



## Stewardship Division

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### WHY THIS PILOT PROJECT?

It is my belief that there were a significant number of complaints from pedestrians and cyclists about the growing number of speeding bicycles in High Park that endangered both people and wildlife. In an effort to control this, it was thought that by giving these speed cyclists a specific time to do that, it would be a compromise to accommodate everyone. They chose not to accept 20 years of data and experience that shows that a partial ban on an activity does not work.

### PLANNED RECREATIONAL CYCLING PILOT IN HIGH PARK

1. While looking good on paper Codes of conduct are not enforceable, just aspirational, especially if participants are anonymous. Bylaw enforcement is not possible due to the lack of resources. This has been demonstrated by previous pilot projects. (e.g. dog off leash area, foraging, fishing).
2. Recreational Cycling is a misnomer, implying it is the same as leisurely cycling. It is speed cycling, with no impediments from cars or pedestrians on park roads.
3. Without registrations for the specific time there is tacit approval of this activity as something one can do in High Park, encouraging many more participants outside of the specified time with no supervision or consequences. If you insist on doing this it must be held as an event with all permits like any other activity that closes a part of the park to the general public.
4. For serious cycle training this proposal is inadequate and inconvenient. Requests will come for more time.
5. Volunteers should not be placed in a position where they are trying to prevent injuries to cyclists and pedestrians. The need for them acknowledges this is an activity where there may be injuries and special care needs to be given. Will they be registered and have insurance? Other park volunteers must be, even for non dangerous activities. Has the city's legal team approved this?
6. It is being placed in a part of the park that is designated as a protected natural area (ANSI and ESA) so does not meet the bylaws that would allow for it. An enormous amount of effort has gone into creating an area for wildlife and nature lovers that is not being respected.
7. "Recreational" (Speed) cyclists deserve a place to train that is their own. Other locations exist. A separate facility is needed that does not cause conflict. This activity benefits only one specific group while unnecessarily inconveniencing and putting other park users and wildlife at risk of injury.
8. It is not acceptable to inconvenience and endanger other park users and groups for the sole purpose of appeasing a vocal and aggressive group of people who want to use High Park as a backdrop for an activity that not only does not require a high quality natural habitat but in fact threatens it. If you can't tell them to slow down now when it is not allowed it will be even more impossible if it is at any time. This is not a compromise it is capitulation.

## DUE DILIGENCE:

There are many departments in Parks, Forestry and Recreation that are responsible for different activities and areas of High Park. The planning group has done their due diligence on activities related to people and are not interfering with fishing and off leash dog trails but are ignoring the bylaws, official plans and ESA/ANSI designations that are there to protect the natural environment. They are required to show that no damage will result from specific activities but aside from actually running over wildlife including turtles, the major harm is to create noise and other disturbance that chase them away and interrupt nesting and feeding which only is visible when bird and other monitoring counts are done over time. There are very few parks out of the 1500 in the city where bird watchers and others can go so why are they less important as park users? We have received no indication that monitoring has been done over the years for other activities. This is a much bigger issue than this pilot project.

## PILOT PROJECTS:

The assumption that the results of similar pilot projects are unknown/uncertain but off leash dogs, foraging and fishing have had a detrimental effect on wildlife despite 20 years of habitat restoration by city staff and volunteers. The issue isn't only the official recreational activity itself but the large number of people who participate at all times that create an inhospitable environment for them. The Dog Off Leash Area officially started with a pilot project in 2008 (after many years of ad hoc park use) even though it met none of the city's requirements for a DOLA and was grandfathered in because it was so popular. As you can see by this [map](#), aside from the fact that it expanded to cover several roads you will find off leash dogs everywhere in the park. There are insufficient bylaw officers to control it and many park users who try to educate people about this are met with abuse. The same applies to foraging (removing plant material), fishing and current speed cyclists. People will do what they want, but if something is not allowed they at least know it is wrong.

## MONITORING:

The concept of this pilot project and monitoring the results has not been well thought out. If all you monitor is how the 2 hours are going you are missing the bigger picture. Aside from the improper use of uninsured volunteers, it is unfair to expect the groups and park users that will be affected to do the work of monitoring and reporting speed cycling outside of the pilot project hours which is a major concern, along with the proposed morning hours that are especially important to wildlife. These are volunteer groups with limited resources who just want to do their own activity. There is no mention of the planning department or the proponents of this project providing that service.

## RECREATIONAL vs SPEED CYCLING:

We are not talking about recreational cycling that meets the bylaw of 20 mph and stopping for pedestrians (and wildlife). This pilot project gives this group the right to ignore those bylaws. As mentioned before, unless this activity is presented as a registered event with insurance, it will be perceived as something you can do in the park. I thought that the removal of cars that was approved was to increase the number of pedestrians and cyclists, not for speed cycling. This is likely to be a popular activity. What are you expecting to happen if this pilot meets the limited criteria for success?

OTHER SITES: (better for ongoing speed cycling)

Cycle Toronto has done fantastic work increasing the number of bike trails/roads in the city. Why do you not want to have this on one or several of them? To me that would be a real pilot project. You could rotate the dates and times and cover more of the city, except in places with ESA/ANSI designations. The goal could also be to have a dedicated facility. It's only fair that some cyclists accept limitations for other cyclists special needs and desires.

The [Morning Glory Cycling Club \(MGCC\)](#) has had speed training riding in the High Park area since 2013. They meet at the park, do their laps in the west end and meet back at the park at a leisurely pace. They require people to join as members, provides insurance and has a very strong code of conduct that is enforced by the group. Cycle Toronto and the city could join with them and subsidize memberships if the objective is to have a free activity.

Neighbourhood trails (not in ESAs) like the PanAm route just west of High Park, on some steeper side streets, or a street like Annette.

Less used and environmentally important sections of the Humber trails that might work, e.g. the part south of Bloor/Old Mill. parts of [Humber Loop](#)

Along the east side of Grenadier Pond but not north of where Cherry Lane Road (under its new name) joins the Grenadier Pond path.

The proposed changes to Parkdale (bi-directional bike lanes on the west side of Parkdale) will accommodate non-pedestrian active transportation & the safety of pedestrians in High Park will not be compromised in order to provide recreation. [Parkside Strategy](#).

CNE grounds, especially for a fixed facility, before/after the World Cup.

[BikeMaps](#) has many good cycling areas (avoid Tommy Thompson Park)