In comparison to the cumulative averages, respondents from Northern Manhattan were 20% more likely to find the park dangerous or intolerable when cars were allowed in, 17% more likely to feel in danger when cars were allowed in and 18%

more likely to use the park more if cars were completely banned

Central Park visitors from Northern Manhattan were the most likely to use the park more often if cars were completely banned.

Both the neighborhood specific data and the general information will prove invaluable in this year's campaign for a car-free summer. Transportation Alternatives will engage with new partners and strengthen existing relationships to encourage park use, increase public safety, improve traffic flow and win a car-free summer in Central and Prospect Park. □

Car-Free or Not Car-Free? That is the Question:

In both Central and Prospect Parks, the confusing timetable of car-free hours can easily befuddle. At press time, this is the schedule of car-free hours:

Prospect Park

Car-free Hours for Prospect Park

All weekends: day and night

All weekdays:

- Westdrive (Southbound) is car-free from 7 pm–5 pm
- Eastdrive (Northbound) is car-free from 9 am–5 pm and 7 pm–7 am

Central Park

Car-free Hours for Central Park

All weekends: day and night

All weekdays:

- Westdrive (Southbound) is car-free from 10 am–7 pm
- Eastdrive (northbound) is car-free from 7 pm–7 am
- Eastdrive from 57th Street and Sixth Avenue to 72nd Street is open to cars from 7 am–7 pm