

Item 3.2

Redfern Station Upgrade

File No: S051491

Minute by the Lord Mayor

To Council:

I am encouraging Council join me in supporting the local community to get a safe, accessible, and equitable southern concourse at Redfern Station to meet the growing transport needs of the area.

Background

Redfern Station is Sydney's sixth busiest station facilitating approximately 70,000 passengers each day getting to work, visiting family and friends, or reaching Sydney's many tourist attractions.

Redfern has experienced major redevelopment in recent years including the arrival of Commonwealth Bank Australia (CBA) at the former Australian Technology Park, now South Eveleigh. Recently approved residential towers along Gibbons Street, future redevelopment opportunities at North Eveleigh, increased activity at the Carriageworks, and a popular university campus all have the potential to attract thousands of additional people to the area and put pressure on Redfern Station to meet the transport demands that go hand in hand with a growing population.

For many years I have advocated on behalf of the community for improvements to access Redfern Station. Successive NSW Governments have failed to anticipate and respond to the needs of the community and rapid growth is occurring without safe and accessible transport infrastructure to support it.

Currently, only two out the twelve platforms at Redfern Station are accessible by a lift and that's just since 2015. That means people with mobility issues don't have the option of changing platforms at Redfern Station to go to many destinations without considerable physical difficulty and inconvenience, or rules them out from being able to use the station at all.

It is a reasonable expectation that in 2019, as we promote green transport modes and encourage a behavioural shift from private vehicle use, everyone should be able to benefit from using a major transport hub like Redfern Station.

Little Eveleigh Street and Marian Street

In order to meet their legal obligations to provide accessible transport services, Transport for NSW have finally committed to improving accessibility at Redfern Station with proposals for a new southern concourse and adding stairs and lifts to access platforms 1 to 10.

When Transport for NSW released their initial designs in May this year, residents along Little Eveleigh Street and Marian Street were understandably alarmed about the safety and amenity impacts of the proposals on their homes and streets.

On 31 May 2019, I met residents who told me their concerns about thousands of commuters spilling on to narrow Little Eveleigh Street and the privacy and noise impacts that would bring. They talked about the inevitable conflict between pedestrians, cyclists and motorists, poor connectivity to the bus interchange on Gibbons Street, and the demolition of the existing heritage building at 125-127 Little Eveleigh Street.

Transport for NSW explored alternative design options for a solution that would minimise impacts on local residents whilst meeting the accessibility objectives of the project.

At a forum on 4 July 2019, City staff and external agencies such as the Physical Disability Council of NSW, the Council for Intellectual Disability, and NSW Police, listened to four options put forward by Transport for NSW.

Those options included:

- Option 1 - a direct bridge across platforms 1 to 10 that exits onto narrow Little Eveleigh Street and Marian Street;
- Option 2 exiting at Wilson Street on the northern side via a ground level pathway avoiding Little Eveleigh Street but including a 7.8m rise and fall gradient;
- Option 3 also exiting at Wilson Street via an elevated walkway along the rear of Little Eveleigh Street properties; and
- Option 4 - a bridge connecting Cornwallis Street and Wilson Street plus a separate footbridge for platforms 8 to 10 and a tunnel to access the new southern concourse.

On 6 August 2019, with the assistance of Cracknell and Lonergan Architects, residents presented their own 'Option 5' to Transport for NSW, which combined aspects of Transport for NSW's options 2 and 4. While the residents' option responded well to connectivity objectives, legibility, wayfinding, high level ramps and the size of structures to achieve the design were highlighted as obstacles to the overall project objectives.

As the options were weighed up, it was clear that balancing the needs of the local community and the wider commuter population was going to be a very complicated exercise presenting as many opportunities as challenges to achieving a safe and accessible station for all.

During the past few months City staff have been working closely with Transport for NSW to get the best possible outcome for local residents as well as the wider community who want an accessible station. I recently met with senior transport staff for a walking tour of Little Eveleigh Street and Marian Street to talk them through the valid concerns of residents and what can be done to mitigate them.

On 4 November 2019, Transport for NSW released their final design for the station upgrades, which is a modified version of their original option 1. They are pursuing a direct bridge between Marian Street and Little Eveleigh Street because they say that it is the safest and most accessible design.

Their modified design shows some important concessions have been made by Transport for NSW in response to the consultation feedback. Additional information submitted to the City from Transport for NSW late last week further indicates their willingness to mitigate impacts on the community.

Those concessions include:

- The heritage building at 125-127 Little Eveleigh Street, which makes a significant contribution to the street's character, is now proposed to be retained.
- Transport for NSW are working with the tenants of 125-127 Little Eveleigh Street to identify suitable alternative premises for their Sydney operations during construction of the concourse, with an opportunity for them to return to Little Eveleigh Street when the station entrance is complete.
- Transport for NSW have confirmed that renewal of Government-owned land around Redfern Station will be undertaken in stages with connections between the station and surrounding streets a key consideration of every stage.

The first stage is the new southern concourse, the second stage is over-station development above platforms 11 and 12 at Redfern Station east, which will incorporate better accessibility and connections between the station and the bus interchange on Gibbons Street, and the third stage is North Eveleigh precinct renewal, which will take into consideration the NSW Government's Central to Eveleigh Strategy, as well as more recent initiatives such as the Sydney Innovation and Technology Precinct.

- Transport for NSW have investigated how future connections may be achieved from the new southern concourse to North Eveleigh precinct via Wilson Street. Two schematic options for that to occur have been developed, which are attached to this Lord Mayoral Minute.
- Transport for NSW have committed to retaining 18 car parking spaces within the local area as off-set parking for Little Eveleigh Street residents to make way for a share zone. Transport for NSW will work with the City to identify an appropriate mechanism for assuring long-term provision of these spaces, including during and after the renewal of the North Eveleigh precinct.
- The new Little Eveleigh Street shareway is to be co-designed between City staff, residents and Transport for NSW to include separate cycle and pedestrian areas, landscaped buffers in front of those houses with retention of all existing street trees.

That said, we need to ensure further progress is made before we support the plan.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council note the tension between the valid concerns of the local residents and the need to meet accessibility and safety standards, and Transport for NSW advice that a direct bridge link between Little Eveleigh Street and Marian Street presents the most accessible and safe option to meet their project objectives.
- (B) Council support the Transport for NSW proposal, subject to:
 - (i) City staff and Transport for NSW continuing to work together to finalise a car parking solution in perpetuity for Little Eveleigh Street residents;
 - (ii) Transport for NSW consulting with the community on designs for a separate station connection that exits onto Wilson Street that are developed as part of future redevelopment plans for North Eveleigh;
 - (iii) Transport for NSW committing to ensure that as well as the future over-station development above platforms 11 and 12 incorporating improved connections from the station, a safe and accessible waiting area for commuters using the bus interchange along Gibbons Street is also provided;
 - (iv) Transport for NSW incorporating barrier-free access into the final upgrade design to create a truly accessible station for all;
 - (v) Transport for NSW continuing to release detailed information to the community about the Redfern Station Precinct Renewal Plan as it becomes available including the future over station development above platforms 11 and 12 and development at North Eveleigh and how those developments will integrate with Redfern Station; and
 - (vi) Transport for NSW working with City staff to develop a consultation strategy for co-designing the Little Eveleigh Street shareway with those residents including a timeline for that to occur and what format it will take.
- (C) the Lord Mayor be requested to write to the Minister for Transport to seek the commitments outlined above and request that Transport for NSW continues to work with the City on this project.

COUNCILLOR CLOVER MOORE

Lord Mayor

Attachments:

Attachment A. Option 1 - Redfern Station Future Access to North Eveleigh Precinct

Attachment B. Option 2 - Redfern Station Future Access to North Eveleigh Precinct