

Streetscape Improvements - Liverpool Street Western Link, Sydney

File No: X026509

Summary

This report outlines the proposal for the Liverpool Street Western Link cycleway connection which extends the existing Liverpool Street separated cycleway, east of Sussex Street, and constructs a new section of separated cycleway and shared path west of Sussex Street, linking to Darling Harbour.

The size of the pedestrian pavement on Liverpool Street is increased and the existing separated cycleway, east of Sussex Street, is extended. The size of the pedestrian pavement on Liverpool Street south west of Sussex Street is also increased by removing two parking spaces adjacent to the intersection.

The proposal will deliver a range of improvements to pedestrian and cycling amenity and safety. It will provide a separated connection for people on bikes between the existing Liverpool Street Cycleway and Darling Harbour.

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.

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 Liverpool Western Link cycleway and streetscape improvements project, 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 Liverpool Street between Sussex Street and Darling Harbour as a planned regional cycle route. Changes are proposed on Liverpool Street to connect the existing separated cycleway with Darling Harbour.
2. The Sydney Centre Access Strategy was published by Transport for NSW in December 2013 and identified Liverpool Street as part of the NSW Government's strategic cycleway network.
3. In 2015, a two-way separated cycleway was constructed by the NSW Government on the northern side of Liverpool Street between Sussex and Castlereagh Streets. Liverpool Street cycleway is the only east-west aligned cycleway in Sydney CBD. It plays a key role in the cycleway network by connecting the north-south aligned cycleways on Kent and Castlereagh Streets.
4. The termination of the existing Liverpool Street cycleway at Sussex Street results in a network gap between the cycleway and Darling Harbour. There is currently no legal means for people to ride eastwards along Liverpool Street between Darling Harbour and the existing cycleway.
5. Liverpool Street between Sussex Street and Darling Harbour is a key corridor for people cycling between the Inner West, Darling Harbour and Sydney CBD. Counts undertaken on Tuesday 26 March 2019 recorded a total of 527 cyclists at the intersection of Liverpool and Sussex Street between 6am and 9am, and 4pm and 7pm.

Separated Cycleway

6. It is proposed to extend the existing separated cycleway on the northern side of Liverpool Street westwards to the intersection with Sussex Street. To enable this it is proposed to demolish part of the existing kerb extension.
7. Two pedestrian bridges currently provide access between Liverpool Street and Darling Harbour over Harbour Street. The bridge on the northern side of Liverpool Street has stairs at its eastern and western ends. The bridge on the southern side of Liverpool Street has no stairs and as such is currently used by cyclists to provide access between Liverpool Street and Darling Harbour.
8. A separated cycleway is proposed on the southern side of Liverpool Street to provide a connection between Sussex Street and the stair-free bridge on the southern side of Liverpool Street.

Shared Path

9. A shared path is proposed on the southern side of Liverpool Street to provide a connection between the separated cycleway and the bridge on the southern side of Liverpool Street.
10. According to Transport for NSW Centre for Road Safety, the recommended minimum shared path width is 2.5 metres, which is based on Austroads guidelines. The southern path of Liverpool Street is 5.6 metres wide, in excess of the minimum recommended Shared Path width.

11. According to Transport for NSW Centre for Road Safety research findings published in August 2015, shared paths represent a relatively low safety risk.

Footpath Widening and Parking

12. It is proposed to remove two parking spaces from the southern side of Liverpool Street to accommodate the separated cycleway and to remove the inset parking bay. It is proposed to widen the footpath at the inset parking bay to improve safety and access for people walking.
13. It is proposed to remove four part-time parking spaces on the northern side of Liverpool Street to accommodate the separated cycleway and provide a permanent traffic lane.
14. No removal or changes to trees are required.
15. Prior to the commencement of the project the City will be required to enter into a Deed of Access and Grant of Easement with Place Management NSW, as owner of the portion of Liverpool Street between Sussex and Harbour Streets, and the bridges between Liverpool Street and Darling Harbour, for the construction and use of the proposed cycleway.
16. The Deed will comprise an access licence for the City to carry out construction works and following completion of the construction works, an easement for access for maintenance purposes by the City, and access and use by the City and the public.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030

17. 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 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 provides 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

18. The 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

19. 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.
20. 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.
21. 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

22. There is a net benefit to the community as the completion of the project will facilitate the movement of cyclists between Liverpool Street cycleway (east of Sussex) and Darling Harbour (and vice versa).
23. People will 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.
24. The proposal will provide streetscape improvements addressing pedestrian amenity and priority for people of all abilities.

Environmental

25. 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 Liverpool Street West 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

26. 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.
27. 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.

28. 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 need to be recognised as expenditure within the operating budget.

Relevant Legislation

29. Roads Act 1993 for road related approvals.
30. Local Government Act 1993 for construction procurement.
31. 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 the proposed works will not require planning approval and will be exempt development.
32. Attachment C contains confidential commercial information which, if disclosed, would confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business.
33. 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 outcomes for its ratepayers.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

34. Works must be completed in this financial year as part of the Transport for NSW agreement to provide funding..

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

Options

35. Design options were considered in close collaboration with Roads and Maritime Services. The only relevant alternative was to continue the existing Liverpool Street cycleway on the same (north) side to the south of Sussex Street. This was dismissed as the link on the north side to Darling Harbour contains stairs, whereas the chosen option connects with Darling Harbour without the necessity for cyclist to use stairs.

Public Consultation

36. The City consulted local residents and businesses in the area with 2,114 letters sent out requesting feedback on the proposal.
37. The design and details of the proposal were available on the Sydney Your Say website with feedback able to be provided between 30 September and 28 October 2019 via an online form and survey.
38. The consultation materials provided to the public are in Attachment B.
39. The consultation was promoted on the Sydney Cycleways and City of Sydney social media channels and Sydney Cycleways Electronic Direct Mail.
40. A total of 202 formal submissions were received with 172 responses supporting the project, 28 somewhat supporting and two opposing. The two submissions not supporting the proposal did not state why.
41. Notification letters will be sent to nearby property owners, residents, and business owners prior to construction.

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