

RELEVANT INFORMATION FOR COMMITTEE

FILE: S100835 **DATE:** 22 July 2013
TO: Lord Mayor and Councillors
FROM: Michael Leyland, Director City Projects
THROUGH: Monica Barone, Chief Executive Officer
SUBJECT: Information Relevant To Item 5 - Thomas and Hay Streets, Haymarket –
Public Domain Improvements – At Environment Committee 22 July 2013

Recommendation

That the Lord Mayor and Councillors note the information contained in this memo.

Background

At the Councillor briefing session on Monday 15 July 2013, further information was requested on community consultation undertaken regarding this project.

There have been three phases of community consultation to inform the development of the Chinatown Public Domain Plan and the emerging Thomas Street project:

Chinatown Public Domain Plan (Adopted 2010)

1. The Chinatown Public Domain Plan drew on extensive consultation including:
 - (a) Community Forum update (July 2009);
 - (b) Haymarket Chinatown roundtable – for key business, cultural and community leaders (October 2009);
 - (c) Two community workshops (10 November 2009 and 9 February 2010), each attended by approximately 100 key stakeholders including the Chamber of Commerce, industry groups, local retailers, property owners, tenants and residents; and
 - (d) a street survey.
2. The draft Chinatown Public Domain Plan was exhibited in July 2010. 12 submissions were received. The summary of consultation indicated the Thomas Street closure was well supported. The Public Domain Plan included a full road closure on Thomas Street between Hay Street and Thomas Lane.

Thomas Street Concept Proposal (2011)

3. Following a feasibility study, the concept proposal reduced the extent of the road closure on Thomas Street to between Ultimo Road and Thomas Lane.

4. Consultation on the Thomas Street concept proposal included:
 - (a) On 6 December 2011 a community information session was held at the Holiday Inn, Darling Harbour to provide an update on the Chinatown Public Domain improvements, including the concept proposal for a road closure. Approximately 50 members of the public and local media attended; and
 - (b) door to door consultation with adjacent properties (December 2011).
5. The responses from the consultation were positive about the future work, particularly relating to the Thomas Street proposals.
6. The key issues included:
 - (a) request for additional consultation through the project development, specifically relating to access and loading proposals;
 - (b) one community member was concerned about the impact of closing Thomas Street between Hay Street to Thomas Lane. However, they had no objections if the road closure was only between Ultimo Road and Thomas Lane; and
 - (c) one business was concerned about any changes to the bus route on Thomas Street.

Thomas Street Design Proposal (2013 - current)

7. Public exhibition on the design proposal was carried out from 6 May to 3 June 2013. During the exhibition period, the following activities took place:
 - (a) 2,500 notification letters were sent to residents, businesses and property owners;
 - (b) a dedicated page on Sydneyoursay.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, close to the site at the Holiday Inn, Darling Harbour. The session was attended by around 50 community members and local media;
 - (d) door to door consultation with 26 business owners and building managers of the properties immediately adjacent to the upgrade site; and
 - (e) key stakeholders meetings including Market City, Community and Private Services Union and Chinatown Chamber of Commerce.
8. 17 media outlets attended the drop in session and subsequently produced positive news articles for the project.

Submissions and Key Issues

9. Ten submissions were received through written submissions and door to door consultations. A summary of issues and responses can be found in Attachment A.
10. Over 95 per cent of the community consulted including the adjacent properties and key stakeholders, are supportive of the improvements being proposed for Thomas

Street including the incorporation of public art and an expanded public domain that prioritises pedestrians and revitalisation of the area.

11. Three of the 26 business owners directly adjacent expressed their concerns to the project. Their key issues were:

(a) **Reduction in parking**

Two submissions were received indicating their concern of reduced number of parking spaces, with the key view expressed that it would affect the viability of business.

One submission received indicated the shared car parking was not necessary.

The proposal retains parking for loading in Thomas Street. General parking will be removed to allow for the widened footpaths and road closure. Previous studies have shown that the majority of visitors to Chinatown arrive by walking or public transport. Furthermore, local shops and restaurants derive much of their business from passing foot traffic.

(b) **Reduction of travel lanes which may increase traffic congestion.**

One submission was concerned that blocking the road would redirect traffic to other side roads and increase danger to pedestrians.

Chinatown is characterised as a highly pedestrianised precinct, albeit informally. The scheme improves pedestrian space and encourages slow traffic speeds. Traffic studies and modelling of the proposals has been undertaken to ensure there are no adverse effects on surrounding streets and adjacent intersections and this has been reviewed by the RMS.

12. Further information on the consultation undertaken, feedback and summary can be found in Attachment C to the Committee report.

13. Shops including Spring River Chinese Restaurant, Emperor's Garden BBQ and Noodles, Sydney's Best Dim Sims and Be My Eyes expressed their support to an improved footpath, however raised concerns for the impact during construction to their businesses. They would like to be notified as early as possible before the construction starts in front of their shops.

14. The construction of the project will impact the surrounding area, but consistent with the recent successful delivery of Little Hay Street, Kimber Lane and Factory Street, City Projects will minimise and manage these impacts by:

- (a) maintaining pedestrian access to properties at all times;
- (b) developing Traffic Management Plans to enable construction activity;
- (c) applying strict contract performance management around safety, implementing a comprehensive communications strategy including:
 - (i) distribution of regular advance community notifications which highlight activities and indicate the duration;
 - (ii) project site signage to promote "open for business";
 - (iii) variable message signs (VMS);

- (iv) Community Liaison Officers, embedded in the project site, to be available to stakeholders and respond to issues as they arise; and
- (v) clear alternate points of contact.

Attachments

Attachment A Consultation Summary – Detailed Issues and Responses

Michael Leyland, Director City Projects

Prepared by: Lisa Dodd, Specialist Design Manager

TRIM Document Number: 2013/264594

approved

P. M. Barone
Monica Barone, Chief Executive Officer

Consultation Summary – Thomas Street, Haymarket:

6 May to 3 June 2013

No of mentions	Comments	Response to Comments
10 Submissions received		
General		
1	The proposed upgrade on Thomas Street is a great step forward for Sydney's Haymarket/Chinatown region. Projects such as this one, Central Park precinct and the proposed South East Light Rail extension are much needed to revitalise the south of the CBD.	Noted.
1	Good to see the proposed Thomas Street upgrade prioritises pedestrian activities in an area where currently cars bully pedestrians into submission.	Noted.
Public Art		
1	So happy to see public art incorporated into the plans. It adds such a richness to the streetscape and culture of the area.	Noted.
Pedestrian connections		
1	It's excellent to see space being reallocated for public use and pedestrian traffic in the city, especially in this stretch near Market City which is cramped by 4 lanes of road width.	The proposal removes a lane of parking for widened footpaths. The proposal removes through traffic southbound on Thomas Street from Ultimo Road to create a new open space for gathering and respite in Chinatown.
1	It is great to see the proposed upgrade in front of NAB Haymarket branch. If Thomas Street south is becoming a plaza, NAB will consider changing its main entrance to Thomas Street	The proposal includes a new open space between Ultimo Road and Thomas Lane, with significantly wider footpaths on the western side of Thomas Street between Hay Street and Quay Street.
1	we are happy about the improvement in front of our shop. Please relay the paving and make the footpath more accessible.	Paving will be replaced with new granite paving. Detailed documentation will review levels to improve accessibility along the street and into adjacent businesses.
Traffic and parking		
1	Given that loading zone spaces have been retained and supplemented for local businesses, the loss of general car parking is not a problem. On-street parking for private cars is a poor use of precious CBD space, and should be at the very bottom of the transport and street use hierarchy.	While general parking has been reduced along Thomas Street for widened footpaths, loading spaces have been increased by three spaces.
1	Concern about the possible traffic congestion after the traffic change on Thomas Street south. After viewing the plans and discussing it with City staff, the facility manager was happy with the proposed design.	The scheme improves pedestrian space and encourages slow traffic speeds. Traffic studies and modelling of the proposals has been undertaken to ensure there are no adverse effects on surrounding streets and adjacent intersections.
2	Thomas Street is a very busy and important business area within Chinatown. Any such reduction of use to car users will severely damage business and viability of business. Blocking the road and redirecting traffic to other side roads will increase danger to pedestrians.	The proposal retains parking for loading in Thomas Street. General parking will be removed to allow for the widened footpaths and road closure. Previous studies have shown that the majority of visitors to Chinatown arrive by walking or public transport. Furthermore, local shops and restaurants derive much of their business from passing foot traffic.
1	The car share space in front of their shop is unnecessary	The parking proposal retains the two existing car share spaces.
1	The development should include a change of street name to overcome existing confusion between Thomas Street, Haymarket and Thomas Street, Ultimo	Thomas Street extends from Hay Street in Haymarket to Wattle Street in Ultimo. It is divided by the Ultimo Pedestrian Network and the ABC building. This project won't review changing street names.