

Healthy Saturdays in Golden Gate Park
Frequently Asked Questions
Compiled by SF Bicycle Coalition
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Why introduce legislation, why not send this issue to the voters?

- ⇒ We should not plan our city, or for the health of our youth, or for the health of the environment through the ballot box. Contrary to the model adopted by our Governor, these things should not be decided by who can spend the most money campaigning. This is the responsibility of elected leaders, working with their constituents.
- ⇒ This is only a trial, so it doesn't make sense to go through a costly and time-consuming ballot measure for such a short time frame. The main reason it failed at the ballot is because there were two competing and confusing measures. Now that the garage is open, the key stakeholders who disagreed over Prop F/Prop G should be on the same page. Park advocates, including the museums, agreed that once the garage was open, car free space should be established in the Park to Saturdays.
- ⇒ People are voting with their feet every Sunday when there are more people using the Park than any other day. In a March 2000 professional poll, 61% of voters surveyed supported this issue. *(See attached poll figures.)*

What is the intent of a 6-month trial?

- ⇒ We have 39 years of experience on Sundays and we expect that Saturdays will be a similarly popular and accessible attraction as Sunday. But, as a compromise with those with doubts, we should see whether there are any significant differences between Saturdays and Sundays, which would be addressed.

Will the trial really end after 6 months?

- ⇒ Written into the legislation is a review period, including reports back from DPT and Rec/Parks Dept. The Board of Supervisors will hold a hearing on the trial and hear the departments' and public's feedback before making any further decisions.

How will the trial be evaluated?

- ⇒ The legislation directs DPT to study the traffic patterns of any impacts outside the Park in nearby area, and directs Rec. & Park Dept. to study similar issues inside the Park. Of course, the cultural institutions will give their input, and the usage of JFK Dr. open space during the trial should be considered. Local businesses near the Park should also be consulted to review the impacts on their businesses as more people come to the Park on Saturdays.

What about access for the cultural institutions in the Park?

- ⇒ The cultural institutions (deYoung Museum, Academy of Sciences, Friends of Rec. & Parks) supported car-free Saturdays in 2000 when they endorsed and worked on behalf of Prop. G, which called for extending car-free space on JFK Dr. to Saturdays after the garage was built, exactly what is proposed in Healthy Saturdays legislation. *(See attached quotes from 2000 ballot book.)*

- ⇒ The museums have an 800-car garage directly beneath them. There is still plentiful on-street parking in other parts of the Park; this proposal only closes 1.5 miles of JFK Dr. to cars, much of which does not have parking anyways. An additional 15 miles of roadways are open to cars in the Park.
- ⇒ An aim of Proposition J, which approved the garage in the Park, was explicitly to lessen the impact of cars on the Park overall. We are *not* seeing this occur. Healthy Saturdays is a solid way to give Park space back to people one day a week, without negatively impacting the institutions. More people in the Park on Saturdays will mean more people visiting the institutions.

Why not wait until the Academy of Sciences is open?

- ⇒ Conducting the trial now allows us to work out any potential kinks before the Academy is back in the Park in 2008, so there's no impact on the Academy. For now, the deYoung has a great amount of parking availability – an 800-car garage. DPT can run traffic models that will anticipate new Academy-generated visitors, as they've done for other studies.

Why not conduct a comprehensive transportation plan for the Park before implementing this?

- ⇒ The Concourse Authority was charged with improving non-auto circulation and safety in the Park during the past 5+ years. Along with building a garage, this has included starting a Park shuttle, implementing a signage system, working with Muni on bus access to the Park and creating both bike and pedestrian improvement plans for the Park.
- ⇒ The Healthy Saturdays proposal is only a 6-month trial and will function as a study.

What about access for the disabled and elderly to the Park? To the Conservatory of Flowers?

- ⇒ Anyone with a disabled placard can drive on JFK Dr. on the car-free Sundays, and that will be the same on Saturdays during this trial. It's included in the legislation.
- ⇒ There is potential to add at least 5 *new* parking spaces for people with disabled placards on Bowling Green Dr., at the intersection of JFK Dr., which will be fully accessible by car on Saturdays and Sundays. This is an increase in disabled parking for the Conservatory. This is only a dozen or so yards from the parking spaces on JFK, which are the most accessible parking spaces on the other days of the week.

What about impacts on residents who want to cross the Park by car on Saturdays, and on parking in neighborhoods?

- ⇒ Cross-traffic is still allowed on many roads, including Stanyan and Park Presidio. Cross-traffic is *banned* through the Concourse area, so there's not significant difference between this proposal and other days of the week. (FYI: There are regular violations of the Board's directive on no-through traffic through the Concourse area. What is being done to address this? And why is the deYoung running an illegal valet parking service in the Concourse in the bike lanes?)
- ⇒ DPT has made recent changes at the intersection of Fulton & Stanyan Sts. to address traffic issues. More improvements are being considered and could be implemented in coordination with this project.
- ⇒ The inner Richmond neighborhoods near the Park seem to be those most impacted by traffic/parking changes in Golden Gate Park. Currently this neighborhood does not have residential parking permits, but this could be added for weekends to allow residents priority for on-street parking.

Why not move the car-free space out to the West end of the Park, where it is farther from the cultural institutions?

- ⇒ There is far less transit access to the West end of the Park, making it less accessible to transit-dependent visitors.
- ⇒ It is farther from the new garage, which is a hardship for those who need to drive.
- ⇒ The West end of the Park is much farther from commercial strips that offer food, drinks, and concessions such as bike and skate rental.
- ⇒ The West end is often significantly cooler and hillier than the East end, which does not make it ideal for families to spend time and for kids to learn to bike or skate.
- ⇒ The further west this attraction is, the further it is from the rest of the city's residents who do not live near the Park.
- ⇒ Bottom line: People vote with their feet every Sunday, when thousands of people are drawn to the car-free space in the East end, where it's been for 39 years. This continuity is important.