

Item 3.

Traffic Treatment - Permanent Road Closure - Central Street, Sydney

File No: S120932.013

Summary

This report recommends that Council approve the permanent road closure of Central Street at George Street to traffic to improve pedestrian and vehicle safety along George Street.

The transformation and delivery of the CBD and South East Light Rail in George Street will generate increased pedestrian activity. It has been identified a closure of Central Street to traffic would not only improve safety but stop vehicle queuing on George Street, assist the operation of light rail and eliminate traffic driving on tracks.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council approve the permanent closure of Central Street to traffic at George Street;
- (B) a Traffic Management Plan be submitted to the Roads and Maritime Services for the permanent closure of Central Street at George Street;
- (C) the proposed permanent closure of Central Street be submitted to the Central Sydney Traffic and Transport Committee for endorsement;
- (D) the driveway crossing on George Street to Central Street be replaced with kerb and gutter; and
- (E) a set of bollards be installed in Central Street, 12.3 metres east of George Street to prevent vehicle access and parking.

Attachments

Attachment A. Map of Permanent Closure of Central Street, Sydney

Attachment B. Local Pedestrian, Cycling and Traffic Calming Committee Minutes of 15 March 2018 – Item 43 - Traffic Treatment - Permanent Road Closure - Central Street Sydney

Background

1. The City of Sydney on behalf of Transport for NSW, proposes to permanently close Central Street, Sydney, at George Street to eliminate traffic conflicts with the CBD and South East Light Rail (Attachment A).
2. The permanent road closure to vehicular traffic will also improve pedestrian safety and accessibility and enhance the local amenity.
3. Central Street is temporarily closed at George Street for construction of the CBD and South East Light Rail.
4. On completion of construction, Central Street is supposed to be reopened with a one-way eastbound traffic flow from George Street to Pitt Street.
5. George Street will have a single southbound lane past Central Street and any vehicle over 7.5 metres will encroach onto the light rail track to access Central Street.
6. Due to the anticipated increase in pedestrian activity on George Street, vehicles will queue waiting to enter Central Street and southbound through vehicles may attempt to overtake queued vehicles. This manoeuvre will be unsafe as vehicles will drive on the light rail tracks, past waiting vehicles and be overtaking on the approach to a set of pedestrian signals on George Street.
7. To eliminate conflicts and improve safety, it is proposed to permanently close Central Street to vehicular traffic at George Street but maintain access for pedestrian, cyclists and emergency vehicles with all local access to Central Street via Pitt Street.
8. As the proposed permanent closure will restrict through traffic, the "Loading Zone" on the southern side of Central Street, east of George Street will be reallocated to "No Stopping".
9. The permanent road closure is supported by Transport for NSW and Roads and Maritime Services with an in-principle agreement to the closure received on 22 June 2017.

Key Implications

10. Central Street is used by residents and businesses for local access which is still available via Pitt Street.
11. The eastern footpath of George Street is heavily used by pedestrians and this will significantly increase once the light rail is in operation.
12. Emergency vehicle access will still be maintained by removable bollards in Central Street.

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030 Vision

13. 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 plan is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:

- (a) Direction 4 - A City for Walking and Cycling - The proposal also helps develop a network of safe, linked pedestrian paths which gives greater priority to pedestrian movements and amenity in the City Centre.
- (b) Direction 5 - A Lively and Engaging City Centre - The proposal is consistent with Direction 5 as it would increase the quality of open space and provide opportunities for future outdoor dining and entertainment opportunities.

Budget Implications

- 14. The CBD and South East Light Rail project will fund the major paving works for the Central Street closure.

Relevant Legislation

- 15. The Roads and Maritime Services is responsible for the control of traffic on all NSW roads and has delegated to Council certain functions to regulate traffic on local roads.
- 16. The Roads and Maritime Services delegation gives Council authority to approve traffic management road closures under Part 8, Division 2 of the Roads Act 1993.
- 17. This delegation can only be exercised by the elected Council and is subject to a number of conditions and limitations, including the need to obtain the advice of Council's Local Pedestrian, Cycling and Traffic Calming Committee.
- 18. If Council agrees to the proposed traffic management road closure, the City must lodge a Traffic Management Plan for approval by the Roads and Maritime Services.
- 19. The proposed permanent closure of Central Street is within the Central Sydney Traffic and Transport Committee's operating area and must be submitted to the Committee for endorsement under section 51L of the City of Sydney Act 1988.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

- 20. Works are to be constructed in the 2018-19 financial year to coordinate with the CBD and South East Light Rail reopening of George Street between Bathurst Street and Liverpool Street.

Public Consultation

- 21. In compliance with Section 116 of the Roads Act 1993, the City consulted with local residents and businesses for a minimum period of 28 days and advertised in The Sydney Morning Herald and the City's "Sydney Your Say" website.
- 22. There were 358 letters sent out with 12 submissions supporting the proposal and one submission (representing 100 residents) opposing the proposal.
- 23. The supporting submissions agreed that the permanent road closure would improve pedestrian safety and amenity.

24. The submission opposing the proposal raised concerns that residents would have difficulty accessing their property if Pitt Street was congested.
25. Pitt Street has two northbound traffic lanes past Central Street and rarely has any traffic delays or congestion.
26. The Central Street closure at George Street will provide significant safety benefits for pedestrians, light rail operation and southbound traffic on George Street.
27. Letters were also sent to NSW Ambulance, Fire Brigade, Police and Roads and Maritime Services.
28. NSW Ambulance, Fire Brigade, Police and Roads and Maritime Services have no objection to closure of Central Street.
29. Transport for NSW supported the permanent road closure of Central Street, as it would improve safety and assist operation of the CBD and South East Light Rail on George Street.
30. The Local Pedestrian, Cycling and Traffic Calming Committee meeting on 15 March 2018 endorsed the proposed permanent closure of Central Street to traffic at George Street (Attachment B).

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