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**MAYOR DE BLASIO ANNOUNCES PROSPECT PARK IS NOW COMPLETELY CAR-FREE STARTING TODAY**

*Recreational users of park's loop road – walkers, joggers, and cyclists -- have outnumbered cars 3 to 1; The park's first-ever car-free summer in 2017 proved popular with park-goers*

**BROOKLYN**—Mayor Bill de Blasio announced today that starting today, Prospect Park's entire loop drive would be permanently car-free for the first time since the inception of the automobile. The change was first announced in October 2017, and came as a direct response to the success of the park's first car-free summer trial last year. The car-free hours received enormous support from the park's recreational users, who had outnumbered cars by more than 3-1 during peak morning hours.

“Prospect Park holds a very special place in my family's history. It's where Chirlane and I were married – and then served as the 500-acre ‘backyard’ where we enjoyed playing so often with our kids,” said **Mayor de Blasio**. “Today, we are providing a great new year's gift that recognizes the special place the park holds for so many other Brooklyn families. Now as a safe refuge that has permanently removed cars, the park can expect to see even more people enjoying walking, jogging and bicycling on its beautiful loop road.”

“We are delighted in this new year to announce that Prospect Park is now completely and permanently car-free,” 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, will be able to rejoice year-round in a safer and quieter park.”

“For 150 years, Prospect Park has been one of New York City's most treasured public spaces,” said **NYC Parks Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver, FAICP**. “Thanks to the permanent removal of traffic from the park, this masterpiece of urban greenery will now be cleaner, safer, more open, and more beautiful.”

Prior to today, Prospect Park's East Drive had been open to traffic during weekday morning rush hour, between 7 and 9 am. The summer car-free trial proved popular with the park's walkers, joggers, and cyclists, who during peak season, outnumber cars during morning rush hours by 1,000 to just 300. After Labor Day weekend, New York City received petitions with more than

1,100 signatures calling for the full-time car-free hours for the entire park. In October, the Mayor announced the permanent car-free change as part of Brooklyn City Hall in Your Borough.

DOT found that during the summer-car free trial, traffic on alternate routes outside of the park was only marginally affected. The agency was confident that, when combined with improvements to signal timing and turn lanes, any adverse effects of a car-free park on nearby streets could be minimized. After the park's West Drive went car-free in June 2015, the most affected alternative southbound evening rush hour route saw an increased travel time of less than a minute, while other afternoon drivers actually saw travel times improve.

DOT has coordinated the transition to a car-free Prospect Park with NYC Parks and the Prospect Park Alliance. Drivers have been advised of the change by variable message boards posted at the Park Circle entrance of the park for the last three weeks. As the car-free hours take effect, DOT will closely monitor traffic to better accommodate traffic pattern changes, as well as implement additional changes if necessary.

"A new year means a new chapter for Prospect Park, a chapter that once and for all has permanently removed cars from Brooklyn's backyard," said **Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams**. "I applaud all of the incredible community members whose years of advocacy have translated into action. It is a pleasure to be part of this meaningful decision that will advance safety and serenity in this signature park."

"I am very pleased that Prospect Park will be permanently car-free," said **Assemblymember Jo Anne Simon**. "A car-free Prospect Park is a safer and healthier park for all park users. I thank Mayor de Blasio and Commissioner Polly Trottenberg for ensuring that the park is a safe and enjoyable destination for park-goers."

"Parks are spaces designed for family recreation and individual leisure. The flow of vehicles in Prospect Park interrupts the peace of park visitors while increasing the level of greenhouse emissions and pedestrian crashes," said **Council Chair of the Committee on Transportation, Ydanis Rodríguez**. "Having Prospect Park free of vehicles will keep the park's visitors safer and more protected than ever before."

"A car-free Prospect Park means millions of parkgoers can now discover the true essence of Brooklyn's backyard - an oasis of tranquility, recreation, and culture in the midst of a natural landscape," said **Council Member Laurie A. Cumbo**. "For generations, Brooklyn families have walked, cycled, and jogged throughout this cherished green space. Today marks another step towards a healthier park and future for our children, seniors, and families."

"While it's a little harder to remember on this frigid morning, Prospect Park is a haven for walkers, joggers, cyclists, seniors, and families, our refuge in the heart of Brooklyn," said **Council Member Brad Lander**. "A car-free park is a more peaceful park, a more beautiful park, and -- most important -- a safer park. Thanks to Mayor de Blasio, to Commissioner Trottenberg, to decades of advocates, and to everyone who made this day a reality."

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