

Item 36.**Traffic Treatment - Pedestrian Boulevard - George Street, Sydney****TRIM Container No.:** 2020/507361**Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Committee endorse the following in Sydney:

- (A) Permanent road closure of the southbound traffic lanes of George Street, between Bathurst Street and Rawson Place;
- (B) Permanent road closure of the northbound traffic lanes of George Street, between Ultimo Road and Bathurst Street;
- (C) Formalise the permanent road closures of Wilmot, Central and Barlow Streets at George Street;
- (D) Permanent road closure of Campbell Street, at George Street, and making Campbell Street two-way between George and Pitt Streets;
- (E) Permanent road closure of Hay Street, between George and Sussex Streets;
- (F) Permanent road closure of Thomas Street, at Hay Street, and making Thomas Street two-way between Hay Street and Ultimo Road;
- (G) Restricting Ultimo Road to one-way westbound from George to Quay Streets;
- (H) Removal of the "No Right Turn" restriction in Valentine Street at George Street;
- (I) Footpath widening on the eastern side of George Street, between Rawson Place and Pitt Street;
- (J) Footpath widening on the western side of George Street, between Ultimo Road and Quay Street;
- (K) Footpath widening on the northern side of Hay Street, between Harbour and Sussex Streets; and
- (L) Footpath widening on the northern and southern side of Ultimo Road, between George and Thomas Streets.

Voting Members for this Item

Voting Members	Support	Object
City of Sydney	[Insert]	[Insert]
Transport for NSW	[Insert]	[Insert]
NSW Police – Sydney City PAC	[Insert]	[Insert]
Representative for the Member for Sydney	[Insert]	[Insert]

Advice

Advice will be updated after the meeting.

Background

The City of Sydney's Sustainable Sydney 2030 strategic plan identifies George Street as the central spine of the city centre. The vision for George Street is a pedestrianised boulevard designed to provide a focus for public life in the city centre with light rail connecting three city squares – Circular Quay, Town Hall and Central Station. The strategic directions of Sustainable Sydney 2030 includes a city for walking and cycling; a lively and engaging city centre; and resilient and inclusive local communities.

The City's Community Recovery Plan in response to the Covid-19 pandemic includes actions to continue the acceleration of the capital works program to upgrade city streets, parks and playgrounds; work with the NSW Government on city management initiatives such as mobility and transport, temporary footpath widening, cycleways, change signal timing, lower speed limits, travel demand planning and reprioritisation of roads; and invest in the pedestrianisation and activation of south George Street.

The introduction of the CBD and South East Light Rail (CSELR) permanently closed and converted George Street into a pedestrian boulevard between Hunter and Bathurst Streets.

To continue the pedestrian boulevard, it is proposed to permanently close and widen the footpath of George Street between Bathurst Street and Railway Square.

The extension of the proposed pedestrian boulevard includes the permanent closure, changing the traffic arrangement and widening the footpath of nearby streets.

Comments

Prior to the introduction of the CSELR, George Street, between Bathurst Street and Railway Square, had six lanes of traffic with intermittent parking on both sides of the street.

From mid-2016 to mid-2019, temporary road closures and traffic detours were implemented in George Street for the construction of the CSELR.

The southbound lanes of George Street, between Bathurst and Campbell Streets, remained closed to traffic as services for the CSELR commenced in December 2019 (L2 Randwick Line) and April 2020 (L3 Kingsford Line).

On 8 May 2020, the NSW Government announced a trial to extend George Street's car-free zone to Rawson Place in response to Covid-19. The trial was implemented on 20 July 2020.

During the construction of the CSELR and the car-free zone trial, parking and traffic changes have been implemented in surrounding streets to service and provide access to properties.

The proposal to permanently close and widen the footpath of George Street to extend the pedestrian boulevard, will improve pedestrian access and provide opportunities for outdoor dining and the installation of trees and street furniture.

The proposed closure of George Street to general traffic will reduce the number of conflicts between drivers and trams at intersections along George Street. This would improve the journey times for pedestrians and trams and would allow the speed limit of trams to be reduced to 20km/h.

Cleansing, construction, freight and servicing vehicles are encouraged to utilise off-street and on-street parking to service businesses, properties and future developments. For special deliveries, vehicular access to George Street via the tram tracks and stopping in the proposed pedestrian boulevard will be permitted subject to approval from the City, Transport for NSW and Light Rail operator.

Emergency vehicles will be permitted to access George Street via the tram tracks and stop in the proposed pedestrian boulevard under flashing lights.

The proposed closure of Thomas Street at Hay Street will prevent drivers from using Thomas Street as a shortcut from Sussex Street to Harris Street and eliminate conflicts between drivers and trams on the L1 Dulwich Hill Line. This would improve the amenity of the area and journey times for pedestrians and trams.

The proposed road closures will require drivers to travel on alternative routes and changes to traffic arrangements and restrictions in some streets.

Consultation

Under Section 116 of the Roads Act 1993, a notice for the proposal was published in the Sydney Morning Herald on Wednesday 23 September 2020. The proposal was also published on the City's website with 14,471 letters and 184 emails sent to local residents and businesses in the area. Consultation for the proposal closed on Wednesday 21 October 2020.

The proposal received a total of 431 comments with 247 comments supporting the proposal, 103 comments opposing the proposal and 81 neutral comments.

The comments supporting the proposal welcomed the opportunity to improve pedestrian access, the local amenity and outdoor activation and dining.

The comments opposing the proposal raised concerns about parking and access to properties, limited access for cyclists and impacts to the community during construction.

The neutral comments suggested improving access for cyclists and provide footpath widening on the southern side of Ultimo Road between George and Thomas Streets.

A parking plan for the proposal will be developed as part of the detailed design should approval be granted. The parking plan will be consulted with affected residents and businesses before it is considered by the Committee for endorsement.

The proposed changes at the signalised intersection of George, Lee, Pitt and Quay Streets will take into consideration comments received by the community. Changes to the signalised intersection will be assessed and approved by Transport for NSW.

According to the Road Rules 2014, it is illegal for cyclists to ride in the tramway and on the footpath. The City will work with Transport for NSW to develop options to improve local access for cyclists.

Should approval be granted to construct the proposal, the City will work with the local community to minimise impacts during construction.

The proposal has been amended to provide footpath widening on both sides of Ultimo Road between George and Thomas Streets.

Financial

Funds are available in the project budget.

VAN LE, TRAFFIC MANAGER - NORTH