

Attachment C

<p>Communications and Engagement Summary Report</p>
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George Street south pedestrianisation – Communications and Engagement Summary Report

The City of Sydney together with the NSW Government is fast tracking new walking connections, as part of our response to the Covid-19 pandemic and plans to complete the pedestrianisation of George Street. This will ensure people can get into and around the city while maintaining physical distancing.

George Street from Bathurst Street to Rawson Place was temporarily closed to traffic on Monday 20 July 2020. The City proposes to make this closure permanent. We propose to build on the success of the pedestrianised northern end of George Street, and pedestrianise the southern end of George Street. We will soon seek community feedback on this proposal and would like to work with the community to build a future vision for this area.

This report contains a summary of the communications and engagement activities undertaken in the lead up to the temporary closure, and an overview of the consultation planned for the proposed permanent closure and pedestrianisation.

Background – George Street Concept Design Consultation

In December 2012, the NSW Government announced George Street as the preferred light rail route through the city centre. The City of Sydney worked with Transport for NSW to develop a draft George Street Concept Design, to establish a design approach that ensured a consistent and cohesive experience for the entire length of George Street.

The concept design was put on public exhibition in December 2012, including an exhibition at Customs House in April and May 2013. The aim was to raise awareness about the light rail project, understand the level of public support, and gain feedback on the design, including pedestrianisation of a large section of the street. The exhibition reached thousands of stakeholders and community members – over 75,000 people attended Customs House where there was a visual display of the exhibition.

Almost 650 individual comments were received during the consultation, and they proved there was a high level of support for light rail and providing a more pedestrian-friendly street – the majority of qualitative comments were positive and 88% of all pop-up display participants supported this. Comments also confirmed the excitement about George Street becoming a destination to meet, socialise, dine and shop. An ‘extended pedestrian area’ was the second most common design feature, selected by 41% of participants.

The George Street Concept Design was endorsed by Council in September 2013, and was used to negotiate a Development Agreement between the City and Transport for NSW for the CBD and South East Light Rail Project, signed in December 2013. This ensured the City’s vision, including the pedestrianisation of George Street, from Hunter to Bathurst streets, was delivered as part of the light rail project.

Engagement Summary –Temporary Closure of George Street, Bathurst Street to Rawson Place

The temporary closure of George Street, from Bathurst Street to Rawson Place, was announced by the Minister for Planning on 8 May 2020.

Since then, the City has undertaken a number of activities to notify the community of the changes and ensure affected stakeholders, and the broader community, are aware of the temporary closure and how it may impact them.

Stakeholders

The City worked with Transport for NSW to undertake stakeholder mapping for the project. Stakeholder groups for the project include the following.

Stakeholder Group	Key issues to be managed	Engagement Considerations
George Street businesses and properties with access requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to property • Changes to parking • Impact on delivery of goods • Changes to traffic 	Ensure businesses understand the changes and access arrangements available to them.
Local Residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to property • Changes to parking • Changes to traffic 	Ensure residents understand the changes and alternatives available to them.
Local Businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to property • Changes to parking • Impact on delivery of goods • Changes to traffic 	Ensure businesses understand the changes and alternatives available to them.
SES and emergency services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General access and awareness of changed road conditions 	Notify relevant groups, arrange briefings as requested
Taxis, freight, servicing, and delivery vehicles (including cash-in-transit)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change to how passengers and goods are picked up and dropped off 	Notify relevant groups, arrange briefings as requested
Other interested groups such as business chambers; retail, tourism, cultural, and night-time industry associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General access and awareness of changed road conditions 	Stakeholder briefings, Notify relevant agencies

Engagement Activities

The following activities took place ahead of the temporary closure to inform and engage stakeholders.

Activity	Approach & Response
Initial email from the CEO to key stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sent out 8 May 2020, to confirm the City's commitment to work together with the NSW Government and the community to build a vision for the southern CBD
Conversations with affected stakeholders ahead of the temporary closure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure directly impacted groups and businesses are aware of the closure and how it may impact them • Information & briefing invitations sent to 33 affected stakeholders • Face to face meetings held: 8 • Businesses reached doorknocking: 24
Stakeholder briefing hosted by the CEO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing to key stakeholders on plans to pedestrianise the southern end of George Street, held on 21 July 2020 • Stakeholders invited: 30 • Attended: 11 representatives from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Committee for Sydney ○ Night Time Industries Association ○ Haymerket Chamber of Commerce ○ CBD Sydney Chamber of Commerce ○ YHA ○ Museum of Chinese in Australia ○ 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art; and ○ World Square Retail Precinct and Property Management.
Temporary closure notification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distributed ahead of the closure to provide information about what is planned, and contact details for project enquiries. • Mailed-out to property owners and occupants: 14,471 • Emailed to stakeholders: 131
Media promotion & FAQs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media release & FAQs issued and Sydney City News story published to raise community awareness ahead of the closure
Sydney Your Say page	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides up-to-date project information, maps and contacts • The page has 557 views and 13 downloads of the closure maps.

Online form where people can register for updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows the community to easily opt in for updates and to be included in future consultation • 13 people have signed up to receive project updates.
Take feedback through current channels, respond and resolve.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated staff to respond • Community are responded to and concerns are understood. • Feedback is considered and informs future plans • 31 enquires have been received

Feedback Received

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The below tables outline the topics raised in business and community enquires.

Key business & community interests:

Key interest	Number of Responses
Interested in outdoor dining	8
Interested in activations & events	7
Interested in design for permanent closure	4

Key business & community issues:

Key issue	Number of Responses
Property access	13
Loading, parking & servicing	12
Timing of closure	5
Concerned about construction impacts	3
Traffic impacts	2
Emergency service access	1
Safety (pedestrianisation next to light rail)	1
Request to retain concrete blocks	1

Next steps – Community Consultation on the George Street south Permanent Pedestrianisation

In September, we plan to start consulting the community on our proposal to permanently pedestrianise the street. The consultation will include seeking feedback to refine the concept design and on the associated traffic changes.

Community consultation will be undertaken from 22 September 2020 – 20 October 2020, and will include the following activities:

- 28 day public exhibition of the concept design and traffic changes, from 22 September – 20 October 2020
- Community notification distributed to over 14,000 surrounding property owners, residents and businesses
- E-mailout to registered stakeholders
- Door-knocking local businesses
- Advertisement in the Sydney Morning Herald
- Media announcement
- Sydney Your Say consultation page
- Online feedback form
- Online registration for project updates
- Invitation to a George Street walk for key stakeholders
- Invitations to 2 x George Street walks for local businesses and residents

Submissions will form part of an engagement report that will be referred to the Local Pedestrian, Cycling and Traffic Calming Committee on 19 November 2020, and to Council for approval on 14 December 2020.

If the permanent pedestrianisation is approved, we will work with George Street businesses to minimise impacts during construction.