

ITEM 5. THOMAS AND HAY STREETS, HAYMARKET – PUBLIC DOMAIN IMPROVEMENTS – PROJECT SCOPE**FILE NO: S100837****SUMMARY**

This report describes the design for improvements to Thomas and Hay Streets, Haymarket that were developed with and presented to the community, and recommends a scope of works for documentation and tender.

The proposed upgrade of Thomas Street will deliver the next phase of the Chinatown Public Domain Improvements as identified in the City's Corporate Plan 2013 - 2016.

The improvements are centred on Thomas Street between Hay Street and Thomas Lane, and propose a more generous and engaging public domain. They include a new public space, incorporating a shared zone and timed road closure between Ultimo Road and Thomas Lane and a widened and enhanced footpath on Thomas Street between Hay Street and Ultimo Road.

Minor enhancement works, such as new tree planting, are also proposed for Thomas Street south and Hay Street.

Importantly, the project establishes public art as a major defining element of the public spaces. The site specific artwork by artist Lindy Lee is integrated into the design proposals, providing interest, enhancing amenity and creating distinct public places.

RECOMMENDATION

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council endorse the design scope for the improvements in Thomas and Hay Street, Chinatown as shown in Attachment A to the subject report, subject to traffic approvals, for the purpose of proceeding with documentation and tender for construction works;
- (B) Council note that further consultation will be undertaken on the proposal for Thomas Street south between Thomas Lane and Quay Street if the works can be accommodated within the project budget; and
- (C) Financial Implications, Attachment D to the subject report, remain confidential in accordance with section 10A(2)(c) of the Local Government Act 1993.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Refined Design Plans

Attachment B: Consultation Boards – Design as exhibited

Attachment C: Consultation feedback report and summary

Attachment D: Financial Implications (Confidential)

(As Attachment D is confidential, it will be circulated separately from the Agenda Paper and to Councillors and relevant senior staff only).

BACKGROUND

1. Chinatown is one of the most well-loved destinations in the City of Sydney. Its unique attractions draw over 1.1 million domestic visitors and 1.4 million international visitors each year (Tourism NSW 2010).
2. In August 2010, Council adopted the Chinatown Public Domain Plan. The Plan recognises Sydney Chinatown's unique character and its historical links with Chinese culture and the Chinese community. It proposed a series of projects to be implemented over the next 10 years, creating more public spaces and improving pedestrian 'life' and connections along key streets in Chinatown.
3. Following the successful transformations of Little Hay Street, Factory Street and Kimber Lane, completed in early 2012, the next projects for public domain improvements were identified as Thomas Street and Hay Street.
4. Importantly, the project establishes public art as a major defining element of the proposals.
5. A design for public domain improvements in Thomas and Hay Street has now been developed. The developed design includes a comprehensive upgrade of Thomas Street between Hay Street and Thomas Lane, some more minor works between Thomas Lane and Quay Street, and minor works, such as new street tree planting for Hay Street.
6. Extensive consultation has been undertaken and there is wide community support for the proposals. Over 95 per cent of responses received through the public exhibition period in May 2013 expressed their support.

Project Objectives

7. The following project objectives were established for the public domain improvement project:
 - (a) create a place where public art becomes part of the urban fabric;
 - (b) recognise past and present cultural identity through architecture, place design and public art; and
 - (c) Maintain and enhance the open street life in Chinatown, embracing its lively, exciting and culturally rich character.
8. The improvements also aim to:
 - (a) strengthen pedestrian connections to Hay Street and Dixon Street;
 - (b) provide generous public gathering spaces and opportunities for flexible uses; and
 - (c) provide sufficient parking / loading spaces.

Design Principles

9. Public art forms an integral part of the project. The art work by artist Lindy Lee is integrated into the proposals. It provides interest, enhances amenity (with shade and seating) and creates distinctive spaces. The design for public art is underpinned by the following core principles:
 - (a) Interconnectivity – between city and nature, the individual and cosmos, history and contemporary, tradition and innovation;
 - (b) Flow – is acknowledged in the principles of Feng Shui, which are important to the Chinatown community. It refers to movement within and through relationships of interconnectivity and is symbolised by a river, which can contain a density of energy while also providing a calming and serene influence;
 - (c) Identity – in expressing Chinese-Australian identity, traditional and contemporary are understood to be part of a continuum and not in opposition. The acknowledgement of this continuum embraces vitality and allows the creation of spaces in which the future will unfold.

Key Areas and Design Elements

10. The project area includes the two blocks of Thomas Street from Hay Street to Thomas Lane (see Attachment A). The two main areas are:
 - (a) A new public space between Ultimo Road and Thomas Lane, which includes the following elements:
 - (i) a shared zone (10km/h speed limit) and timed closure to create a plaza and provide pedestrian priority in this section of Thomas Street;
 - (ii) continuous stone paving treatment to create a cohesive public space. The carriageway will be flush with the footpaths;
 - (iii) a double row of trees to form a canopy and generate a sense of enclosure and a place for respite;
 - (iv) integrated art work comprising groupings of sculptural stone seats, iconic scholar rocks and unusually shaped and sculptural bronze 'rocks' that pay homage to the traditional Chinese Garden;
 - (v) new street and pedestrian lighting; and
 - (vi) a timed closure, to allow loading supporting adjacent businesses;
 - (b) The northern block between Hay Street and Ultimo Road, which includes the following elements:
 - (i) removal of parking on the western side to allow a widened footpath to 9.5m on the western side of Thomas Street. The widened footpath creates more space for gathering and pedestrian activation adjacent to Market City;

- (ii) footpath widening at the intersection with Hay Street to further reduce the pedestrian crossing distance and calm traffic entering Thomas Street;
 - (iii) a catenary shade structure over the footpath which, together with the bronze paving inlay of the “moon gate”, creates an artistic threshold for Thomas Street;
 - (iv) continuation of the integrated sculptural stone seats and iconic scholar rocks; and
 - (v) new street lighting.
11. In both areas, the artwork is interpreted in the street furniture, paving materials and paving patterns as well as various sculptural elements, which pay homage to traditional Chinese gardens and Australian identity.

Ancillary Areas – Hay Street

12. Works in Hay Street are more minor and include additional street trees on the northern side and, potentially, the centre median. Final locations are subject to approvals and further site investigations regarding the location of significant services.

Ancillary Areas – Thomas Street south of Thomas Lane

13. Further opportunities for footpath widening and additional tree planting (nine trees) have been identified in Thomas Street, south of Thomas Lane. Parking along the western side could be removed to allow for a wider footpath and double avenue of street trees.
14. These works are subject to being accommodated within the current cost plan. Detailed cost plans will continue to be developed and further consultation will be carried out if this scope can be accommodated within the project budget.

Traffic and Parking

15. To facilitate the proposed public domain and pedestrian improvements, a number of changes to parking and traffic arrangements are proposed.
16. In the northern block of Thomas Street, between Hay Street and Ultimo Road, the following changes are proposed:
- (a) parking will be removed on the western side of Thomas Street (currently eight spaces signposted as two and four hour parking);
 - (b) parking is retained on the eastern side of Thomas Street and two additional loading zones are provided (one additional space, one space converted from general parking to a loading zone during business hours);
 - (c) through traffic will be reduced from two lanes to one lane; and
 - (d) southbound vehicles on Thomas Street will be required to turn left or right into Ultimo Road. Vehicles will no longer be able to cross Ultimo Road and continue straight ahead on Thomas Street.

17. In the Thomas Street block between Ultimo Road and Thomas Lane, the following changes are proposed:
 - (a) a 10km/hr shared zone with timed closure is proposed to give priority to pedestrians in this section of the street, while also retaining access to businesses for loading;
 - (b) the existing four loading zones on the eastern side of Thomas Street are retained;
 - (c) through traffic will become one-way southbound; and
 - (d) vehicles will be able to access the shared zone from Ultimo Road, turning left into Thomas Street only.
18. Additional changes are required in Thomas Street, between Thomas Lane and Quay Street, to facilitate the timed closure. These include:
 - (a) Thomas Street between Thomas Lane and Quay Street will become one way southbound; and
 - (b) four general parking spaces on the northern side of Thomas Lane will be removed to cater for the anticipated increased traffic flows.
19. Traffic modelling studies were undertaken to assess the impact of the proposals on traffic flows in the area. An initial review undertaken by Roads and Maritime Services indicates minor effects on traffic through the proposed changes.
20. Total parking changes include the removal of 12 parking spaces and the addition of two loading spaces.

Tree Management

21. No trees will be removed with these works.
22. Sixteen (16) new street trees are proposed to be planted in Thomas Street and Hay Street.

Consultation to date

23. Public exhibition on the design proposal was carried out between 6 May and 3 June 2013. The community consultation report is included in Attachment C. It includes a summary of the process undertaken to date, the issues and suggestions raised by the community and responses from the City.
24. During the exhibition period, the following activities took place:
 - (a) 2,500 notification letters were sent to residents and businesses;
 - (b) a dedicated page on Sydneyyoursay.com.au announcing the exhibition period, the drop in session, a link to the design panels and details of how people could make submissions;
 - (c) a community consultation drop in session was conducted on 8 May 2013 at the Holiday Inn, Darling Harbour; and

- (d) door to door consultation with business owners and building managers of the properties immediately adjacent to the upgrade site.
25. Key issues raised during the consultation include:
- (a) there is strong community support for an expanded public domain and prioritising pedestrian activities;
 - (b) the community is generally supportive of the improvements being proposed for Thomas Street and the incorporation of public art;
 - (c) there was mixed responses regarding the reduction of parking. Generally, the community is supportive of minimising parking to provide more pedestrian space. There were three business owners that raised concern about the reduction in parking potentially affecting the viability of their businesses; and
 - (d) there was concern that the reduction to the number of traffic lanes in the block between Hay Street and Ultimo Road may increase traffic congestion.
26. Further consultation for the proposed traffic changes is currently underway in accordance with the Roads Act 1993, Section 116. The outcomes of this process will be reported to the Local Pedestrian Cycling and Traffic Calming Committee, following Council approval of the design scope.
27. The concept and developed designs were presented to the Design Advisory Panel on 26 March and 4 June 2013. The Panel provided general endorsement of the proposal.
28. The concept and developed designs were presented to the Public Art Advisory Panel on 12 February and 27 June 2013. The Panel provided general endorsement of the proposal.

KEY IMPLICATIONS

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030

29. *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 strategic directions and objectives:
- (a) Direction 4 - A City for Walking and Cycling – the proposal addresses objective 4.2 “Give greater priority to cycle and pedestrian movements and amenity in the City Centre” and, in particular, action 4.2.4: “Implement part time or full time road lanes and street closures where outdoor activities can be encouraged”;
 - (b) Direction 5 - A lively and engaging City Centre – the proposal addresses objective 5.3 “Manage and strengthen precincts in the City Centre” and, in particular, action 5.1.2 “Progressively design and implement the Chinatown Public Domain Improvement Plan”; and

- (c) Direction 7 - A Cultural and Creative City – the proposal addresses objective 7.2 “Support cultural activity, participation and interaction” and, in particular, action 7.2.3 “Use Sydney’s streets, laneways and public spaces to showcase different art forms.”

Organisational Impact

- 30. The project will create additional assets, which will require ongoing maintenance. These include new pavements, trees, street furniture, public art elements and the proposed catenary shade structure.

Risks

- 31. Risks associated with the proposal have been considered throughout the concept design and consultation phase. These include safety (in particular road safety for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists), environmental impacts and economic impacts, as well as community concerns.
- 32. An independent Road Safety Auditor has been engaged to review the design and advise on any safety issues arising from the proposal.

Social / Cultural / Community

- 33. The proposal improves pedestrian amenity and provides opportunities for informal community interaction in the streets.
- 34. The significantly widened footpaths and the timed road closure provide opportunities for events and community gatherings.
- 35. The improvements and art work will create a more lively and distinct urban precinct.
- 36. New paving, widened kerbs at intersections and pram ramps improve accessibility.
- 37. Delivery and parking within the street will be maintained.

Environmental

- 38. The design for the renewal of Thomas Street will embrace current best practice Ecologically Sustainable Development initiatives to support the City’s Sustainable Sydney 2030 vision for achieving high quality sustainable outcomes on all new capital works developments.
- 39. Once Council resolves to approve the designs, City staff will engage an external planner to consider whether the proposed works require assessment and approval under Part 5 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. A review of environmental factors will be carried out for the approved proposal to ensure that all environmental impacts have been identified assessed and, where appropriate, action is identified to manage impacts. The review will identify the likely impacts, note steps to be taken to manage them and assess whether residual impacts of the work are likely to be significant.

Economic

40. The upgrade encourages activation of the street, which is consistent with the desired outcomes of Chinatown representatives.
41. Loading zones are maintained where they are currently located and are servicing the adjacent businesses.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

42. There are sufficient funds allocated in the current year's capital budget and future year's forward estimates as outlined in confidential Attachment D.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

43. Attachment D is to remain confidential in accordance with Section 10A(2)(c) of the Local Government Act 1993, as it contains information that would, if disclosed, confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business.
44. NSW Roads Act 1993 and City of Sydney Act 1988 for road related approvals.
45. Local Government Act 1993 for construction procurement.
46. Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

CRITICAL DATES / TIME FRAMES

47. Proposed key dates are:
 - (a) Detailed Design and Documentation September 2013;
 - (b) Construction tender October 2013;
 - (c) Construction start February 2014; and
 - (d) Construction completion November 2014.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

48. As detailed earlier in this report, community consultation has been undertaken in the development of the design.
49. The following engagement will take place to ensure the community is kept up to date with further developments regarding the design and construction of Thomas and Hay Street Public Domain Improvements program:
 - (a) City of Sydney Website updated;
 - (b) project update letters and emails to local residents and interested community members;
 - (c) doorknocking nearby properties and businesses;

- (d) notification will be sent to businesses and property owners prior to construction; and
- (e) during construction there will be close liaison between businesses, property owners, Council staff and the contractors to minimise disruption to trade and residences in the area.

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