

Streetscape Improvements - Macleay Street, Potts Point

File No: S120379

Summary

This report outlines the proposed scope of works for the upgrade of Macleay Street, Potts Point.

On 13 August 2018, Council resolved for the Chief Executive Officer to develop a package of public domain works to address community feedback about the City East precinct. Macleay Street is identified in the City's Liveable Green Network Strategy and Master Plan.

The proposal for Macleay Street includes new streetscape design, concrete unit paving, landscaping and low level planting, new trees, Smartpoles and LED lighting, bubblers, bike racks, seating, continuous footpath treatments at several intersections and a raised intersection at Greenknowe Avenue.

The concept plans were presented to the community on 19 November 2019 and 11 March 2020 and were exhibited on the City's website. Community feedback was broadly in support of the proposal. Community suggestions have been incorporated into the concept design as part of design development.

The Local Pedestrian, Cycling and Traffic Calming Committee endorsed the proposal at its meeting of 18 June 2020.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council endorse the design for the Macleay Street Upgrade, as described in the subject report and shown at Attachment A to the subject report, for progression to detailed design, documentation and construction of the works; and
- (B) Council approve the project budget as detailed in confidential Attachment C to the subject report.

Attachments

Attachment A. Refined Concept Design

Attachment B. Local Pedestrian, Cycling and Traffic Calming Committee - 18 June 2020 Report and Draft Minutes (Excerpts - Item 19)

Attachment C. Financial Implications (Confidential)

Background

1. The City East precinct is one of the most diverse and densely populated areas in Australia. Macleay Street is a critical part of the public domain, supporting local businesses, community and visitors.
2. Over the past decade, several public domain improvement works have been undertaken in the precinct. In recent years, community members approached the City about further improvements needed to the area. This formed the basis of the Council resolution on 13 August 2018.
3. Macleay Street, Potts Point is identified in the City's Liveable Green Network Strategy and Master Plan. The City of Sydney has allocated funding to upgrade the streetscape of Macleay Street from Orwell Street to Oak Lane.
4. A concept design has been prepared that:
 - (a) Enhances the local character of the area for locals and visitors and encourages a sense of belonging through planting, seating, lighting and improved footpath treatments.
 - (b) Improves pedestrian safety and connectivity along Macleay Street between Potts Point and Kings Cross by calming traffic and enhancing opportunities for walking.
 - (c) Benefits local businesses by supporting increased pedestrian activity and enhancing local amenity to encourage locals and visitors to spend time in the area.
5. Street improvements will include:
 - (a) replacing existing pavements with concrete unit pavers;
 - (b) footpath widening and raising the signalised intersection of Macleay Street and Greenknowe Avenue;
 - (c) installation of Continuous Footpath Treatments; and
 - (d) installation of new garden beds, street trees, Smartpoles and LED lighting, bubblers, bike racks and seating.

Public Consultation

6. The design process for the streetscape improvement of Macleay Street has undergone three rounds of community engagement.
7. The first round commenced with an initial community meeting in June 2019 followed by two community consultation sessions.
8. The first consultation commenced with a presentation on 19 November 2019, following which community feedback was received until 3 December 2019 via the City's "Sydney Your Say" web site.

9. The second consultation commenced on 11 March 2020 with a presentation of a revised concept design based on the feedback from the first round of engagement. Sydney Your Say was open for feedback until 8 April 2020.
10. The design has also been informed by advice from the City's Design Advisory Panel (DAP).
11. Consultation activities included:
 - (a) consultation letter for the first and second community presentations sent to 5,282 residents and businesses informing them of the project presentation and submission details;
 - (b) the concept design was displayed in the Rex Centre, Potts Point on the night of both presentations;
 - (c) four visualisation boards were placed along Macleay Street;
 - (d) a webpage on sydneyyoursay.com.au where submissions could be made; and
 - (e) 102 face to face contacts with business.
12. Over 200 submissions were received on the original concept design in November and December 2019 through the "Sydney Your Say" webpage.
13. Comments included:
 - (a) 71 per cent of feedback supported the need for an upgrade to Macleay Street. The support was contingent on maintaining the character of the local area and retaining available parking;
 - (b) 189 submissions provided feedback about the proposed ban of the right hand turn into Greenknowe Avenue. 128 of these submissions opposed the ban;
 - (c) there was strong support for a paving upgrade in Macleay Street;
 - (d) there was strong support for more greening and appropriate street furniture;
 - (e) 16 submissions requested the City consider alternate tree species to the London Plane trees because of allergy concerns; and
 - (f) 20 submissions considered the design inconsistent with the character of the area.
14. The City's response to key issues raised by the community are summarised below:
 - (a) The concept design was referred to the City's Design Advisory Panel (DAP). The Design Advisory Panel had recommendations on paver type and amenities such as seating layout, bubblers and bins. These changes have been incorporated into the design;
 - (b) The proposed ban of the right hand turn into Greenknowe Avenue has been deleted from the design;
 - (c) Changes to the footpath widening in the vicinity of Greenknowe Avenue.

15. The revised design presented to the community on 11 March 2020 generated the following comments:
- (a) Consistent support for the upgrade provided that:
 - (i) Traffic flow and pedestrian movement is not adversely impacted;
 - (ii) Minimise impacts to businesses through the construction program; and
 - (iii) Requests made over selection of street furniture, tree species and greening options.
 - (b) The City's response to key issues raised by the community are summarised below:
 - (i) The design maintains traffic flow, has a positive impact on road safety and pedestrian movement and there is no net loss of parking, The project was submitted and endorsed at the Local Pedestrian, Cycling and Traffic Calming Committee (LPCTCC) on 18 June 2020;
 - (ii) Changes were made to the intersections of Rockwall Crescent and Challis Avenue to accommodate business needs and minimise crossing distances to improve pedestrian movement;
 - (iii) To minimise disruption during the work, a staged construction program for each section of work will be developed. The program will be based on regular liaison with business owners and the community;
 - (iv) Existing mature London Plane Trees will remain and new planting will be an alternate species in line with the City's Street Tree Master Plan; and
 - (v) Design Advisory Panel recommendations have been incorporated into the design.
 - (c) Further updates on the project with local businesses and construction notifications will be provided through the following channels:
 - (i) Notifications sent to residents, business owners and people who have made submissions;
 - (ii) During construction, on-site updates will be displayed; and
 - (iii) Community Liaison Officer appointed for the project.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030

16. 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 report is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
- (a) Direction 4 – A City for Walking and Cycling – the project improves pedestrian amenity and safety through enhanced footpath treatments, localised footpath widening and Continuous Footpath Treatments, improved lighting and increased amenities such as seating and bubblers;
 - (b) Direction 6 - Vibrant Local Communities and Economies – the project will provide an improved public domain that meets the needs of a wide variety of user groups and provides opportunities for social interaction;
 - (c) Direction 9 - Sustainable Development, Renewal and Design – the project will involve the use of recycled materials, increase urban canopy and streetscape greening through additional planting.

Social / Cultural / Community

17. The project will provide improved amenities for local residents and visitors to the City to encourage walking and social interaction.
18. The project will also improve the material quality of the public domain to compliment the important local character of the street.

Environmental

19. A review of the existing trees will be undertaken with the City's arborist during the design development stage of the project. The following tree management is proposed as part of the works:
- (a) Retention of existing street trees along Macleay Street and the addition of approximately eight new trees;
 - (b) Establish a construction methodology with the City's arborist to maximise tree root health; and
 - (c) Planting new shrubs and ground covers and use of permeable tree base materials to minimise the extent of paving in the vicinity of tree roots.

Economic

20. The new upgrade is likely to attract more visitors to the area, which may assist the viability of local businesses, such as cafe and store owners. The upgrade will add to the area's attraction for families and visitors increasing pedestrian utilisation of the area.

Budget Implications

21. There are sufficient funds in the draft 2020/21 Capital Works Budget and future year forward estimates(the subject of a separate report in the current Council cycle) to deliver this project. A summary of the financial implications is included in confidential Attachment C.

Relevant Legislation

22. Local Government Act 1993 - Section 10A provides that a council may close to the public so much of its meeting as comprises the discussion of information that would, if disclosed, confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom the council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business.
23. Attachment C to the subject report 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.
24. 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 outcome for its ratepayers.
25. Local Government Act 1993 for construction procurement.
26. Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EPA) (Part 4 and 5). A planner will review the scope of works to assess consent requirements for the project under the EPA Act.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

27. Key dates for the project are as follows:
 - (a) Design finalisation July 2020
 - (b) Final community communication period July 2020
 - (c) Service investigation and construction period July/August 2020 to January 2022

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