



Legislation Text

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Int. No. 499

By Council Members Rosenthal, Levine, Johnson and Levin

A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to restrictions on motor vehicle traffic on the central park loop drive.

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. Declaration of legislative findings and intent. One New York City's greatest assets is our extensive system of parks. The City is home to more than 1,700 parks, playgrounds, and recreational facilities comprising over 29,000 acres. Each day, thousands of New Yorkers and tourists walk, run, bicycle, play, and relax in our parks. Central Park alone attracts approximately 40 million visitors annually. Parks provide a safe, serene, and beautiful escape from the often hectic pace of urban city living.

According to research compiled by Transportation Alternatives, traffic volume in Central Park is at an all-time low and shrinks significantly in the summer, while recreational demand skyrockets. Further studies show that the impact of closing the Central Park loop on traffic adjacent to the park would be minimal and traffic may even decrease. Eliminating vehicle traffic from the Central Park loop during the summer would enhance the benefits Central Park offers while decreasing the chance a visitor would be injured by a motor vehicle.

§ 2. Chapter one of title 19 of the administrative code of the city of New York is amended by adding a new section 19-132.1 to read as follows:

§ 19-132.1 Restrictions on the central park loop drive. a. The central park loop drive shall be closed to motor vehicle traffic between June 24, 2015 and September 25, 2015.

b. Vehicles operated by or on behalf of the department of parks and recreation, the police department,

and the fire department and emergency service vehicles are exempt from the restrictions set forth in subdivision a of this section.

c. The commissioner may issue waivers for motor vehicles otherwise prohibited from traveling on the central park loop drive in accordance with subdivision a of this section that are operated by or on behalf of individuals or organizations participating in events that have been authorized by the department of parks and recreation and to motor vehicles operated by vendors authorized to operate in the park.

d. The prohibition set forth in subdivision a of this section shall not be construed to prohibit motor vehicle traffic on any of the transverse roads in central park.

e. The commissioner shall conduct a traffic study of central park and the surrounding area for the purpose of determining the effects, if any, of the closing of the loop drive. The study shall examine such factors as motor vehicle traffic volume, disruptions of pedestrian traffic flow, environmental factors identified in consultation with the department of environmental protection, and such other factors deemed necessary by the commissioner. Such study shall be submitted to the mayor and the council and posted on the department's official website no later than December 31, 2015.

§ 3. This local law shall take effect immediately upon enactment into law.

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