

**ITEM 4. CITY NORTH PUBLIC DOMAIN PLAN – ADOPTION****FILE NO: S121925****SUMMARY**

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's adoption of the draft City North Public Domain Plan (the Plan) as amended.

The City North study area is generally bound by George Street, Alfred Street, Macquarie Street and King Street. The Plan analyses the existing public domain, strategic and development context, and recommends the scope, location and extent of public domain improvements over the short, medium and long term.

The Plan will allow the City to provide a detailed and timely response to several major public and private projects within the area by providing a coordinated public domain direction. It considers public domain options to inform and respond to transport changes within the precinct as a result of the CBD and South East Light Rail (CSELR) and Bus Plan; and provides input to the NSW Government as they undertake a Plan of Renewal for Circular Quay.

The scope of the Plan includes an urban design study for Martin Place by Gehl Architects with City Design, which identifies improvement opportunities, addresses outdoor dining, and considers improved activation of the space as part of a long term master plan. The other major focus of the study is the interface between the northern City Centre, Alfred Street and Circular Quay, the subject of an urban design study by HASSELL Architects. Opportunities identified include place-specific upgrade projects as well as precinct-wide overlay projects.

Council approved the public exhibition of Draft City North Public Domain Plan on 14 September 2015. The draft Plan was placed on public exhibition from 21 September to 20 October 2015, and 26 written submissions were received. A summary of the issues raised in the submissions received and the City's response is provided at Attachment B.

The draft City North Public Domain Plan has been reviewed and amended following consideration of external and internal feedback. The amended Plan recommended for adoption, with additional text shown underlined in red and deleted text shown in ~~strike through~~, is provided at Attachment A.

An implementation plan with project priorities, scope and preliminary costings is included at confidential Attachment C for Council's approval.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council adopt the City North Public Domain Plan with amendments, as shown at Attachment A to the subject report, as a guiding document to inform capital works planning, planning proposals, development applications and Voluntary Planning Agreement negotiations;

- (B) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to make minor amendments to the adopted City North Public Domain Plan as required; and
- (C) Council endorse the Preliminary Implementation Plan and Financial Estimates outlined in confidential Attachment C to the subject report to inform scope and implementation of current and future Voluntary Planning Agreements, future capital works by the City, and project co-ordination with Transport for NSW and other State Agencies.

## ATTACHMENTS

**Attachment A:** City North Public Domain Plan with amendments  
(Note – This attachment will be circulated separately from the Agenda Paper in limited numbers. It will be available for inspection on Council's website and at the One Stop Shop and Neighbourhood Service Centres.)

**Attachment B:** Summary of Public Submissions and Responses during Exhibition Period

**Attachment C:** City North Public Domain Plan – Preliminary Implementation Plan and Financial Estimates (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. In June 2014, the City Design team commenced work on the draft City North Public Domain Plan (the Plan). The study area for the Plan is generally bound by George Street, Alfred Street, Macquarie Street and King Street. This study includes detailed analysis and feasibility to recommend the scope, location and extent of public domain improvements over the short, medium and long term.
2. The draft Plan forms part of a series of detailed studies that will form part of the overall City Centre Public Domain Plan. To date studies for Chinatown and City South, Harbour Village North and George Street have been completed.
3. The Plan allows the City to provide a detailed and timely response to several major public and private projects within the City North study area. These include:
  - (a) CBD and South East Light Rail (CSELR), the transformation of George Street and implications for adjoining streets and spaces (including Alfred Street and Martin Place);
  - (b) Transport for NSW's roll out of infrastructure for the Bus Plan; and
  - (c) the future redevelopment of the AMP precinct, the Gateway building, the Alfred Pitt, Dalley and George (APDG) project, several major redevelopments in Martin Place, and other development applications and State Government projects with public domain implications.
4. The intent is that this strategic work is completed to inform major infrastructure, transport or development projects so that the recommended improvements can be taken into consideration through planning negotiations and project delivery. This work will also guide the City's long term planning and capital works programming.
5. Consultants were engaged to develop priority projects to inform the draft Plan. These consist of a Martin Place Urban Design Study (Gehl Architects) and a City North Streetscapes and Spaces Study (HASSELL). The work has also been informed by the advice of independent arborists, heritage specialists and quantity surveyors.
6. Public intercept surveys carried out in November-December 2014 identified outdoor dining as a key consideration in developing a public domain concept. Other City policies and strategies, including Open Sydney and the Retail Action Plan, nominate opportunities for increased activity in public spaces, including outdoor dining, as a key action.
7. The Plan (including the Martin Place Urban Design Study by Gehl Architects) has considered the benefits of outdoor dining and recommends that it be allowed in certain areas within Martin Place. These recommendations have been developed in collaboration with the draft Outdoor Dining Guidelines, which have been reported separately to Council and are currently on public exhibition.

8. Martin Place is nominated as a special precinct within those draft guidelines, which are consistent with the recommendations of the draft Plan. Consultation with the Returned Services League (NSW) and detailed pedestrian modelling has informed the outdoor dining recommendations. The draft guidelines include defined areas for outdoor dining that keep clear of the Cenotaph; a requirement that outdoor dining will not operate on days of significance nominated by the NSW RSL; and a furniture palette that recognises the heritage and aesthetic qualities of the place. They also include a four metre wide minimum clear path of travel to ensure safe and comfortable pedestrian movement.
9. In July 2015, the NSW Government announced the Sydney Metro project, with a new station planned for Martin Place to interchange with the existing heavy rail station. An upgrade to the existing heavy rail station is anticipated in parallel with these works. Together, these projects present future opportunities to achieve significant improvements to Martin Place, and the Plan will provide a strong basis for the City to provide input to the development of these projects over time.
10. The City has been approached by the NSW Premier to provide a location for a memorial to the Martin Place siege victims within Martin Place. The Premier, through the Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Government Architect, is developing concept proposals for the memorial. A future briefing on this proposal will occur.
11. A development application has recently been lodged by AMP Capital for the redevelopment of the 'Quay Quarter', including a commercial tower at 50 Bridge Street and the block bound by Loftus Street, Young Street, Customs House Lane and Loftus Lane. The draft Plan, and HASSELL's City North Streetscapes and Spaces Study, have been developed in consultation with the designers and developers of the Quay Quarter project. Following public exhibition and endorsement of the Plan, it will assist City staff in directing the allocation of Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA) funds from that development project.

### **GUIDING DIRECTIONS**

12. The draft Plan has five guiding directions. They are:
  - (a) strengthen north-south streets and encourage east-west pedestrian permeability;
  - (b) reinforce connection of public space at Circular Quay and create a unified square from the building edge to the water;
  - (c) reinforce Martin Place as the city's premier civic and public space;
  - (d) create a linked series of park and garden spaces and upgrade existing open spaces; and
  - (e) support and encourage active building edges and high quality activation of the public domain.

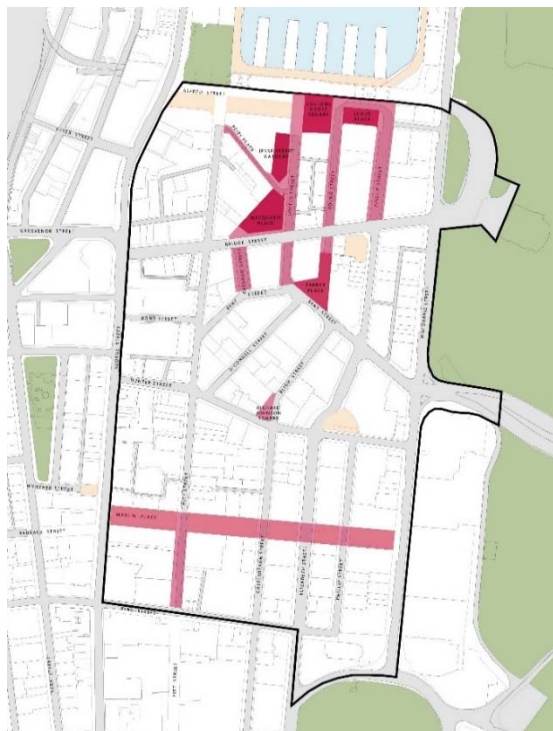
### **DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS**

13. A series of projects have been developed to help deliver the guiding directions of the draft Plan.

14. The Plan proposes two types of projects to improve the City North public domain:
- (a) place-specific upgrade projects that aim to make physical improvements to particular streets or spaces within the area. These projects focus on key streets and spaces as well as Martin Place, and can be implemented independently of one another; and
  - (b) precinct-wide 'overlay' projects that aim to improve specific aspects of the public domain experience throughout the study area.

### PLACE-SPECIFIC UPGRADE PROJECTS AND PRIORITIES

15. Place-specific upgrade projects are indicated on the plan below, and described in further detail later in this report.



16. Projects have been preliminarily identified as either short, medium or long term projects. Confidential Attachment C - Preliminary Implementation Plan with Financial Estimates - outlines the project scope and preliminary costings. All projects are subject to available funding.
17. Time frames for projects have been reconsidered in response to submissions and further information regarding staging of transport and major development construction programs. The amended project time frames are listed below. The amended Plan also reflects these changes.
18. Short term projects are generally those that interface with current infrastructure or development projects, or address a pressing need arising through community and stakeholder consultation. Short term projects have been preliminarily identified as:
- (a) Martin Place short term upgrade works including:
    - (i) additional fixed public seating and some associated softworks;

- (ii) commence tree planting and landscaping;
  - (iii) commence paving infill at intersections;
  - (iv) development of a temporary seating program;
  - (v) development of a kiosk strategy;
  - (vi) outdoor dining guidelines (refer also to precinct-wide overlay projects);  
and
  - (vii) events strategy and guidelines (refer also to precinct-wide overlay projects);
- (b) Alfred Street upgrade including Scout Place;
  - (c) Loftus Street (north of Customs House Lane);
  - (d) Jessie Street Gardens (making good of green areas and memorial works); and
  - (e) Macquarie Place Conservation Management Plan.
19. Medium term projects generally require additional exploration due to their complexity, heritage status, land ownership or contractual/leasing arrangements, or interface with medium term stakeholder or government projects. Medium term projects have been preliminarily identified as:
- (a) Martin Place medium term upgrade works including:
    - (i) lighting upgrade; and
    - (ii) paving infill;
    - (iii) Block 2 fountain renewal, steps and topography works and tree planting;
  - (b) Customs House Square;
  - (c) Loftus Street north (Bridge Street to Customs House)
  - (d) Young and Phillip Street upgrades;
  - (e) Reiby Place;
  - (f) Farrer Place and Loftus Street south upgrade; and
  - (g) Richard Johnson Square upgrade.
20. Long term project ideas relate to projects that require further detailed study and consultation to test their feasibility and scope. They are identified for future study but not developed in detail as part of the Plan. They may rely on coordination with long term infrastructure projects (e.g. Sydney Metro). Long term projects have been preliminarily identified as:
- (a) Martin Place long term upgrade works including:
    - (i) relocation of station and underground retail entries;

- (ii) Block 3 steps and topography works; and
- (iii) completion of tree planting;
- (b) Macquarie Place Park upgrade;
- (c) Jessie Street Gardens future improvements;
- (d) Gresham Street upgrade; and
- (e) Pitt Street Mall extension between King Street and Martin Place.

### PRECINCT-WIDE 'OVERLAY' PROJECTS

21. In addition to the place-specific projects, the study includes recommendations for wider overlays to the area to improve the quality of the public domain, signage, wayfinding, events and experiences. Many of these overlays are already underway within the City. It is intended that the outcomes of the following urban design overlays be integrated into the individual place-specific projects as they progress:
- (a) new outdoor dining guidelines and specific precinct guidelines as required (e.g. Circular Quay and Martin Place);
  - (b) city-wide events strategy and guidelines;
  - (c) city granite paving and Smartpole rollout;
  - (d) CBD laneway upgrades;
  - (e) new public domain furniture rollout;
  - (f) temporary seating program;
  - (g) wayfinding signage; and
  - (h) Creative Lighting Master Plan (Martin Place).

### KEY IMPLICATIONS

#### Strategic Alignment – Sustainable Sydney 2030

22. *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. The draft Plan is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
- (a) Direction 3 - Integrated Transport for a Connected City – this project delivers on Action 3.3.2 Increasing the amount of street space dedicated to sustainable transport modes and urban space; Action 3.2.2 Improve the integration of cross-regional public transport services, including light rail and metro rail, and the quality of transport hubs; and Project Idea 3: Protecting the City Centre.
  - (b) Direction 4 - A City for Walking and Cycling – this project delivers on Action 4.2.1 Manage the road space to encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport.

- (c) Direction 5 - A Lively and Engaging City Centre – this project delivers on Project Idea: Three Linked Squares; Action 5.1.1 Plan for a north-south central spine in the City Centre connecting three new squares; Action 5.1.2 Develop a public space improvement strategy to enhance street and squares in the City Centre.
23. The City of Sydney 2013-2016 Corporate Plan identifies the City Centre Public Space Improvement Program as a major project, including the development of concept designs and briefs for city centre public spaces (City Centre Public Domain Plans), to be carried out by the Chief Operations Office between 2011 and 2017.

### **Social / Cultural / Community**

24. The amended Plan will be a vehicle to capture the public and key stakeholders aspirations for the precinct and its improvement.

### **Environmental**

25. This amended Plan will ensure greater connectivity and walkability of the city, enabling sustainable forms of transport. Additional tree planting will increase canopy cover and reduce heat island effect.

### **Economic**

26. Public domain improvements will have a positive economic impact through increased pedestrian use and activation to ensure the City Centre is a destination for leisure and recreation as well as for workers.

### **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

27. The City North Public Domain Plan recommends a series of projects that could guide future capital budget allocations for improvements to the area for the next 20 years. It is likely that to implement the priority projects, some adjustment within the 10 year Long Term Financial Plan will be required.
28. With respect to streetscapes and spaces projects other than Martin Place, funding from relevant Voluntary Planning Agreements in the precinct (AMP Quay Quarter, 33 Bligh Street and the Gateway) should be available to enable some of these proposed improvements.
29. A Preliminary Implementation Plan with Financial Estimates is provided in confidential Attachment C.
30. The plan recommends that Martin Place should be free from banners. The Martin Place Owners Group and Design Advisory Panel recommend that this space be banner free to reduce clutter and create a more visually refined space as appropriate to its heritage context. Additional locations for banners in the City of Sydney Local Government Area are being explored.

### **CRITICAL DATES / TIME FRAMES**

31. Adoption of the Plan will be timely to inform Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA) negotiations and scope boundary confirmation with Transport for NSW for light rail interface works.



32. Adoption of the Plan will allow Council to resolve public domain works associated with private development, both under VPA and standard consent conditions.

### OPTIONS

33. The option not to undertake this Plan has been considered. This would result in an uncoordinated response to individual private development and transport projects, potentially missing opportunities for coordinated public domain improvements. It would also not allow the City to consider the streets and spaces that surround George Street (including Martin Place) in a coordinated and timely fashion to align with the upgrade and introduction of light rail on George Street.

### RELEVANT LEGISLATION

34. Attachment C contains confidential information which, if disclosed, would confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business. Discussion of the matter in an open meeting would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest because it would compromise Council's ability to negotiate fairly and commercially to achieve the best outcome for its ratepayers.

### PUBLIC CONSULTATION

35. A consultation strategy was developed for the project, outlining an appropriate range of engagement methodologies that included:
- (a) individual meetings with key government stakeholders;
  - (b) three workshops with the Martin Place Owners Group;
  - (c) focused meetings with individual property and business operators within the study area; and
  - (d) intercept surveys with the public in key locations.
36. Woolcott Research & Engagement was engaged to carry out two rounds of public intercept surveys to inform the work at key stages. In November-December 2014, an initial round of intercept surveys was carried out to assist in the identification of key issues relevant to the study area to be addressed in the development of public domain concepts.
37. In July 2015, an additional round of surveys was carried out by Woolcott Research & Engagement to gauge the public response to key project opportunities identified in relation to the Martin Place, including public seating opportunities, the Lloyd Rees fountain, and events guidelines. The findings of these surveys reinforced:
- (a) desire for more public seating, particularly fixed seating;
  - (b) desire for more planting and trees;
  - (c) appreciation of the provision of a fountain in Martin Place, and some concerns around the size and lack of interaction opportunities of the existing Lloyd Rees fountain design; and
  - (d) desire for event guidelines to ensure that events contribute to the cultural life of the city, are well designed and cater to a range of ages.

38. The City has hosted three workshops with the Martin Place Owners Group (6 November 2014, 4 February 2015 and 18 June 2015).
39. City staff have participated in focused meetings and briefings with Transport for NSW and the CSELR design team to provide input to the ongoing design development of light rail, and to gather feedback on the development of the draft Plan to address key areas of interface with transport projects such as Alfred Street (light rail) and Martin Place (future metro station and train station upgrade).
40. The analysis, concepts and recommendations of the draft Plan have been the subject of several presentations to the City's Design Advisory Panel, as well as a Panel sub-committee site visit. The Panel's comments and recommendations have informed the draft Plan.
41. The draft Plan was placed on public exhibition from 21 September to 20 October 2015.
42. Notification of the public exhibition was advertised in the local press and The Sydney Morning Herald, and documents were made available on Sydney Your Say website.
43. 2,252 letters were mailed out to residents and businesses in the project area.
44. 22 invitations were sent to key stakeholders announcing the consultation and the ways they could have their say.
45. A briefing of staff of the NSW Small Business Commissioner was undertaken on 6 October 2015.
46. A drop-in session at Customs House was held on 8 October 2015 to allow people to view the plans, discuss issues and seek clarification with City staff and make a submission at the venue. It is anticipated that further consultation with key stakeholders and the community will take place during the design development of individual project components of the Plan as per standard City practice. All projects will be subject to appropriate planning and heritage approval processes. Regular meetings with key developers and designers on major private projects within the study area have informed the development of the draft Plan. These include the AMP Quay Quarter and Alfred, Pitt, Dalley and George (APDG) sites, Gateway building (Dexus), as well as major development sites in Martin Place.
47. The City's Strategic Planning team has been involved in extensive consultation with the Returned Services League (NSW) with regard to the proposal to introduce outdoor dining areas to Martin Place. The outcomes of that consultation process have informed the development of the draft Plan, and the City's draft Outdoor Dining Policy, Guidelines and Action Plan. The draft Outdoor Dining Policy, Guidelines and Action Plan are on public exhibition from 3 November to 15 December 2015.
48. Throughout the development of the Plan, the City has participated in regular meetings with Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority to ensure a coordinated approach to Circular Quay and surrounds.
49. At the close of the public exhibition, the City received 26 submissions. These submissions have been summarised and responded to in Attachment B.

50. Submissions were widely supportive of the principles for public domain renewal expressed by the Plan. Support was particularly expressed for the following key elements:
- (a) a coordinated approach to improving the streets, parks and public places in City North, where significant redevelopment is occurring;
  - (b) more street trees, planting and general greening of City North;
  - (c) improving pedestrian and cycle access through the city; and
  - (d) activation of Martin Place, and improved linkages to Circular Quay, as two of Sydney's most important public places.
51. Key areas of concern expressed by submissions include:
- (a) the appropriateness of outdoor dining and activity around the Cenotaph in Martin Place, and maintaining the significance of that place;
  - (b) additional noise and activity created by events and outdoor dining that may disturb occupants of residential and commercial buildings in the precinct;
  - (c) concern about the potential for an increase in 'clutter' in the public domain, generated by additional seating and other furniture;
  - (d) removal of trees, planting and grass; and
  - (e) management of quality and impact of events in the City Centre.
52. Many of the issues raised are noted for design development of the individual projects.
53. A proposed amended version of the Plan is provided in Attachment A. Additional text is shown underlined in red and deleted text is shown in ~~strikethrough~~.
54. The proposed changes are minor, for the clarification of the draft and the correction of typos and graphics. It is considered that these amendments do not substantially change the strategic directions of the Plan and therefore re-exhibition is not warranted.
55. Note that the Appendices to the amended Plan have not been changed. These were background documents only intended to inform the principles of the draft Plan. There is no fundamental change to the intention or principles of the draft Plan.

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