

Streetscape Improvements - Chalmers Street Cycleway, Sydney

File No: X026519

Summary

This report outlines the proposal for a two-way separated cycleway on Chalmers Street between Prince Alfred Park and the cul-de-sac at Randle Street. The link will connect people riding to the separated cycleway on Chalmers Street, which was built as part of the light rail project.

The improvements will separate people riding and walking between Prince Alfred Park and the entrance to Central Station and will provide space protected from traffic for riders to travel safely.

There are around 1,200 bike trips each weekday between Prince Alfred Park, Surry Hills and the city centre. The cycleway connection is part of a key route between the growing Green Square area, inner Sydney and North Sydney.

Once light rail construction is complete, activity in the area will increase significantly. These proposed improvements will create a safer environment for the high volumes of people walking and riding.

Concept plans were presented to the community between 7 and 28 October 2019 and exhibited on the City's website.

Community feedback was generally supportive of the proposal.

There are no proposed changes to trees, parking, loading areas or traffic.

This project is funded by the NSW Government and is being designed and delivered by the City of Sydney.

Recommendation

It is resolved that Council:

- (A) approve the scope of the Chalmers Cycleway Link and streetscape improvements as described in the subject report and the plan at Attachment A to the subject report for progression to design development, documentation and construction tender;
- (B) note the estimated project costs as detailed in Confidential Attachment C to the subject report; and
- (C) note that the City has accepted a funding offer from the NSW Government as part of the Transport for NSW Active Transport Program for construction of the project, conditional on the works being completed in the 2019/20 financial year.

Attachments

- Attachment A.** Plan - Concept Design
- Attachment B.** Exhibition Panels - Concept Design
- Attachment C.** Financial Implications (Confidential)

Background

1. The City's Cycle Strategy and Action Plan 2018-2030 was adopted by Council in November 2018 and includes Chalmers Street between Prince Alfred Park and Eddy Avenue as a planned regional cycle route.
2. Sydney's Cycling Future was published by Transport for NSW in December 2013 and identified Chalmers Street as a strategic bicycle corridor. The Sydney Centre Access Strategy was published by Transport for NSW in December 2013 and identified Chalmers Street between Prince Alfred Park and Eddy Avenue as part of the NSW Government's strategic cycleway network.
3. Chalmers Street, between Prince Alfred Park and Eddy Avenue, is a key corridor for people cycling between Green Square, Redfern and the Sydney CBD. The City's permanent count station on the Prince Alfred Park shared path currently records over 1,200 riders on a typical weekday and over 7,000 riders per week.
4. As part of the Sydney Light Rail project a two-way separated cycleway was constructed on the Chalmers Street light rail corridor 70 metres north of Randle Street. The Sydney Light Rail project does not propose to provide any dedicated facilities for people riding between Prince Alfred Park and this new cycleway as part the Sydney Light Rail project. As Chalmers and Randle Streets are one-way roads, southbound cyclists are currently forced to share space with pedestrians in an area that has high pedestrian activity.
5. Changes are proposed by the City, on Chalmers and Randle Streets to improve pedestrian safety near the entrance to Central Station by providing dedicated space for people riding between Prince Alfred Park and the new separated cycleway constructed as part of the Sydney Light Rail project.

Separated Cycleway

6. A two-way separated cycleway is proposed on the western side of Chalmers Street and the northern side of Randle Street to provide dedicated space for people riding between Prince Alfred Park and the Chalmers Street cul-de-sac, which was constructed as part of the Sydney Light Rail project. The cul-de-sac provides direct access to the recently constructed two-way separated cycleway along the Chalmers Street light rail corridor.
7. The cycleway will improve pedestrian safety along Chalmers Street and around the entrance to Central Station by providing dedicated space for people riding.

Footpath Widening

8. Footpath widening is proposed on the northern side of Randle Street to improve pedestrian amenity and provide a connection between the separated cycleway and Chalmers Street cul-de-sac.

Traffic Island

9. A traffic island is proposed on the western side of Chalmers Street to provide physical protection for cyclists near the access to Prince Alfred Park. A gap is proposed at the traffic island to enable cyclists riding northbound on Chalmers Street to access the separated cycleway.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030

10. 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 program is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
 - (a) Direction 3 - Integrated Transport for a Connected City – outlines actions that will enhance opportunities for inner Sydney residents to walk and cycle to the city centre, and provide an integrated approach to traffic management, public transport, walking and cycling and public domain design.
 - (b) Direction 4 - A City for Walking and Cycling – outlines actions that will make walking and bike riding an easy and safe option for residents and visitors. It recognises the importance of these transport modes to improve the health and environmental sustainability of our city.
 - (c) Target 7 - By 2030, at least 10 per cent of City trips will be made by bicycle and 50 per cent by pedestrian movement.

Organisational Impact

11. This project will repurpose existing assets and create additional assets, such as new civil infrastructure that will require ongoing maintenance. The design is low impact, i.e. minimal existing services will be affected.

Risks

12. The funding is conditional on completion of the works by 30 June 2020. If the works are not completed by then further negotiations will need to be held with the NSW Government in respect of the continuing availability of the funding.
13. Risks associated with the proposal have been considered through the concept design and consultation phases. These include safety (in particular road safety for pedestrians, people on bicycles, and motorists), environmental impacts and economic impacts, as well as community concerns.
14. The key risk identified is the safe circulation of cyclists, pedestrians, and motorists in a congested environment and is addressed via the preferred separation of cyclists, pedestrians and motorists within a busy transport corridor.
15. An independent Road Safety Audit was carried out on the developed design to further identify and assess risks associated with the proposal. These risks have been mitigated through amendments to the design.

Social / Cultural / Community

16. There is a net benefit to the community as the completion of the project will facilitate the movement of cyclists between Prince Alfred Park and Chalmers Street.
17. People have improved access to safe cycling infrastructure and enjoy a healthy lifestyle with an increased level of physical activity. As part of the City's cycle network, this project will contribute to better connected neighbourhoods, and a more active and healthy community.
18. The proposal will provide streetscape improvements addressing pedestrian amenity and priority for people of all abilities.

Environmental

19. This project will align with the City of Sydney's environment performance objectives and targets. Key initiatives include:
 - (a) Transport – as part of the cycle network, the Chalmers Street Cycleway will provide a viable transport alternative, which will contribute to lower carbon emissions and reduced pollution.
 - (b) Materials – materials adopted for this project are in line with standard City of Sydney approved products, which are selected from responsible manufacturers within Australia.
 - (c) Design - the design has a low impact as changes to the existing infrastructure are minimised.

Budget Implications

20. The City has accepted a funding offer from the NSW Government as part of the Transport for NSW Active Transport Program for construction of the project.
21. The total forecast project construction cost, based on concept plans, has been assessed by an independent quantity surveyor. A summary of the financial implications is included in Confidential Attachment C.
22. As part of this project, the upgrade of non-Council owned assets, including traffic signal infrastructure and Ausgrid street lighting, is proposed to be carried out. This will be recognised as expenditure within the operating budget.

Relevant Legislation

23. Roads Act 1993 for road related approvals.
24. Local Government Act 1993 for construction procurement.
25. Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (Part 4 and 5). The scope of works will be reviewed by a planner through a Review of Environmental Factors (REF) to assess consent requirements for the project under the Act. It is anticipated that the proposed works do not require planning approval and will be exempt development.
26. Attachment C contains confidential information of which if disclosed would confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom the council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business.
27. Discussions of the contents of attachment 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.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

28. Works must be completed in this financial year as part of the Roads and Maritime Services agreement to provide funding..

Local Pedestrian, Cycling and Traffic Calming Committee	December 2019
Construction commencement	February 2020
Construction completion	May 2020

Options

29. As the existing layout is located outside a busy entrance to Central railway station and crosses the light rail corridor, design options are limited. This design enables the City to improve connectivity for cyclists via a separated cycleway (the safest typography), and provide dedicated pedestrian amenity for a heavily utilised pavement connecting Central Station.

Public Consultation

30. The City consulted local residents and businesses in the area with 178 letters sent out requesting feedback on the proposal.
31. The design and details of the proposal were available on the Sydney Your Say website with feedback able to be provided between 7 October and 28 October 2019 via an online form and survey.
32. The consultation was promoted on the SydneyCycleways and City of Sydney social media channels as well as the Sydney Your Say and Sydney Cycleways Electronic Direct Mail.
33. The plans exhibited are in Attachment B.
34. A total of 249 formal submissions were received with 231 responses supporting the project, 10 somewhat supporting and eight opposing.
35. The eight submissions that did not support the proposal raised concerns about pedestrian/cyclist conflicts upon exiting Prince Alfred Park, the lack of consideration for people entering and exiting buses, the lack of construction information and the time it takes the City to construct projects.

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