

Project Scope - Millers Point Greening and Traffic Calming

File No: X110307.001

Summary

This report describes proposed greening and traffic calming measures in Millers Point.

In 2023 and 2024 the City of Sydney (the City) undertook a traffic and transport study for Millers Point, in response to concerns from the community about traffic impacts on safety and amenity. The study collated the ideas put forward by the community, and identified opportunities for the City to further consider.

Throughout 2025 the City has reviewed these opportunities and developed a proposal for implementation of greening and traffic calming measures to provide the best balance between the overall benefits to the precinct, technical feasibility, potential heritage impacts, alignment with other strategic targets and to minimise unintended flow on effects.

The traffic and transport study had identified 4 intersections as key focus areas for traffic calming:

- (a) George Street and Hickson Road in The Rocks
- (b) George Street and Lower Fort Street in Dawes Point
- (c) Lower Fort and Argyle Street in Millers Point and
- (d) Kent and Argyle Street in Millers Point.

The further review has identified an additional opportunity to reallocate road space for additional greening on:

- (e) Lower Fort Street north of George Street in Dawes Point.

The City carried out community consultation from 4 March to 1 April 2026 which included sending notification letters to 2,000 residents and businesses as well as emails to key stakeholders. The Sydney Your Say page was visited 561 times. Approximately 80% of the 69 submissions received were supportive of the proposal.

This report details the recommended scope of works for Greening and Traffic Calming measures in Millers Point, Dawes Point and The Rocks, which has been developed to best meet the project objectives within the available budget of \$4 million.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council endorse the scope of works for Greening and Traffic Calming in Millers Point as described in the subject report and shown in the concept plans at Attachment A to the subject report, for the purpose of proceeding to design development, documentation and construction;
- (B) Council note:
 - (i) the greening initiatives already under way in Millers Point as described in the subject report and shown in Attachment C to the subject report; and
 - (ii) the financial implications detailed in the subject report; and
- (C) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to write to the Chief Executive of Place Management NSW to request funding for the works on land owned/managed by Place Management NSW.

Attachments

- Attachment A.** Concept Plans Exhibited for Community Feedback
- Attachment B.** Engagement Report
- Attachment C.** Greening Initiatives Underway

Background

1. Millers Point and Dawes Point are located in the northern part of central Sydney and are within the City of Sydney Local Government Area (LGA). The Rocks (to the east of the Sydney Harbour Bridge) is managed by Place Management NSW (NSW State Government). A Location Plan delineating these boundaries and project locations is included in Attachment A.
2. The area forms part of the state heritage-listed *Millers Point and Dawes Point Village Precinct Conservation Area*. The historic forms of the precinct include wide roads, narrow footpaths and limited tree canopy cover. From a heritage protection perspective, a low or no intervention approach is the preferred option. This has been a key factor in why previous proposals to make modifications for pedestrian improvements have not progressed.
3. Vehicles travel through Millers Point to access The Rocks, including the Overseas Passenger Terminal (OPT), while surrounding areas, in particular The Rocks and the Walsh Bay Arts Precinct, are also areas of high walking activity.
4. George Street (between Lower Fort Street and Hickson Road) is regularly closed to vehicles for "The Rock Markets" (every Saturday and Sunday) and events (Vivid Sydney, New Year's Eve etc).
5. In 2023 and 2024, the City undertook a traffic and transport study (the study) which included extensive consultation with the local community and key stakeholders. It followed a number of submissions from the local Millers Points community around traffic and transport issues in the area.
6. The study reviewed the current and future transport context, along with the consultation feedback and identified opportunities to provide a more walkable environment and improve amenity and safety. It identified opportunities to minimise the intrusion of traffic through movements while recognising Millers Point's role as a major contributor to the economic activity of Sydney.
7. The study developed the following objectives for the precinct to guide the identification and assessment of suitability of opportunities proposed for the study area.
 - (a) Provide for a more walkable and accessible environment
 - (b) Maximise the number of trips made by active and sustainable transport modes
 - (c) Provide for a safe environment for all road users
 - (d) Minimise the intrusion of through traffic movements
 - (e) Limit the impact of traffic associated with construction, tourism and events – recognising Millers Point's role as a major contributor of economic activity to Sydney.

8. The study collated the list of ideas put forward by the community and identified 29 opportunities to meet these objectives. It included 12 for Transport for NSW and Place Management NSW to consider and 17 opportunities for the City to consider. City staff have reviewed and further developed the ideas and have prioritised the most effective locations and measured which can be delivered within budget. The physical traffic calming measures are centred around the 4 focus point intersections identified in the traffic and transport study:
 - (a) George Street and Hickson Road in The Rocks
 - (b) George Street and Lower Fort Street in Dawes Point
 - (c) Lower Fort and Argyle Street in Millers Point and
 - (d) Kent and Argyle Street in Millers Point.
9. In addition to the opportunities for traffic calming at these intersections, further initiatives are being developed and delivered by the City as part of several different programs, including:
 - (a) in-road tree planting at the far northern end of Lower Fort Street, which is the fifth location of works recommended in this report
 - (b) increased greening - a total of 375sqm of additional planting area will be added to 110 tree pits along Kent, Lower Fort, Argyle Place, Trinity Avenue, Windmill Street and Dalgetty Road. These works are shown in Attachment C
 - (c) dedicated share bike parking locations
 - (d) works on Watson Road and Upper Fort Street to improve pedestrian safety
 - (e) renewal of pedestrian lighting in Argyle Street, east of Lower Fort Street
 - (f) footpath renewal works
 - (g) review of coach parking arrangements with Transport for NSW.

Project Scope

10. The recommended scope prioritises physical traffic calming measures which provide the best balance between the sometimes-conflicting considerations and has been developed based on the following key principles:
 - (a) using a precinct wide approach with smaller interventions in 5 locations
 - (b) integrating greening and traffic calming measures
 - (c) providing traffic calming while recognising the need for vehicular access to be maintained to and in the local area
 - (d) improving pedestrian amenity and safety while minimising flow on effects such as parking loss
 - (e) balancing heritage considerations with the need for change.

11. A key element of the proposal is planted traffic islands to reduce the road width at key intersections. This approach aims to:
 - (a) slow traffic by narrowing the roadway at key intersections
 - (b) reduce the area of sealed surfaces and integrate additional greening opportunities
 - (c) make the local streets less convenient for through traffic, including large vehicles and thereby encourage drivers to use Hickson Road, which is a Regional Road, to access The Rocks
 - (d) improve amenity and safety for people walking by shortening the distance to cross the street
 - (e) improve safety at existing zebra crossings by physically restricting approaching traffic to one lane
 - (f) protect heritage values by retaining the legibility of the historic road geometry and the alignment of the existing kerbs and gutters
 - (g) reduce impact of existing stormwater and utilities infrastructure
12. In detail, the proposal includes:
 - (a) At George Street and Hickson Road - changes to intersection geometry and traffic priority to encourage through traffic along Hickson Road rather than into Millers Point, planted traffic islands to increase greening and shade canopy, and a new kerb extension to shorten the crossing distance for pedestrians.
 - (b) At Lower Fort and George Street - new planted traffic islands to reduce road widths, slow traffic and discourage unsafe manoeuvres, shorten the crossing distances for pedestrians and increase greening and shade canopy.
 - (c) At Argyle and Lower Fort Street - a new zebra crossing to provide a safe crossing point as well as new traffic islands to reduce the carriage way width and slow traffic, and a new planted traffic island to assist with one-way delineation in Argyle Place and increase greening and shade canopy.
 - (d) At Argyle and Kent Street - new planted traffic islands to reduce lane widths on approach to the existing zebra crossing and improve safety, a new kerb extension to reduce the crossing distance for pedestrians and new bollards closing Kent Street to north bound traffic, simplify the intersection and reduce points of conflict.
 - (e) At the far northern end of Lower Fort Street - new in-road tree planting to increase greening and shade canopy as well as reduce the carriageway width to encourage slower speeds and improve safety.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision

13. Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision renews the communities' vision for the sustainable development of the city to 2050. 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 2 - A leading environmental performer - Urban trees provide mitigation benefits through carbon storage and sequestration which can improve health and air quality. Through the implementation of the proposed greening and traffic calming measures, this project will contribute to the City's target of achieving 40% green cover, including 27% tree canopy coverage by 2050.
 - (b) Direction 3 - Public places for all - The project will contribute to the outcome of local streets having fewer cars and more trees and making them safe for all people to walk.
 - (c) Direction 4 - Design excellence and sustainable development - The design approach has been developed to respect the character of the distinctive neighbourhood of the Millers Point Heritage Conservation Area. Impact on the existing heritage fabric is minimised while distinct traffic calming elements are added to the roadway to reduce traffic speeds and pedestrian crossing distances and discourage large vehicle through traffic.
 - (d) Direction 5 - A city for walking, cycling and public transport - The project aligns with the objective to reallocate street space for people, places and planting and will contribute to the outcome of providing cooler, quieter and calmer streets.

Organisational Impact

14. The project will create additional assets such as planted traffic islands greening and traffic calming measures will provide improved amenity for the people who live, work and visit the area. The assets (new trees, planting, road infrastructure) will require ongoing maintenance.

Risks

15. Risks associated with the proposal have been considered through the development of the concept design. These include safety for people walking, riding and driving, environmental and economic impacts, and community concerns. The risks will be further addressed in the forthcoming design development and documentation phases.
16. This approach is within the City's risk appetite, which states:
 - (a) We acknowledge that some financial risks may be necessary to achieve our goals, particularly when investing in new initiatives that align with our strategic objectives. We carefully evaluate financial options and risks and consider the potential impact on our financial position, cash flow, and overall stability.

- (b) We acknowledge our responsibility to protect and enhance the social and environmental wellbeing of our community. Our risk appetite emphasises the integration of sustainable practices into infrastructure asset management, considering environmental impacts, climate change resilience and community engagement.

Social / Cultural / Community

- 17. Local residents, including the Millers Point Community Resident Action Group (MPCRAG), have been advocating for traffic calming and greening in Millers Point for many years. Implementing this proposal will benefit the community by improving pedestrian amenity and safety.

Environmental

- 18. Millers Point forms part of the state heritage-listed Millers Point and Dawes Point Village Precinct Conservation Area. Heritage approvals will be required, and a specialist heritage consultant will be engaged to provide advice and prepare a Heritage Impact assessment. Preliminary discussions with Heritage NSW have confirmed that the City's proposed "light touch" approach is considered reasonable.
- 19. The Greening Sydney Strategy (2021) sets targets for canopy and greening across the LGA. To meet the targets, we generally need to maximise any and all opportunities for planting.

Financial Implications

- 20. A budget of \$4 million has been allocated in the adopted 2025/26 Long-Term Financial Plan. This budget is sufficient to deliver the greening and traffic calming measures described in this report, including the works on land managed by Place Management NSW (PMNSW) and the greening initiatives already under way as described in Attachment C.
- 21. The majority of the intersection of George Street and Hickson Road is not a City of Sydney asset but falls within the area managed by Place Management NSW (PMNSW). The estimated value of the works at this intersection is in the order of \$760,000. PMNSW agrees in principle with the proposed works on their land but does not currently have budget allocated for the works.

Relevant Legislation

- 22. Local Government Act 1993
- 23. Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.
- 24. State Environmental Planning Policy Infrastructure 2007.
- 25. Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012.
- 26. Heritage Act 1977 (NSW).

Critical Dates / Time Frames

27. Current Program Dates:

- (a) Detailed design - mid to end 2026
- (b) Tender - early 2027
- (c) Construction - mid 2027 to early 2028

Options

- 28. It is recommended to proceed with the delivery of the project scope as outlined in this report.
- 29. It is an option to make construction at the George Street and Hickson Road intersection contingent on funding to be provided by Place Management NSW for works on their land. This is not recommended as works at this intersection are considered essential to encourage traffic to exit the Rocks via Hickson Road.

Public Consultation

- 30. From 4 March 2026 to 1 April 2026, we asked the community for feedback on the concept plans for new greening and traffic calming measures in Millers Point. Engagement activities included the following:
 - (a) A letter was sent to residents and businesses about the concept designs and invited them to provide feedback.
 - (b) A stakeholder email was sent to local stakeholders, inviting them to give feedback on the proposals. The email was sent to:
 - (i) Placemaking NSW (and for PMNSW to co-ordinate a response from OPT and OPT suppliers)
 - (ii) Transport for NSW
 - (iii) Port Authority
 - (iv) Fort Street Public School
 - (v) Bus NSW
 - (vi) Walsh Bay Precinct
 - (vii) Sydney Dance Company
 - (viii) New Sydney Waterfront
 - (ix) The Garrison Church

- (x) Local Businesses; The Lord Nelson Brewery Hotel, Fortune of War, The Mercantile Hotel, Harbour View Hotel, The Langham, Pier One Sydney Harbour
 - (c) A webpage on SydneyYourSay showing the plans for the consultation. 561 individual users viewed the page.
31. There were 69 submissions received during the public consultation. This included 29 submissions via email and 40 submissions via the online feedback form (Sydney Your Say survey portal).
32. The proposed greening and traffic calming measures were strongly supported by survey responders with:
- the proposed changes to Hickson Road and George Street supported by 75% of survey responders
 - the proposed changes to the intersection of Lower Fort Street, Cumberland Street and George Street supported by 70% of survey responders
 - the proposed changes to the intersection of Argyle Street, Lower Fort Street and Argyle Place supported by 92.50% of survey responders
 - the proposed changes to the intersection of Kent Street, Argyle Street and Argyle Place supported by 85% of survey responders
 - the proposed in-road tree planting in Lower Fort Street supported by 77.50% of survey responders
33. Those who were not supportive of the proposals were either:
- (a) concerned that the proposal doesn't go far enough or
 - (b) concerned that the proposal would negatively impact residents on Hickson Road.
34. City staff have responded to each of the issues raised in the online feedback form, emails and group submissions in Attachment B - Engagement Report.

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