

# Memo



**Date:** January 21, 2011  
**File:** 6130-00  
**To:** City Manager  
**From:** Ian Wilson, Park Services Manager  
**Subject:** Knox Mountain Drive Vehicle Access

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## **Recommendation:**

THAT Council receives the report from the Park Services Manager, dated January 21, 2011 with information from the trial opening period for Knox Mountain Drive Vehicle Access;

AND THAT Council directs staff to notify the public of the permanent change to Knox Mountain Drive normal hours of opening for public vehicles to Monday through Saturday, 9:30 AM to 9:00 PM and Sundays 12:00 PM to 9:00 PM;

AND THAT Council directs staff to permit an exception to the normal schedule for Knox Mountain Drive vehicle access to include seasonal (winter) closures, approved special events, and periods of high safety risk.

## **Purpose:**

To report back to Council on progress since the following resolution was passed:

COUNCIL RESOLUTION FROM THE MARCH 29, 2010 P.M. REGULAR MEETING: THAT Council directs staff to, on a trial basis for the entire season, change the opening times for public vehicle use of Knox Mountain Drive from the current schedule (6:00 am to 10:00 pm) to an alternative schedule of 9:30 am to 9:00 pm from Monday to Saturday and 12:00 pm to 9:00 pm on Sunday, except during special events, such as, but not limited to, the Canada Day celebrations and the Knox Mountain Hill Climb; AND FURTHER THAT staff report back to Council with the results of these trials.

## **Background:**

Knox Mountain Park is open to the public year-round although the paved road (Knox Mountain Drive) is normally closed to public vehicle access during the months of December through March, depending on weather.

Based upon previous public feedback and data that 95% of all vehicle use occurred between 9:00 AM and 9:00 PM, Council endorsed a modified road opening schedule in 2010, from the previous schedule (6:00 AM to 10:00 PM) to an alternative schedule of 9:30 am to 9:00 pm, Monday to Saturday and 12:00 pm to 9:00 pm on Sunday, except during special events.

Council also asked staff to develop a communication strategy to advise the public of the change and to seek feedback. Funding was not available for a statistically valid survey, but with assistance from Community and Media Relations, media releases and comment cards were developed and a webpage was created detailing the trial and providing a venue for online comments. A large sign at the base of the mountain advised the public of the changes and directed citizens to the city website, with comment cards and a drop box available on-site.

Results from the comment cards were mixed. It quickly became apparent that many comment cards were spoiled or filled in by one or a few persons wishing to influence the results. The comment cards were quickly modified so that respondents had to supply a name and address, but only 38 cards were received with a confirmed name and address. However, the results from these 38 cards were generally positive, and a majority of respondents (Fig. 1) wanted park hours to be changed permanently, but respondents were split as to whether they wanted to keep the existing trial hours or make further changes to the schedule (Fig. 1).

All written comments received by Park Services, whether accompanied by a name or not, are summarized in the attached Table 1. Most of the comments favour a change in vehicle access (68% of comments) and many advocate even less vehicle access (Table 1). Approximately 24% of comments expressed a negative viewpoint about road access changes, while the remaining 8% commented on other aspects of the park.

The Mayor's office only received two letters on the subject; both letters were in favour of limiting road access but one letter was in support of partial road closures and the other advocated complete closure to vehicles.

In general, feedback for the trial and reduced road opening was positive but there was no clear consensus regarding any further changes to opening times (Fig. 1, Table 1). Therefore staff recommend that the trial hours are "permanently" applied beginning in 2011. Staff will report back in future if further modifications are felt to be necessary.

#### **Communications Considerations:**

Staff will work with the Community and Media Relations department to communicate the change in hours.

#### **Internal Circulation:**

Carla Stephens, Director, Community and Media Relations

#### **Considerations not applicable to this report:**

**Legal/Statutory Authority:**

**Legal/statutory Procedural Requirements:**

**Existing Policy:**

**Financial/Budgetary Considerations:**

**Personnel Implications:**

**Technical Requirements:**

**Alternate Recommendation:**

Submitted by:



I. Wilson, Park Services Manager

Approved for inclusion:



Joe Creron, Director, Civic Operations

CC:

J. Penrice, Urban Forestry Supervisor

J. Vos, General Manager Community Services

L. Roberts-Taylor, Manager Community & Neighbourhood Programs

T. Barton, Parks Planning Manager

External Agency/Public Comments:

Fig.1. Summary of survey results from respondents supplying a confirmed name and address (n=38).

### Would you like to see the trial hours applied permanently?

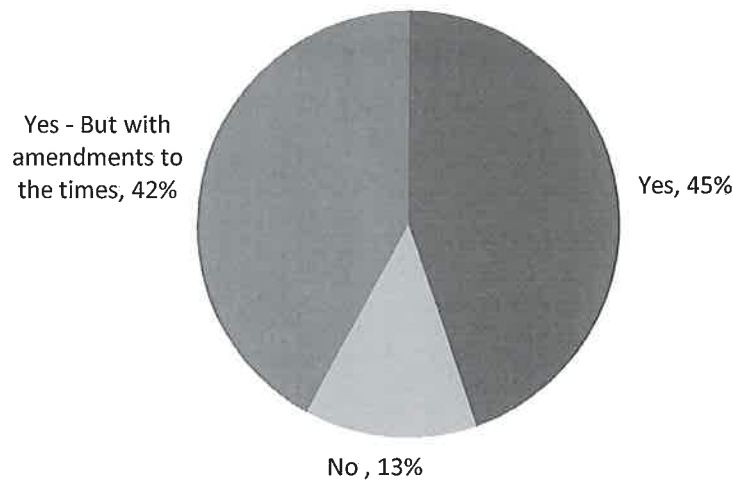


Table 1. Individual comments received by Park Services (all responses, not just responses with name and address supplied). Comments are listed verbatim; no editing of content or spelling has been done with the exception of removal of names or addresses.

6 AM - 9 PM
A Short Poem Sunday morning. The Knox Mountain Park No racing motorcycles. No dirty fume from SUV's Peace on Earth!! Thank you!
a water fountain and bathroom at the first look out point would be appreciated.
Absolutely love the new hours!! Can walk up the road with my children and parents and feel safe
As a member of the Water St. Senior Centre Trekking Group the closure of the park to vehicles until 9:30 has proved very inconvenient. We hike to Paul's Tomb both in the summer and winter months. In summer our hikes start at 8:30 a.m. and in the winter 9 a.m. We used to start our hikes from the first look-out car park something we are not able to do any more.
As a walker, I really appreciate the traffic-free mornings - people continually speed up the hill in their cars, regardless of safety for others

As an almost daily user of the park, I appreciate being able to walk, run or bike up the road - safely! The road is the only reasonable non-motorized access to the 1st lookout and is unsafe with cars on it (no shoulder)

At a minimum Sat am should be vehicle free also same as Sunday. I'd prefer to see vehicles banned from the park. Parking lot is dangerous!! Traffic drives too fast on the Knox Rd. up & down. Reduced kph notices should be posted & enforced considering pedestrians share the road.

At least 8:30 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. daily.

We have been conducting hiking/winery tours for 7 years and 90% of the time choose the Knox Mountain trails for the hike. We normally arrive about 8:30 - 9:00 a.m. to start. This year we have to change our tour itinerary (which delays us too late for the rest of the tour which is lunch and wineries) or go somewhere else. We feel the restricted times are very discriminatory towards us as a tour company and to tourists that we service. We would like to be able to arrive at least between 8:30 and 9:15 a.m.

At least open the road at 9:00 a.m. which allows non-vehicular time for the walkers etc. but allows a bit earlier access for tour companies such as ours to start our hikes with tourists at a reasonable time.

At the very least the road should be closed to vehicles every day from opening until noon.

Build a path beside the road or a designated path for walking. EVERYONE should be allowed to enjoy the views, not everyone can walk or bike.

Build a sidewalk, problem solved.

Cars = more people = garbage and damage. Protect Knox Mountain!

Close road at first view point

Close the road permanently above the first lookout and apply restricted hours to the road
Dumm idea
during summer months it becomes far too hot to hike during the afternoon. Early mornings are the best for this type of activity. I have 3 children, and a small dog and we preffer to drive up to the 2nd landing to hike the Paul's Tomb trail :)
Either make a trail that is safer for people or close the road permanently to vehicles!!
Great idea to close the road to vehicles, even if for a few daylight hours each day. We really appreciate this initiative by the City. The road is so much more pleasant to walk, and also much safer. The road is the only way to get up to and down from the first lookout that is not very steep (or eroded). However, when vehicles use this road, it feels unsafe for pedestrians because of the lack of shoulder, and the poor visibility between the two hairpin turns. We have seen more people parking at the bottom, as well as where I live on Royal View Drive (pedestrian access to park), which is great to see. It seems that I see a lot more pedestrians and cyclists on the road in the mornings than when the road is open to traffic. The park seems better used, or at least it seems that the road is. The only reason to keep the road open at all is to provide access to those that can not make the walk up to the lookouts. However, the vast majority of people we see driving Knox Mountain road are neither elderly nor disabled. Perhaps by being denied access on 4 wheels they would enjoy the park even more! I also think that the road closure, if made more permanent, would also reduce the numbers of downhill bikes destroying some of the trails on the mountain - these bikes require a shuttle to get to the top.
hours should be more restricted to cars, whats 3 hours in the morning and one hour at night really going to do. There should be a day (say Sunday) where cars are not allowed up at all, so families can hike up the road without worrying about cars. Or make Sundays very restricted. Its a busy place and the worst part is when you have a family and want to walk up the road, since hiking up the trails with a stroller doesnt work, and cars are coming around those corners
how about all the dogs running of lease
I am an avid Knox park user on bike and foot...i am a proponent of less vehicle access particularly since there is no space to walk or bike safely on the side of Knox Park road. The new fenced off dog walk area has taken away a safe walking lane when going from the Tennis courts up to the first hair pin. Has anyone from the city tried to walk or bike on the uneven narrow portion of this section of dirt left going up this section between the road and the dog fence?? Not easy! Adding a shared bike/walking lane might help where possible.
I am disabled. Able bodied people have full access to the park. I am now further restricted. Discrimination comes to mind. A walking / cycling trail would solve the problem.
I have been unable to do the kind of walks that I like on Knox before work in the a.m. I have bad knees and pavement is very hard and painful. When the roads are open I can access different walks on pathways. These pathways are largely inaccessible (especially upper areas) during the road closures except for Pauls tomb (no sun in morning) and parking in residential and walking in to limited trails. People should walk on trails not roadway and the whole park should be accessible to all. Thank you.
I have oftern walked up to the dog park in the am and seen 5-10 people walking in the road. Much more useable (safe & peaceful) . Thanks for the change & dog park.
i live in lake country what a stupid idea to close the park off to a certien section of people they don't close off mission creek do they.

<p>I don't think vehicles should be allowed up there at all. If people can't walk to the top, maybe there should be some sort of 'shuttle' that goes up there 3 or 4X a day.</p>
<p>I have a bad back, so hiking the steep Knox Mountain trails is too difficult/risky for me. All winter I LOVE walking up the road, and see many other being enjoying it. I really appreciate the new changes to hours that you have made. I wish the road could be closed permanently to all cars and motorbikes, but I recognize that for physical reasons some people can not walk up the road. Ideally I would like to see ONLY a shuttle bus that runs up and down the road periodically (say once every hour, or two hours). I know this would incur costs, but people could pay a fee - just as they do for other forms of pulic transit. Alternatively, I would like to see the current "no vehicle" hours extended. I hear of a lot of drinking and partying on the mountain at night in the summer. It fells dangerous and unsafe. I think the road should be closed earlier - say 6 or 7 pm. Also, in the heat of the summer, the evening is cooler for walkers and bikers. I would also like to see the road open to cars a little later in the morning - say 11am. This gives walkers and bikers more time before the day heats up. Thanks for all you are doing. I suggest you publicize this questionnaire more broadly. Feel free to contact me about this. My email and physical addresses are below.</p>
<p>I think it should be closed on holidays and July and August</p>
<p>I think the road should be closed to vehicles permanently with access to the summit via the neighbourhood at the last switchback.</p>
<p>Thank you, thank you, thank you. It has been absolutely wonderful being safe on the road during the trial period. And because the park has such steep hills, it makes vehicles work harder and have more excessive emmissions. Not having to suck back exhaust fumes has increased my pleasure in the park tenfold. I believe that closing the road permanently to vehicles would benefit park users immensely. To truly enjoy this natural wonder in our back yard, one really needs to get out of their vehicle, get some fresh air and exercise, and take some time to enjoy the beauty of the park. Lots of vehicles just drive through the park and leave. Unfortunately, too many drivers exceed the speed limit, drive carelessly, and have little or no consideration for the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and animals. In fact a regular park hiker told me she discovered a dying fawn, at 6:00 am, at the top of the mountain a few weeks ago. That would mean a vehicle hit the fawn late in the evening, before park closing, and the animal suffered all through night. I'd be willing to bet the driver did not even stop or try to report it. I realize that this is a few bad apples spoiling it for others, but for the safety and health of pedestrians, hikers, cyclists and animals, please, please close the road to vehicles permanently.</p>
<p>I understand need for people with disabilities ...but could it be restricted hours.</p>
<p>I would have it 9am -9 pm. easy to remember and market!</p>
<p>I would like there to be a wheelchair access bathroom (needs to be bigger like last years) and more picnic tables at the bottem</p>
<p>I would like to see the hours closed longer to vehicles. And Closed permanently in the summer when there is a small fire hazard.</p>
<p>Ideally I would like to see vehicle access only from noon - 9PM EVERY DAY OF THE WEEK. (This is a great start though)</p>
<p>if it gets closed then my famil will stop going up there forever how are poeple to get up there if they cant walk with bad knees plus for old people thats not right</p>

It is great to be car free on the road - very peaceful. Ideas: cars access only to 1st lookout or through Magic Estates to get to the top. OR hours always 12-9 PM, morning free for walkers etc. Thanks!

It would be nice to see the road closed permanently to cars with the exception of one or two evenings a week. This will still allow people with disabilities or older people who may not be able to walk to the top to still enjoy the beautiful view every so often. Otherwise, Knox mountain should be most available to recreational users. Vehicles are a hazard to cyclists and walkers/runners.

joggers and walkers can use pathways or the road were as a car can only drive on the pavement not fair to the seniors who like to drive up early in the mornings

Knox Mountain is to the best of my knowledge the only park with in the area that persons with disabilities can access view points within a park. On many occasions I have seen disabled people enjoying the park, and ths was only because of the vehicle access. While I agreee shutting the park down to vehicles could potentially provide better access to hikers, it complete destroys any chance for anyone not wanting to hike to get to the top. Hikers have hundreds if not thousands of trails to hike to the top, please keep knox one of the few parks that vehicles can get to the top open. Consider tourists, who may not want to get out of the air conditioned car, or seniors who would like to take in the view but not wanting to hike. Please do not give in to a few vocal hikers who want an asphalt road as there hiking path.

If I understand this correctly, this entire issue is related to hikers and vehicles sharing the road. Why not just build a sidewalk? lets review all options before closing the road down to cars. PS with the money already wasted on this experiment, I bet several hundred feet of sidewalk could have been built.

My Vote is to keep the road open, dawn till dusk, year round, and build a sidewalk.

Less vehicle access

Mon - Fri 9am - 9pm Sat- Sun 12pm - 6pm

Mon-Sat. 9:30a.m. to 9p.m.

Sun. 12 - 9p.m.

My concern is for those that have no way of getting to the lookouts other than with a vehicle. The elderly, the disabled, etc should have equal access to the park.

Stanley park in Vancouver sees much higher volumes of traffic than Knox Mtn does, and they seem to cope just fine.

My opinion may seem biased because I live adjacent to Knox Mountain Park however, I believe that more people would enjoy the park if it were closed permantly. When the park was closed to traffic this past summer, there were more people walking and cycling the road than I've seen in a long time. Not all, but much of the vehicle traffic that goes up and down Knox Mountain road are people that aren't really there to enjoy the park as it is intended for. Quite often, cars, trucks and motorcycles travel at above the posted speed limit, to the top and moments later they are racing back down. I'm pretty sure they didn't spend time enjoyong the beauty, the park has to offer. I've seen cigarette butts litter the area around the top lookout, along with empty beer cans scattered around the parking lot. Let's face it, the type of people that actually hike and cycle are not the ones who may eventually burn down this beautiful park with a still smoldering cigarette butt. I think the city of kelowna is playing russian roulette when they allow vehicles to continue to travel through the park. I think if anything, they should allow traffiic to the first lookout only. It's a beautiful view from there. This way the elderly and handicap folks have an opportunity to enjoy the park as well.

Please close the park permanently before it's too late.

Thankyou for reading this



Need a larger porta potty like last year. Need a picnic table under tree by tennis court
No need to allow cars up
Of course I realize they can't close the park to vehicle access completely without other means for access by persons unable to walk or ride. I would consider paying a fee to be shuttled in an electric or other suitable, low environmental impact vehicle as a solution for closing the park completely. Perhaps the City can ask Kelowna Transit to extend the #2 route to include Knox on some occasions. Just an idea. Plus, there is access to the top via Magic Estates - what issues would be faced to promote this option.
OK. Sat Noon - 9 PM
Opening later in the day will be very inconvenient and I don't believe it will benefit Kelowna residents. Many people use Knox mountain earlier in the morning as part of their exercise routines. Kelowna is becoming a more active and social community and I believe lessening the hours is a contradiction to this. Increasing security even if this includes drive-bys at the times that are to be seen as "high risk" could be a better option. If there are incidents that residents should know about that would call for such hours, we are certainly not hearing about them. I only re-call one situation in the last year being brought to our attention.
People should just walk up the hill. It would really preserve the tranquility of the park, and confine the mountain-bike trails to the kind of conscientious riders who actually RIDE up (and are more likely to stay on the right trails on the way down)
Picnic table under tree by tennis court
Please close the road permanently to vehicles or minimize their access
Please close the road to vehicle access or minimize vehicle access
Please either close the road permanently or minimize car access hours!
Providing Knox Mountain Road as a safe pedestrian and biking access will take significant pressure off the fragile trails.
restricting hours is restricting the amount of time families with children, the elderly, and anyone else who doesn't wish to walk up the mountain's steep grade. The park should be accessible to everyone, restricting the hours is not the answer.
Restricting vehicle access restricts the use and enjoyment of the park by seniors and others with restricted mobility, who otherwise couldn't get beyond the gate at the bottom. If there are problems at Knox, then bring in better enforcement, not reduced hours. Have you seen how incredibly popular this park is with walkers, runners, cyclists, and others? It may be the best-used park in the city, and full access to it encourages a healthy community. It's bad enough that the road is closed for many months in the winter, which reduces residents' access to the park. You should be encouraging its use, not discouraging it by reducing access.
Road should be closed to all vehicles except shuttle buses for elderly & handicapped
same hours every day 9:30am-9pm
SAT & SUN noon - 9. MON - FRI 9:30 - 9:00
Saturday & Sunday 12 PM - 9 PM. Mon to Fri 6 AM - 9 PM
Saturday Close 6 AM - 9 AM
Seniors who are less fit need to be able to enjoy the park as well as walkers and bikers. Walkers can always use the trail up the mountain. However I believe that the numbers of hours that cars may access the road could be decreased further in subsequent years.

Should be closed all day on holidays and completely closed during fire season July August
Some trucks brought many mountain biker to the top of . Many mountain bikers do not respect the land & trails they ruin the vegetation & made new roads. Would like to see less vehicle on the road in park
The new hours hardly increase the ability of cyclists and hikers to use the road. The road should be closed to vehicles except for perhaps one or two days a week to allow the elderly and disabled to go up the mountain.
The park should be more accessible to pedestrians and cyclists. The road should only be open to vehicle traffic perhaps one or two days or afternoons a week.
The parking areas at the bas of the hill by the tennis court should be kept open.
The road should be open for car traffic only between 11am and 6pm daily
This is the only place with a great night time view of the city. One of the pleasures of living here is the access to this park. I believe the hours of access should be increased to 9:30 AM to 11:00 PM
Traffic on Knox Mountain Road endangers pedestrians and cyclists, results in litter, and damages the fragile terrain of Knox Mountain. Ideally the road should be closed except for exceptional circumstances.
Vehicles and Bikes/Walkers/Runners don't mix well
Very disapointed that more was not done around closing the road to cars. What was done was so minor it is a bit of a silly gesture. I would like to see the road closed to cars as much as possible. Perhaps it could be opened for a few hours one day a week.
We speak to many users of the park who are very happy with new hrs!
Thanks for changing the car access hours on Knox Mountain. I've been an early morning runner on Knox for 29 years. This year it has been pure pleasure to NEVER encounter vehicles or car exhaust at that very beautiful time of day. I regularly count a minimum of 20 cars parked at the bottom of other users enjoying the car free zone - lucky me just goes out the back door. Many many thanks
Parks - Safety and Security My family and I use Knox Mountain Park about 3 times/week. We now have a baby and are forced to use the roadway. I am requesting that vehicle traffic be further contstrained on the park road to only a few days per week to increase the safety of the road. We have had many close calls. Thanks.