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**MAYOR DE BLASIO ANNOUNCES ALL OF PROSPECT PARK WILL BECOME
PERMANENTLY CAR-FREE**

Decision comes after first-ever car-free summer proved successful and popular with park-goers

BROOKLYN—Kicking off City Hall in Your Borough, Mayor Bill de Blasio announced today that Prospect Park’s entire loop drive—east and west—will become permanently car-free. The change will be implemented on January 2, 2018 and follows the park’s first car-free summer. From July through September, cars had not been allowed on the park’s East Drive – now open to cars during morning rush hours. The car-free hours had enormous support from the park’s recreational users, who outnumber cars more than 3-1 during morning hours.

“Prospect Park is Brooklyn’s backyard. I married Chirlane here. This is where my kids played little league. And I have always wanted it to be the safe, quiet refuge for Brooklyn’s families that it was intended to be. Restoring Prospect Park as a car-free oasis will improve the lives of the millions who use this park today and of generations to come,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**.

During the car-free summer -- from July 17 until September 11th -- the park’s new arrangement was popular with the park’s walkers, joggers, and cyclists who use the loop drive. DOT estimates those recreational users outnumber cars during morning rush hours 1,000 to just 300. After Labor Day weekend, New York City received petitions with more than 1,100 signatures calling for the return of full-time car-free hours for the entire park.

While the analysis of the car-free trial is still being finalized, its preliminary results clearly indicate no alternative driving route experienced more than a minimal delay, with most experiencing no change in travel times whatsoever. Based on that data, officials are now confident a fully car-free park can be implemented without adverse impact. These results are consistent with those seen after the closure of the West Drive in June 2015, when the most

affected alternative southbound route saw an increased travel time of less than a minute, while other afternoon drivers actually saw travel times improve.

“We are delighted to announce that Prospect Park will be completely car-free for the first time,” said **DOT Commissioner Polly Trottenberg**. “Like the Mayor, I have spent countless hours enjoying the beauty of Prospect Park. Cyclists, joggers and pedestrians, young and old, can rejoice year-round in a safer and quieter park.”

“New Yorkers look to their parks for green space and fresh air,” said **NYC Parks Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver, FAICP**. “Completely removing car traffic from Prospect Park turns one of our most historic sites back over to the kids, joggers, ball players, picnickers, and amblers who love it. Starting in January, all visitors to Prospect Park will enjoy cleaner air, improved safety – and peace and quiet.”

“I am excited to enjoy a car-free Prospect Park, alongside the millions of Brooklynites and visitors who enjoy the recreation and relaxation that our borough's crown jewel provides every day. This decision will significantly enhance the experience of cyclists, runners, and walkers in this premiere open space. My administration has worked hard with community advocates to make Brooklyn a safer place to raise healthy children and families, and we can now add a car-free Prospect Park to our growing list of success stories,” said **Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams**.

In 2015, Mayor de Blasio announced that the West Drive of Prospect Park would be permanently car-free for the first time since the inception of the automobile. In July of this year, DOT announced it would for the first time coordinate summer car-free hours with NYC Parks and the Prospect Park Alliance. On September 17th, the East Drive from Park Circle to Grand Army Plaza was re-opened to vehicular traffic during weekday morning rush hours (7am to 9am); starting on January 2, 2018, the first workday of the New Year, the entire park will be permanently car-free. In the weeks before the permanent car-free hours, the City will once again publicize the change to drivers using social media as well as VMS boards posted at the Park Circle entrance of the park.

After the January car-free hours take effect, DOT expects to closely monitor traffic around the park for changes in traffic patterns, and expects to adjust traffic-signal timing and make other changes as needed.

Senator Jesse Hamilton said, “Removing cars from Prospect Park will allow all park visitors to breathe more easily, helping everyone enjoy the park. Thanks to Mayor de Blasio, NYC Parks, and all those park-goers who petitioned for this change. As a frequent visitor to Prospect Park myself, I know our community’s greenest gem shines a bit brighter because of this move.”

Assembly Member Jo Anne Simon said, “Prospect Park is a perfect escape from the hustle and bustle of every day Brooklyn. Removing cars from the park will make it safer and more enjoyable for the thousands of visitors every day. After a successful car-free summer, I am so glad that the City will make this permanent.”

"Joggers, cyclists, seniors, and families who love Prospect Park will all rejoice at today's news. Dogs, horses, squirrels -- and I guess maybe even cows, too. After many years of tireless advocacy and step-by-step implementation, I'm thrilled that our park will officially be car-free," said **Council Member Brad Lander**. "Our refuge in the heart of Brooklyn is now safer and more peaceful. What a great way to celebrate Prospect Park's 150th birthday!"

"New Yorkers go to Prospect Park to escape the fast pace of the city and reconnect with nature. Now they'll be better able to do so," said **Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez, chair of the Council Committee on Transportation**. "With the expansion of bike-share programs and more bike lane miles, I am confident we can replicate this process and create more car-free areas throughout the city."

"I want to commend Mayor de Blasio for spearheading this initiative to make Prospect Park permanently car-free. As a long time advocate for the preservation of "Brooklyn's Backyard," I believe this is an important step towards ensuring that the park is a safe and welcoming environment for pedestrians. By working together, we are making this historic green space healthier and more peaceful for future generations of New Yorkers," said **Council Member Mathieu Eugene**.

Council Member Laurie Cumbo said, "It's a good day when we take the right steps to ensure that our children, seniors, and families have safe and peaceful green spaces. Under the leadership of the de Blasio Administration, we have taken another step towards transforming Prospect Park into a car-free and healthier environment where our families can grow and thrive. This is a major victory for the millions of people who can now walk, jog, and cycle year-round without reservation."

"Prospect Park Alliance applauds Mayor de Blasio and Commissioners Trottenberg and Silver for working to ensure a car-free Prospect Park," said **Sue Donoghue, President of the Prospect Park Alliance**. "As Brooklyn's Backyard, it is important to do all we can to ensure the Park is a safe and tranquil destination for the millions of visitors who depend upon it for recreation and relaxation."

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