

ITEM 6. FOLEY STREET IMPROVEMENTS, DARLINGHURST – STAGES 2 AND 3 CONCEPT PLAN**FILE NO: S113172****SUMMARY**

This report outlines the proposed scope for the upgrade of Foley Street, Darlinghurst between Crown Street and Taylor Square.

A key part of our Sustainable Sydney 2030 vision is for a cultural and creative city and, as part of this vision, the City is planning improvement works along Foley Street.

The upgrade seeks to revitalise the streetscape, enhance the street level uses of the adjoining retail tenancies and facilitate their use for a variety of business activities.

The first stage of the project, involving the streetscape upgrade of Foley Street from Oxford Square / Burton Street to Crown Street, was completed in 2012.

A concept design for the stages 2 and 3, from Crown Street to Taylor Square, has now been developed and community feedback has been sought.

This report provides a summary of responses received from community consultation on the concept plan and recommends a scope of work.

RECOMMENDATION

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council endorse the scope of Foley Street improvements as described in the subject report and shown in the concept plan at Attachment A to the subject report, for progress to documentation and construction tender;
- (B) Council note the project cost estimate detailed in confidential Attachment C to the subject report; and
- (C) Financial Implications, Attachment C to the subject report, remain confidential in accordance with section 10A(2)(c) of the Local Government Act 1993.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Foley Street Stages 2 and 3 Concept Plan

Attachment B: Community Consultation Response Schedule

Attachment C: Financial Implications (Confidential)

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

BACKGROUND

1. Foley Street is a local lane that runs parallel and to the north of Oxford Street. The lane width is approximately 6 metres, with a narrow footpath that is unsuitable for pedestrians and often obstructed by poles for lighting and power cables. Foley Street currently operates as a service lane for the adjacent buildings. The lane operates in a one way easterly direction.

Concept Plan

2. A concept design for Foley Street has been prepared based on the following design principles:
 - (a) providing a safe and more appealing pedestrian link from Oxford Square to Crown Street;
 - (b) providing opportunities for outdoor dining; and
 - (c) attracting a range of uses that will contribute to the economic viability of the Oxford Street precinct.
3. Key elements of the design are:
 - (a) closing Foley Street from Crown Street to Langley Street, and providing pedestrian and cyclist only access at all times;
 - (b) creating a Shared Zone from Langley Street to Taylor Square for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists to share at all times. This will require making Langley Street one way southbound;
 - (c) raising the Foley Street road surface to the footpath level to comply with Roads and Maritime Service Shared Zone requirements;
 - (d) extending and improving the adjacent footpaths along Crown and Palmer Streets to improve pedestrian amenity;
 - (e) installing energy efficient LED lighting to improve lighting levels and safety;
 - (f) planting more shrubs and trees along the adjacent footpaths in Crown and Palmer Streets; and
 - (g) moving overhead power lines underground along Foley Street to reduce the visual and physical clutter.

Developed Design

4. Key issues raised during community consultation were:
 - (a) concerns about local traffic flow and vehicle access;
 - (b) concerns about illegally parked vehicles in Foley Street; and
 - (c) concerns about potential impacts from future tenancies, including noise from patrons and garbage removal.

5. In response to items raised during public consultation on the concept plan, the following will be further investigated during the detailed design phase:
 - (a) including fixed bollards in Foley Street between Palmer Street and Taylor Square, similar to the alignment of bollards in the section between Crown and Palmer Street, to separate footway seating from vehicles;
 - (b) considering if additional bicycle racks can be incorporated into the scheme (bicycle racks were installed on the Burton Street footpath as part of Stage 1 works); and
 - (c) considering if a taxi rank can be created in the area to facilitate faster departure of patrons from bar and restaurant venues anticipated to be created in the Oxford Street buildings.

Car Parking Spaces

6. Foley Street is currently zoned as 'No Parking'. The upgrade proposes a 'No Stopping' zone for Foley Street. Parking spaces will not be lost from Foley Street.
7. To enable footpath widening, the upgrade proposes the removal of two parking spaces on Palmer Street. One space is a 'Loading Zone' (7am to 6pm Mon-Fri and 7am to 10am Sat), located on the western side of Palmer Street and the other space is 'No Parking' (Council Vehicles Excepted) located on the eastern side of Palmer Street.
8. The proposal does not change any permit holder exempt areas. Resident parking will not be affected.

Vehicle Access and Turning

9. The proposal has considered vehicle access and turning in Foley, Crown, Palmer and Langley Streets, and caters for garbage trucks and other vehicles of this size.
10. To facilitate the closure of Foley Street from Crown Street to Langley Street, it is proposed to make Langley Street one way with southbound traffic. Langley Street currently has a two way traffic flow. Langley Street is used by vehicles to access parking in the rear of the Palmer Street residences. Palmer Street residents can continue to access Langley Street from Burton Street.
11. The proposed street closure will impact on the collection points for garbage bins as outlined later in this report.

Tree Management

12. The upgrade does not propose the removal of any trees.
13. Three additional street trees are proposed; one on the eastern side of Crown Street, one on the western side of Palmer Street and one on the eastern side of Palmer Street. The City's Street Tree Masterplan will inform the species selection of the new trees.

KEY IMPLICATIONS

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030

14. *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 project is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
 - (a) Direction 4 - A City for Walking and Cycling – the Shared Zone proposal in this project encourages pedestrians and cyclists in Foley Street;
 - (b) Direction 6 - Vibrant Local Communities and Economies – the project recognises and seeks to build on local community places for meeting and social activity; and
 - (c) Direction 9 - Sustainable Development, Renewal and Design – the project seeks to provide a welcoming streetscape setting that encourages the renewal and activation of adjoining underused buildings.

Organisational Impact

15. Premises adjoining the proposed closed section of Foley Street between Crown and Langley Streets will have to place their garbage bins at the ends of the street closure for waste collection. If this does not occur, the waste collection crews will have to leave the garbage truck to collect the bins from the closure and take them to the truck for emptying. This would add additional time to the waste collection round.

Social / Cultural / Community

16. The improvements to Foley Street will facilitate activation of the laneway, including outdoor dining possibilities associated with provision of suitable tenants in the basement tenancies of 82-106 and 110-122 Oxford Street, which adjoin Foley Street.

Environmental

17. The project will upgrade stormwater infrastructure and encourage activation of the adjoining heritage properties.
18. The streetscape upgrade will provide a safer and more appealing pedestrian link from Oxford Square to Crown Street.
19. The upgrade works do not propose the removal of any existing trees.
20. Additional street trees and understorey planting are proposed in Crown and Palmer Streets to provide improved amenity to the area.

Economic

21. Objectives of the streetscape upgrade proposal include making the place more inviting to pedestrians. In association with this project, the lower ground floor tenancies of the Oxford Street buildings are being refurbished and, in some cases, separated from the Oxford Street frontage properties to enable new businesses to occupy these spaces. The new businesses would front onto Foley Street. The streetscape upgrade and activation of the underutilised tenancies are likely to have positive economic effects on the surrounding businesses.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

22. There are sufficient funds allocated to this project within the capital works budget 2013/14 and future years forward estimate.
23. The project budget and cost estimate for the upgrade is presented in detail in confidential Attachment C.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

24. Attachment C 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 whom Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business.
25. In accordance with section 116 of the Roads Act 1993, the City placed public notices in two newspapers to notify the public of the proposed changes. This consultation is discussed later in this report.
26. Foley Street is designated as an Alcohol Free Zone. This designation is valid until 2016. In accordance with Local Government Amendment (Alcohol Free Zones) Act 1995 and section 644 of the Local Government Act 1993, Foley Street is a designated Alcohol Free Zone.

CRITICAL DATES / TIME FRAMES

27. The proposed program for the project is:
 - (a) Design Development and Documentation Dec 2013 – May 2014;
 - (b) Tender phase Jun 2014 – Oct 2014; and
 - (c) Commence Construction Sep 2014.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

28. In January 2013, the City met with representatives of Ausgrid regarding the proposal to relocate the aerial power lines underground. This proposal will be assessed further once construction documentation prepared.
29. In July 2013, Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) were provided with the concept design report and traffic management plans for the scheme along with a description of the proposal that sought RMS approval in principle. The City received approval in principle from RMS in September 2013.

30. In October 2013, in accordance with section 116 of the Roads Act, public notices were placed in two newspapers to notify the public of the proposed traffic changes, modification of traffic flow, the creation of a road closure and the creation of a Shared Zone. The notices sought comments on the proposal and referred to the City's website where the concept plan was available to be viewed.
31. In October 2013, consultation with local residents and business was undertaken on the concept plan (Attachment A). Notification included the distribution of a letter and the concept plan to Darlinghurst residents within a 200 metre radius of the site. Approximately 1,500 letters were distributed.
32. The concept plan was also displayed on the City's website with a description of the project.
33. A summary of the consultation feedback received in response to the concept plan is included in Attachment B.
34. Four submissions were received. Feedback provided insight into specific issues in this area. Feedback on the concept plan will inform the design development.
35. Prior to commencement of construction, the local community will be notified by a letterbox drop, and neighbouring properties will be door-knocked and provided with an updated program of works.

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