

ITEM 7. GREEN SQUARE LIGHT RAIL - PROJECT PLAN AND RESOURCES

FILE NO: S052514

SUMMARY

On 10 August 2015, Council resolved to:

- request that the Lord Mayor write to Minister for Transport commending him for his support for Green Square light rail and requesting the City and NSW Government work in partnership to develop the proposal;
- request the Chief Executive Officer report back to Council with a work plan and resources for approval; and
- note the intent of the City to develop and implement the work plan in collaboration with the Minister for Transport and Transport for NSW.

This report outlines the investigative and technical work already completed as well as works currently underway and works required to complete the feasibility of light rail between the CBD and Green Square.

Works completed include acquisition and dedication of lands for the proposed light rail corridor, Green Square Transport Management and Accessibility Plan (TMAP); Light Rail Patronage study which estimates 3,000 peak hour demand; and assessment of potential spatial conflicts.

Additional works required include economic analysis and estimation of benefit-cost ratio, financing options and route options analysis.

These additional works are estimated to cost \$445,000. It is recommended that Council approve additional funding from the General Contingency to undertake these priority works.

Timely completion of this work is required to provide relevant documentation to the State Government for review and feedback. This will maximise the potential for securing this vital service for the future 54,000 residents and 20,000 workers within the Green Square Urban Renewal Area.

RECOMMENDATION

It is resolved that Council:

- (A) endorse the project plan and resources for further work on Green Square Light Rail, shown at Attachment A to the subject report;
- (B) note the Lord Mayor's letter to the Minister for Transport commending him for his support for Green Square Light Rail and requesting the City and NSW Government work in partnership to develop the proposal; and
- (C) approve additional funds of \$445,000 from the General Contingency to undertake these works immediately.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Project Plan and Resources for Green Square Light Rail

Attachment B: Letter from Lord Mayor to the Minister for Transport

BACKGROUND

1. Green Square is an exemplar for inner city urban revitalisation in the both the context of Australian cities and the NSW Government's *A Plan for Growing Sydney*.
2. The development involves the establishment of a new Green Square Town Centre and over \$8 billion of development in the wider Green Square Urban Renewal Area. The residential population in this 278 hectare precinct is expected to rise to over 54,000 and significant employment growth is planned.
3. Council has taken a leadership role in the Green Square initiative through the provision of infrastructure (including streets, drainage, footpaths, bike paths), community facilities (including library, aquatic centre, child care, creative centre) and a network of parks and open spaces.
4. Multiple planning documents have identified the critical importance of new mass transit capacity for the overall success of Green Square.
5. On 28 July 2015, the Minister for Transport announced support for light rail to accommodate the massive growth in Green Square.
6. On 10 August 2015, Council resolved to progress work on Green Square Light Rail and requested the Chief Executive Officer to provide Council with a work plan and the resources for approval.
7. The City has previously implemented measures and studies in support of the Green Square Light Rail proposal.
8. The attached table, provides a high level summary of work that has already been completed, together with the key elements of a project plan to undertake additional works to finalise the feasibility and funding options. Timelines and resource implications are also provided.

KEY IMPLICATIONS

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030 Vision

9. *Sustainable Sydney 2030* is a vision for the sustainable development of the City to 2030 and beyond. It includes 10 strategic directions to guide the future of the City, as well as 10 targets against which to measure progress. This report is aligned with the following SS2030 strategic directions and objectives:
 - (a) Direction 1 - A Globally Competitive and Innovative City – The overall Green Square initiative will contribute to growth in population and employment for Sydney in a significant corridor for global connections and higher yields from improved land use planning.
 - (b) Direction 2 provides a road map for the City to become A Leading Environmental Performer – The City is committed to the implementation of a recycling water network system within the Green Square Town Centre. Energy efficient LED street lighting will also be incorporated into the designs.

- (c) Direction 3 - Integrated Transport for a Connected City – Plans are underway to establish an Eastern Transit Corridor and East-West Relief Route, which will enable public transport services to be provided for residents and businesses in and around the Green Square area.
- (d) Direction 4 - A City for Walking and Cycling – Green Square Town Centre will be connected to the network of cycleways in the CBD. The public domain in the Town Centre has been designed to enhance pedestrian activity.
- (e) Direction 5 - A Lively and Engaging City Centre – The establishment of the Green Square Town Centre, which includes new community facilities, open spaces, parks and a town centre plaza, is consistent with this direction.
- (f) Direction 6 - Vibrant Local Communities and Economies – The Green Square Town Centre will be a commercial, retail and cultural hub for the Green Square area and will provide a vibrant and active place where residents and visitors can enjoy a range of cultural and social activities.
- (g) Direction 7 - A Cultural and Creative City – Historical buildings located within the development site will be refurbished to become community facilities and service purposes such as artist studios and exhibition galleries. Public art will also be included within the development site.
- (h) Direction 8 - Housing for a Diverse Population – The planning control for the Green Square Town Centre recognises the need to provide a range of housing to suit people with various lifestyle choices and household types, whilst being affordable.
- (i) Direction 9 - Sustainable Development, Renewal and Design – The Green Square Town Centre will enhance connectivity, renew historical buildings and provide development opportunities that will maximise economic, social, environmental and cultural benefits. In addition, the Green Square Town Centre DCP contains provisions to ensure the development of the Green Square Town Centre will promote sustainability and design excellence.
- (j) Direction 10 - Implementation through Effective Governance and Partnerships – The Green Square Town Centre is currently overseen by a Steering Committee made up of Council representatives. An Advisory Committee, comprising Council representatives, as well as industry experts, has also been established to provide expertise in program delivery, planning and risk management.

Organisational Impact

10. There are no major organisational impacts arising from this report. The need for light rail in Green Square has already been identified. Some adjustments in work priorities and resources are recommended in the context of recent Council resolutions on this topic and the announcement from the Minister for Transport.

Risks

11. Non supply of light rail and adequate public transport is an identified key risk for the overall Green Square initiative. The proposed project plan for Green Square Light Rail is a series of measures that have been specifically developed to address these risks.

Social / Cultural / Community

12. Council's community consultation has identified concerns about traffic impacts as an important consideration for Green Square. The opportunity to work in partnership with the State Government to secure light rail has the potential to address many of these concerns. Concurrently, the City is actively contributing to enhancing cycling and pedestrian options for Green Square.

Environmental

13. Provision of needed public transport options, such as Green Square Light Rail, will have positive environmental impacts.

Economic

14. Poor transport outcomes in Green Square have the potential to negatively impact on major transport corridors linked to Sydney's major airport and port. The cost impact of congestion upon the State's economy is well documented.
15. Conversely, new and efficient mass transit options for Green Square will maximise the long-term economic benefits of successful urban renewal projects.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

16. The Budget implication of this report is a proposal for additional expenditure in 2015/16 of \$445,000, which was not included in Council's approved budget. It is recommended that funding for these works be approved from the 2015/16 General Contingency.

CRITICAL DATES / TIME FRAMES

17. A specific timeframe has not been set out for this project. However, it is important to maximise the opportunities that may arise from recent Council and State Government announcements. Accordingly, the target timeframe to complete most aspects of the project plan are by December 2015. Tasks to finalise and update studies and to communicate outcomes have a longer timeframe.

OPTIONS

18. Council is mindful that the Green Square Light Rail project is of a scale that it will fit with the 'Major Projects Assurance Framework' of the State Government.
19. Options should be considered to ensure that Council's actions, as part of the project plan detailed in this report, will effectively link to the Major Projects Quality Assurance Framework.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

20. The proposed project plan for Green Square Light Rail includes specific actions relating to community engagement and provision of public information about the project.

KIM WOODBURY

Chief Operating Officer

Morris Bellamy, Place Manager, Green Square