

Attachment C

**Community Engagement Summary and
Analysis Report dated 30 October 2020**



Global Research
Turning **Information** Into **Insight**

City of Sydney – Proposed Pedestrian Boulevard

George Street, Sydney & Devonshire Street, Surry Hills

ENGAGEMENT: summary and analysis

30th October 2020

Prepared by Global Research Ltd
For

CITY OF SYDNEY 

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Executive summary

George Street, between Hunter and Bathurst streets, was converted to a pedestrian boulevard following the construction of the light rail. To build on this success, City of Sydney proposes to extend the pedestrian boulevard to Railway Square by restricting through traffic and widening the footpaths to install more trees and street furniture. This proposal contains changes to both George Street, Sydney, and Devonshire Street, Surry Hills.

The City sought community feedback on three documents, that were available on the Sydney Your Say webpage, all of which contained information about different aspects of the proposed changes. The documents were:

1. **Concept design** – proposed plan of the new pedestrian areas.
2. **Local access plan** – proposed traffic and access arrangements.
3. **Review of environmental factors** (REF)– addresses impacts of the proposal and how they will be managed.

Key findings

Below are the key findings from written feedback about the three documents above.

GEORGE STREET

Concept Design

- The largest proportion of respondents were **supportive** of the proposal and provided generally positive comments covering a range of topics, without providing significant detail. Respondents generally supported the focus on people and aspirations to reduce the number of vehicles in the area.
- A moderate number of respondents who supported the proposal also suggested that cycle access should be more heavily factored into the proposal, either in the form of separated cycle lanes or shared paths.
- Respondents who were **unsupportive** of the proposal most often commented on parking and access issues that would result from the proposed changes. A significant number of these comments were made by respondents with connections to Christ Church St Laurence, the Anglican church on George Street.
- Proposed traffic changes were also discussed by this group, who felt that journeys around the area would be subject to unnecessary detours and convoluted routes, which they suggested would impact members of the public and nearby businesses.
- Comments from respondents who were **neutral** or **'mixed'** about the proposal mostly discussed the need to better include cyclists and cycle access in the proposal. These comments also discussed concerns about proposed traffic changes.

Local Access Plan

- The largest proportion of respondents were **supportive** of the proposal. These comments included general praise, as well as some suggestions as to how the proposal could be improved. Respondents commended the proposal's focus on creating pedestrian-friendly spaces and reducing the number of vehicles in the CBD.
- Suggestions or concerns discussed by these respondents focused on parking and access, traffic, and a desire for cycle access to be added to the proposal.
- Respondents who were **unsupportive** of the proposal commented most frequently on parking and access issues. A large proportion of these comments were made by respondents with connections to Christ Church St Laurence, and expressed concern about how proposed traffic changes and the removal of car parks could impact parishioners' ability to attend church services and events.
- Comments from respondents who were **neutral** or **'mixed'** about the proposal discussed parking and access issues; traffic; and cycle access.

Review of Environmental Factors

- The largest proportion of respondents were **supportive** of the proposal. These comments were often general in nature, conveying support for reducing the amount of motor vehicle traffic in the area and favouring pedestrians over cars.
- Respondents who were **unsupportive** of the proposal again commented mostly on parking and access issues, expressing concerns about the potential inconveniences caused to those who rely on cars to access the CBD, including the elderly and less mobile.
- Only a small number of comments were made by respondents who were **neutral** or **'mixed'** about the proposal. These discussed parking and access; traffic; cycle access; design; and construction timing.

DEVONSHIRE STREET

Concept Design

- The largest proportion of comments were **supportive** of the proposal. General supportive comments were common, embracing the concept design, welcoming the pedestrian-centric development and looking forward to its implementation.
- A similar number of respondents discussed the design for the permanent closure of Devonshire Street. These comments called for more trees and greenery in pedestrian areas; careful consideration of seating options; and ensuring that the design enhances the flow of foot traffic. A moderate number of respondents, while supportive of the concept design, requested greater provision of cycleways.
- Small numbers of comments were **unsupportive**, **neutral** or **mixed** towards the proposal for Devonshire Street. These comments mostly discussed cycle access and traffic.

Local Access Plan

- The largest proportion of respondents were **supportive** of the proposal, providing general supportive comments without going to significant detail. Several comments suggested that cycle access should be added to the proposal, in the form of separated or shared cycle paths. A small number of respondents discussed traffic. Generally, these comments supported reducing the amount of traffic in the area.
- Only a small number respondents were **unsupportive** or **neutral** towards the proposal for Devonshire Street, discussing incorporating cycle access and traffic reduction.

Review of Environmental Factors

- Again, the most common sentiment expressed was **support** for the proposal, which was often general in nature. The most commonly discussed specific topic was the proposal's focus on pedestrians over cars.
- Only a small number of comments were received from respondents who were **unsupportive** or **neutral** towards the proposal. These respondents expressed general opposition to the proposal.

Project overview

Introduction

The City of Sydney together with the NSW Government is fast tracking new walking connections, in 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. The City proposes to build on the success of the pedestrianised northern end of George Street, and pedestrianise the southern end of George Street.

The City also proposes to permanently close Devonshire Street, between Chalmers and Elizabeth streets, in Surry Hills. This section has been temporarily closed to traffic since the construction of the light rail.

Community feedback on the proposal was sought from 23 September to 21 October 2020.

This report contains a summary of the engagement activities undertaken during the consultation, and an analysis of the responses received from the community.

Project background

George Street, between Hunter and Bathurst streets, was converted to a pedestrian boulevard following the construction of the light rail. To build on this success, the City proposes to extend the pedestrian boulevard to Railway Square by restricting through traffic and widening the footpaths to install more trees and street furniture.

The proposal also includes creating a pedestrian boulevard on Devonshire Street between Chalmers Street and Elizabeth Street in Surry Hills.

City of Sydney is creating more people-friendly streets, with wider footpaths and new spaces for businesses to operate, while attracting people back to the city centre. The proposal is supported by the NSW Government and will ensure everyone can move around comfortably while maintaining physical distancing.

What is proposed

George Street – proposed changes include:

- closing the southbound lanes of George Street, between Bathurst Street and Rawson Place
- closing the northbound lanes of George Street, between Ultimo Road and Bathurst Street
- closing Campbell Street at George Street and making it two-way between George and Pitt streets
- closing the westbound lanes of Hay Street, between George and Sussex streets
- closing Thomas Street at Hay Street and making it two-way between Hay Street and Ultimo Road
- making Ultimo Road one-way westbound from George to Quay Streets
- removal of the no right turn restriction in Valentine Street at George Street
- introduce a no left turn restriction from George Street into Pitt Street
- widen the footpaths of George Street from Ultimo Road and Rawson Place to Railway Square
- widen the northern footpath of Hay Street between Harbour and Sussex streets
- widen the northern footpath of Ultimo Road between George and Thomas streets
- parking changes in George Street and surrounding streets

Devonshire Street – proposed changes include:

- closing the eastbound lane of Devonshire Street from Chalmers to Elizabeth Streets
- closing Chalmers Lane at Devonshire Street

Engagement objectives

To inform the community that the City is working with the NSW Government on a proposal to pedestrianise the southern end of George Street, and Devonshire Street between Chalmers Street and Elizabeth Street in Surry Hills.

To ensure affected stakeholders along the route understand how the proposed changes will affect them and are well-informed throughout the project.

To encourage the community – visitors, workers and residents, and key stakeholders to provide feedback during the consultation period.

To work with the community to help build a vision for the proposed pedestrianised areas, and to help minimise any impacts.

Engagement description

The City of Sydney sought feedback about the proposed pedestrian boulevard from 23 September – 21 October 2020.

Community consultation included the following activities:

- 28 day public exhibition of the proposal
- Community notification distributed to 14,569 property owners, residents and businesses surrounding George and Devonshire streets
- E-mailout to 203 registered stakeholders
- 12 Individual briefings with affected stakeholders
- Two advertisements in the Sydney Morning Herald
- Media announcement
- Sydney Your Say web page
- Online feedback form
- Online registration for project updates
- Invitations to a George Street walk for stakeholders and local businesses and residents

The City sought community feedback on three documents, that were available on the Sydney Your Say webpage, all of which contained information about different aspects of the proposed changes. The documents were:

4. **Concept design** – proposed plan of the new pedestrian areas.
5. **Local access plan** – proposed traffic and access arrangements.
6. **Review of environmental factors (REF)**– addresses impacts of the proposal and how they will be managed.

The Sydney Your Say web page received 2,016 page views. The concept design was downloaded 860 times. The local access plan was downloaded 302 times, and the REF was downloaded 74 times.

In addition, key stakeholders and members of the public were invited to join the project team for a walk of George Street on 23 September and on 13 October, to hear an update on the plans and next steps. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, a maximum of 20 people were able to attend each event.

Overall, 239 submitters provided feedback to the City of Sydney on the proposal:

- 186 online surveys were completed
- 53 submissions in respondents' own formats:
 - 11 from individuals
 - 35 Christ Church St Laurence parishioners signed a pre-formatted letter
 - 7 from organisations

In the online survey, respondents were asked a series of questions which would filter their feedback according to:

- Which area they were providing feedback on (George Street and/or Devonshire Street)
- Which of the three documents they were providing feedback on
- What subject their feedback related to out of the following:
 - Driveway access
 - Loading and servicing
 - Emergency services access
 - Design for the permanent closure
 - Footway dining
 - Events & activation of pedestrian areas
 - Approval process
 - Construction timing
 - Other (please specify)
- The overall sentiment of their feedback (supportive, neutral, or unsupportive)

The discussion section of this report has been structured based on respondents' answers to the above questions. Comments relating to George Street and Devonshire Street have been addressed separately, as have comments on each of the three documents – the Concept design; Local access plan; and Review of environmental factors. Finally, responses have also been filtered based on sentiment. Further explanation of how written comments have been analysed can be found on page 13.

CHRIST CHURCH ST LAURENCE

Christ Church St Laurence (CCSL) is an inner-city parish of the Anglican Church. It is located on George Street between Pitt Street and Rawson Place. Parishioners of the church circulated a pre-formatted letter during the consultation period, which resulted in a relatively high proportion of submissions and surveys being received from respondents with connections to the church.

The pre-formatted letter outlines the main concerns of CCSL parishioners, and offers some suggestions to help mitigate the potential negative impacts of this proposal on the church. A copy of pre-formatted letter can be found in Appendix B of this report.

The responses from CCSL parishioners (both surveys and written submissions) account for a large proportion of the comments discussed under sections titled 'unsupportive'. The main concerns of CCSL parishioners were around parking, access and traffic. Comments expressed concern at the proposal to remove street parking near the church, and preventing cars from turning left into Pitt Street from George Street (southbound). These concerns were based on the fact that many parishioners rely on cars to access church services and events, particularly those who are elderly or less mobile. By removing nearby parking and creating detours that result in longer, more convoluted car journeys, respondents feared that some parishioners may be unable to attend services. These comments are included throughout the George Street section.

Engagement results

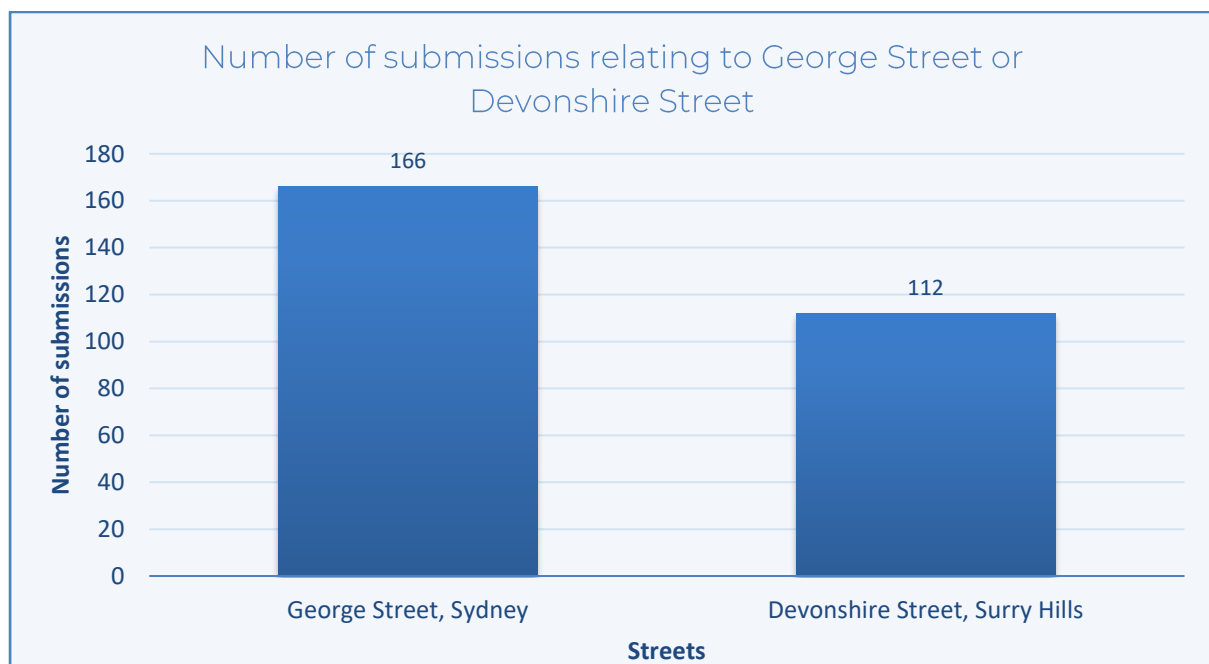
Quantitative analysis

OVERVIEW

Within the online survey, three questions identified which aspects of the plan respondents were discussing in their submission. A fourth question asked about the respondents' relationship to the project. The questions and the percentages of respondents who selected particular options are presented in the charts and discussions that follow.

The street respondents commented on

Respondents were asked to select which street their feedback was regarding. Options were: George Street, Sydney; Devonshire Street, Surry Hills. Respondents could select more than one option.

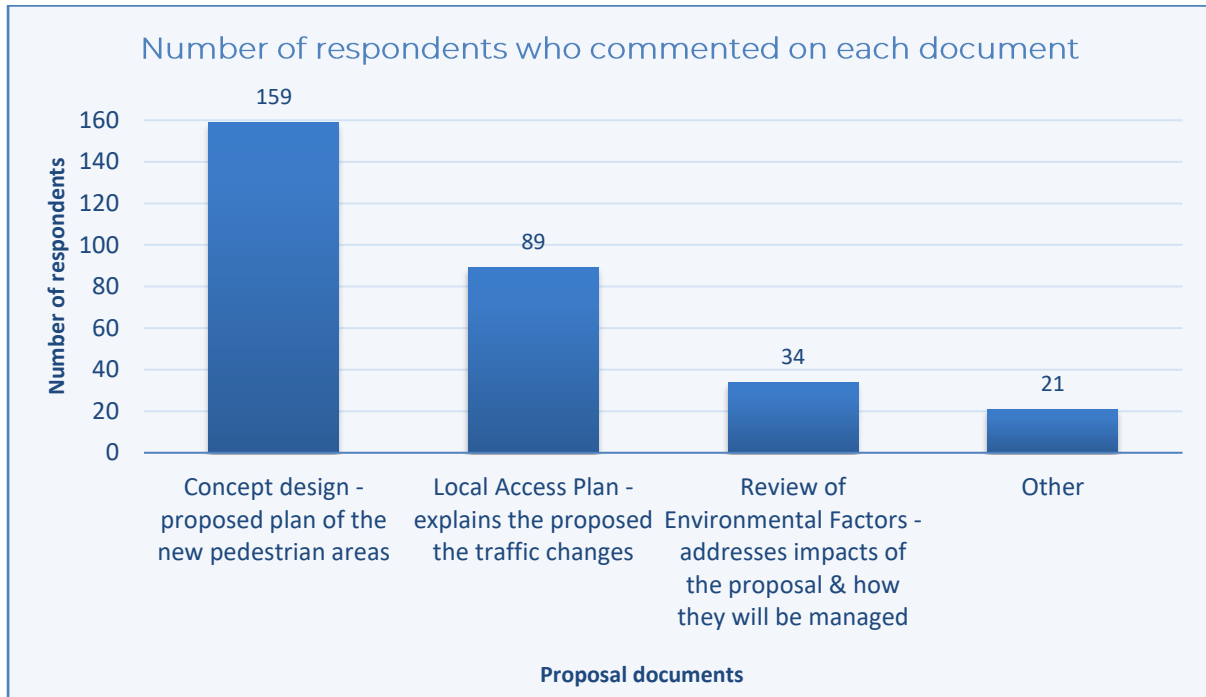


RESULTS

- > George Street was the most commonly commented on street, with 166 of the online survey submissions discussing this street
- > One hundred and twelve respondents discussed Devonshire Street.

The document respondents commented on

Respondents were asked to select which document they were commenting on. Options were: Concept design – proposed plan of the new pedestrian areas; Local access plan – proposed traffic and access arrangements; Review of environmental factors – addresses impacts of the proposal and how they will be managed; Other (please specify). Respondents could select more than one option.

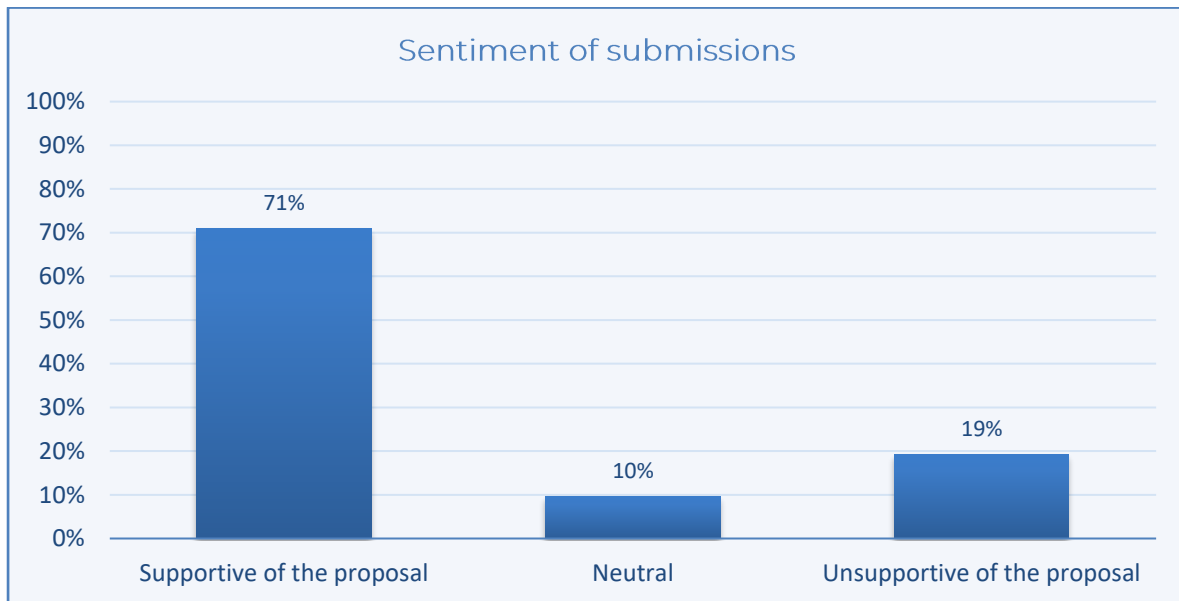


RESULTS

- > The most commonly commented on document was the *Concept design - proposed plan of the new pedestrian areas* – 159 respondents commented on this document.
- > Eighty-nine respondents commented on *Local Access Plan - explains the proposed the traffic changes*
- > Thirty-four respondents commented on the *Review of Environmental Factors –addresses impacts of the proposal & how they will be managed*
- > Twenty-one respondents chose to comment on other topics.

Sentiment of submissions

Respondents were asked to identify their sentiment towards the proposal. Options were: Supportive of the proposal; Neutral; Unsupportive of the proposal.

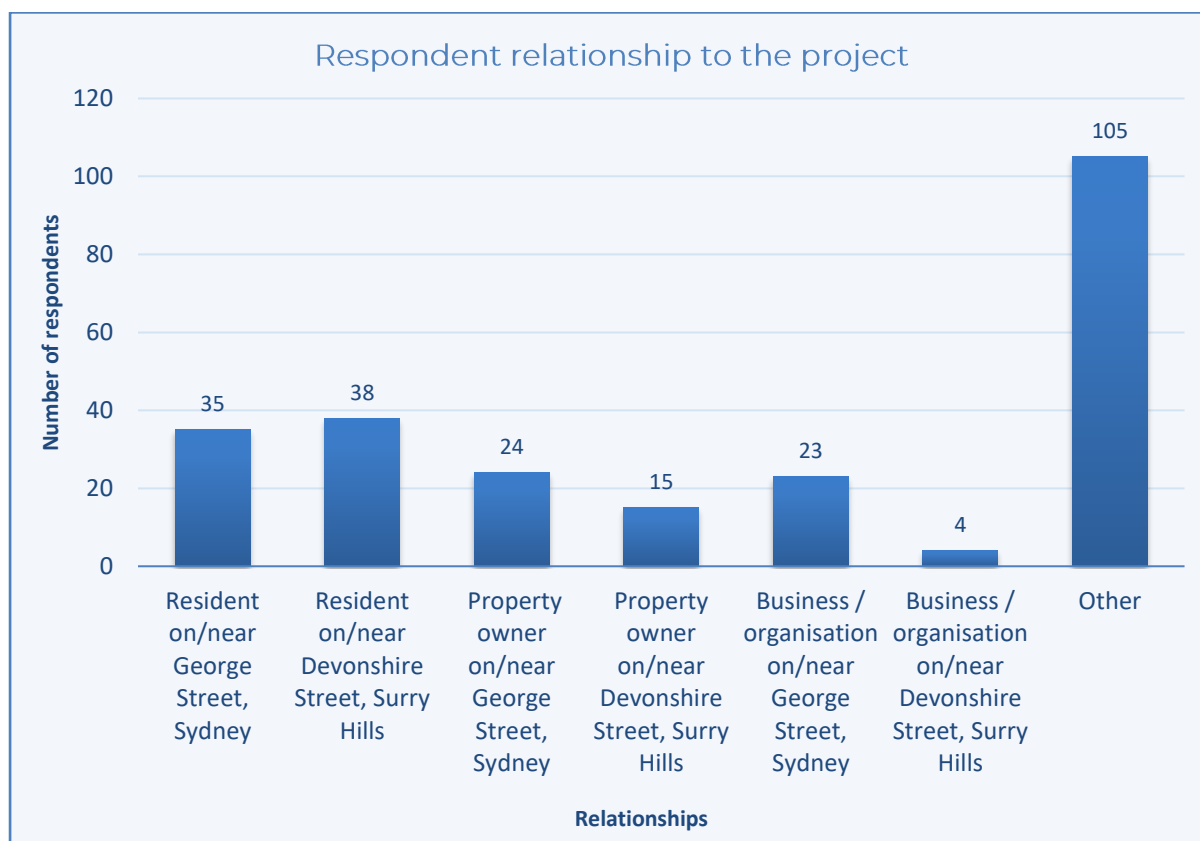


RESULTS

- > The majority of respondents were supportive of the proposal, with 71% of respondents selecting this option
- > Nineteen percent of respondents were unsupportive of the proposal
- > Ten percent were neutral.

Relationship to the project

Respondents were asked to identify their relationships to the project. Options were: Resident on/near George Street, Sydney; Resident on/near Devonshire Street, Surry Hills; Property owner on/near George Street, Sydney; Property owner on/near Devonshire Street, Surry Hills; Business/organisation on/near George Street, Sydney; Business/organisation on/near Devonshire Street, Surry Hills; Other (please specify). Respondents could select more than one option.



RESULTS

- > A high proportion of respondents selected *other* as their relationship to the project. The most common relationships provided to define 'other' were: Resident (30); Christ Church St Laurence parishioner (21); Worker or commuter (21); Visitor (14); Cyclist (7).
- > In order of popularity, selected options were:
 - *Resident on/near Devonshire Street, Surry Hills* (38)
 - *Resident on/near George Street, Sydney* (35)
 - *Property owner on/near George Street, Sydney* (24)
 - *Business / organisation on/near George Street, Sydney* (23)
 - *Property owner on/near Devonshire Street, Surry Hills* (15)
 - *Business / organisation on/near Devonshire Street, Surry Hills* (4)

Written comments analysis and reporting overview

Analysis approach

The following discussion presents results from qualitative analysis of written feedback provided by respondents who completed the online survey or submitted other written feedback in their own formats.

In the online survey, respondents were asked a series of questions which would filter their feedback according to:

- Which area they were providing feedback on (George Street and/or Devonshire Street)
- Which of the three documents they were providing feedback on
- What subject their feedback related to out of the following:
 - Driveway access
 - Loading and servicing
 - Emergency services access
 - Design for the permanent closure
 - Footway dining
 - Events & activation of pedestrian areas
 - Approval process
 - Construction timing
 - Other (please specify)
- The overall sentiment of their feedback (supportive, neutral or unsupportive). Note that respondents were able to select multiple options for this question. Where respondents have selected more than one option, their feedback has been discussed under the subheading 'mixed'.

The discussion section of this report has been structured based on respondents' answers to the above questions. Comments relating to George Street and Devonshire Street have been addressed separately, as have comments on each of the three documents – the Concept design; Local access plan; and Review of environmental factors. Finally, responses have also been filtered based on sentiment. Comments are discussed below in order of most to least frequently mentioned.

The submissions received in respondents' own formats were combined with the survey comments, with similar points grouped together under particular topics.

How analysis was completed

To complete the analysis, Global Research analysts read each comment received from individuals and organisations within the Sydney community and organised (coded) them into themes and topics based on the points made. Some comments contained multiple points, relevant to multiple topics, resulting in many comments being coded to multiple topics. The analysis was assisted by NVivo qualitative analysis software.

Analysts then synthesised the coded comments and used the results to inform this report. The discussion below was written in the order of most-to-least commonly mentioned topics under each of the two different sections: George Street and Devonshire Street.

In the online survey, respondents were asked to identify what topic their feedback related to from the following options:

- Driveway access
- Loading and servicing
- Emergency services access
- Design for the permanent closure
- Footway dining
- Events & activation of pedestrian areas
- Approval process
- Construction timing
- Other (please specify)

In order to ensure that similar comments have been grouped together, these categories were used as a guide to identify the topics being discussed. However, due to the small number of comments received on some topics, or varying alignment of comments to topics, final discussions of written comments do not precisely reflect these options:

- **Parking and access:** ‘Driveway access’, ‘loading and servicing’, and ‘emergency services access’ have been discussed together as ‘Parking and access’.
- **Approval process:** The majority of comments from respondents who had selected ‘approval process’ as one of their topics did not specifically mention the approval process. Generally, these comments were from respondents who were unsupportive of the proposal and therefore may have been indicating that respondents wanted the approval of the project to be reviewed. For this reason, discussions about the approval process specifically have not been included in this report as a separate issue.
- **Other topics:** A number of other topics were frequently mentioned by respondents, including general support or opposition; comments about traffic; and comments about bicycles. These topics have been included in the discussion below under their own headings.

Throughout the discussion of written comments, the number of points made on particular topics have been consistently represented by the amounts described below:

- A sizeable number= 75 – 99 comments
- A substantial number = 50 – 74 comments
- A considerable number = 25 – 49 comments
- A moderate number = 15 – 24 comments
- Several comments = 8 – 14 comments
- A small number = 4 – 7 comments
- A few = 3 comments
- A couple = 2 comments

The numbers in brackets represent the number of points made on particular topics. The aggregate of all points made on particular topics is included in the heading, for example 158 points were made by respondents supportive of the concept design for George Street.

Proposal for George Street

The majority of comments made by respondents discussed the proposed works for George Street. Comments were made on all three of the documents released for feedback; the *Concept Design*; the *Local Access Plan*; and the *Review of Environmental Factors*.

CONCEPT DESIGN

208 COMMENTS

Below is a summary of points made by respondents about the Concept Design for George Street, based on their overall sentiment towards the proposal.

Supportive comments

- There were more comments in support of the proposal than unsupportive, neutral or mixed comments.
- A considerable number of respondents expressed general, clearly supportive comments for the proposal. The most commonly praised aspect of the proposal was the overall focus on people rather than cars.
- Respondents who were overall supportive of the proposal also offered suggestions regarding how the proposal could be improved. The most common suggestions were around cycle access. A moderate number of respondents felt that due to reduced traffic in the area, this project provides an opportunity to make access to the area safer and more efficient for both pedestrians and cyclists. Some respondents wanted to see separated cycle paths, while others felt that shared paths would be a better option.
- A variety of other suggestions were also made, including increasing the amount of trees and greenery in the area; the installation of comfortable and varied seating options; activation of pedestrian areas through seating, activities and events, art installations and street food vendors.
- Traffic was commented on by a moderate number of respondents, several of whom supported reduced car access. A few respondents did however express some concerns around proposed traffic changes, including calls for traffic lights to be updated to favour pedestrians rather than cars.
- A small number of respondents encouraged footway dining in George Street.

Unsupportive comments

- Parking and access were the most common concerns shared by respondents who were unsupportive of the proposal. These comments came largely from respondents who were associated with Christ Church St Laurence (CCSL), who argued that the removal of street parking near CCSL would make it difficult for many older or less mobile parishioners to access the church. Other respondents felt that the proposed changes would negatively impact businesses in the area. In particular, access for delivery and services vehicles was a concern.
- Other elements that were commented on by a small number of respondents included: calls for cycle access to be included in the proposal; other concerns about traffic changes; and suggestions for the design of pedestrian areas, including shade, seating and footpath design.

Neutral comments

- Several respondents called for cycle access to be added to the proposal. These respondents suggested that this was a great opportunity to provide safer cycling in the CBD.
- A small number of comments were made about proposed traffic changes, including the proposal to stop cars turning left into Pitt Street from George Street (southbound). These comments generally expressed concern for those who rely on a car to access CCSL.
- Similarly, a small number of comments were made about parking and access, usually relating to CCSL and the need for older or less mobile parishioners to have access to parking near the church.
- A couple of respondents made suggestions about the design, including footpath design, and other ideas to help enhance the amenity of CCSL.

Mixed comments

- Comments discussed in this section were limited in number, and covered a range of subjects from design, to cycle access, parking, and footway dining.

Supportive

139 comments

More supportive comments were made about the concept design than unsupportive, neutral, or mixed.

The following comments were made by respondents who were overall supportive of the concept design. While these respondents were supportive of the overall vision or aspirations of the plan, comments were made that expressed concerns about certain

elements of the concept design, or offered suggestions regarding how the plan could be improved.

GENERAL SUPPORT (43)

The most frequent comments in support of the concept design came in the form of generic positive feedback. These comments were often lacking in detail but expressed strong support for the proposed pedestrianisation of the area. The most general of such comments made statements such as “good idea” or “we need more initiatives like this!”. Other comments offered slightly more detail in their support, such as the following:

Very excited to see this concept proposal and looking forward to unlocking this part of George street

I love this proposal, making the city even more pedestrian friendly.

Would absolutely love to see it - would make the Sydney center far more mentally friendly for pedestrians

The improved walkability of the area was highly praised, with respondents expressing excitement about having a safer, more enjoyable space to walk in the CBD.

Pedestrianisation will make this precinct safer and more enjoyable for everyone using and travelling through George St and surrounds.

I think it's a great idea to encourage better use of city areas and provide greater access to pedestrians. A modern functioning city needs this focus on people.

Several similar comments were made, which supported reducing vehicular traffic in the George Street area and prioritising pedestrians. Examples of such comments include:

Yes, yes, yes. George St is full of pedestrians and few cars so the reallocation of space is so clearly the right thing to do.

I support all plans to open space for pedestrian traffic. Design cities for people not cars.

It is great to see a movement away from a vehicle-oriented city. Decisions like this from council and government bodies is great to see and should always be given extra support.

Other benefits of supporting pedestrians and removing vehicles from the area that were raised by respondents included reduced noise, reduced pollution, and increased safety.

DESIGN FOR THE PERMANENT CLOSURE (35)

A considerable number of respondents identified design elements they wished to see in the new pedestrianised area of George Street.

Several comments called for more trees and vegetation to be incorporated into the design of the new pedestrian area. These respondents generally wanted more trees and greenery

to provide shade for pedestrians and workers stopping for lunch, to reduce the heat effect of paving, and to beautify the area.

A few respondents made the following suggestions:

The permanent 'rain gardens' in some places, and the temporary planter boxes at various times, add a distinct softening to the hardness of a big city. The more the better. For example, consider narrow planter boxes as barriers behind outdoor café area backing onto the tram line.

The concept and design are great but the grey paving makes the street look drab and colourless. Plus it captures heat. I would love to see a more earthy colour, small grass patches with trees and timber benches for a more homely feel.

As there are limited places for workers to eat lunch outside providing planting and trees is also important.

Another respondent proposed that the placement of trees and the species used should be carefully considered to ensure that the resulting streetscape is interesting and cohesive, and the plants can develop to be healthy and well-formed.

Other design elements mentioned by respondents included comments about ensuring that: drains are adequately designed to prevent large puddles forming during heavy rain; there is enough weather protection for pedestrians (such as street awnings or large, colourful umbrellas); effective lighting at night that highlights the beautiful heritage buildings in the area as well as providing lighting at street level; and comfortable and sheltered seating is provided. Other respondents suggested:

Amidst all the necessary items (seat, poles, signs, trees, control boxes, etc.) effort should be made to combine items where possible. That might require some innovative design, and some tweaking of regulations / standards / rules.

Reviews should be undertaken later at night of the lighting quality – especially when (some of) the shops have turned off their window lighting, thus making footpaths darker and feeling less safe.

Many of the pavers currently used around Sydney get extremely slippery when wet on rainy days and is a hazard for me, a young, healthy adult. I imagine it would be much worse for the elderly, parents with strollers, etc. Especially on areas which are sloped, I would request looking into different materials or surface treatments of these pavers to be safer in the rain.

CYCLE ACCESS (18)

Bicycle access was frequently mentioned by respondents, several of whom felt that the new pedestrianised areas along George Street should include spaces for cyclists.

A moderate number of respondents who generally supported the proposal made comments calling for increased cycle access to George Street, noting that the removal of

cars from the area was the perfect opportunity to allow safe and efficient active transport options including both walking and cycling.

*George Street would be an excellent bike route, even as a 10kmh shared path.
Please consider making this space available to cyclists.*

I very much support the increased pedestrian spaces and reducing traffic. I also strongly believe we need to keep adding cycle access - it's such a great way for people living within 5-10km (or more for some) of the city to get around and into the city.

I would also like for the pedestrianised streets to include marked bicycle lanes which could be connected to other cyclist infrastructure.

Consideration also needs to be given to bicycle access and parking. How will delivery riders, residents, staff and visitors with bicycles access properties and where will they park?

One respondent who mentioned cycle access took the opposing view – that pedestrian zones should be reserved for pedestrians only, and that steps should be taken in the design process to ensure that cyclists are kept out of these areas.

TRAFFIC (15)

Other traffic and roading elements were discussed by respondents, with several comments offering suggestions or expressing concerns.

Several respondents were generally supportive of restricting traffic in the area. One respondent stated:

Great idea , good to keep cars out of Central Sydney. We should have a Congestion Charge like they have in London. That is a Boundary right around the Centre if motorists go in it , they pay £10 per vehicle per day

Reduced noise, congestion and emissions were all seen as benefits of reduced traffic in the CBD.

Traffic lights at crossings were also mentioned by a small number of respondents who all commented that, although vehicle traffic has already been restricted in the area, the traffic lights have not yet been adjusted to reflect reduced traffic volumes. This results in pedestrians waiting longer than necessary for a green light to cross. One respondent noted:

Now that there is fewer traffic (other than Bathurst and Druitt/Park Streets), the traffic lights are still not adjusted to allow more pedestrian flow. I find myself waiting to cross the roads despite noticing no traffic for long periods of time.

EVENTS AND ACTIVATION OF PEDESTRIAN AREAS (10)

Several comments offered suggestions around how pedestrian areas could be activated and enjoyed by the public. A couple of respondents suggested incorporating art installations or sculptures, with one noting:

Good spots may be scarce, but maybe consider the proposed Campbell Street closure, and in the area at and south of Rawson Place.

Some respondents had specific suggestions for design aesthetics, with one person suggesting

A large (very large) colourful, light-weight, semi-transparent object hanging high (very high) above the intersection of George and Hay Streets? Perhaps with a Chinatown theme?" or a water feature.

Another respondent made the following suggestion to ensure the southern end of George street does not lose its "buzz":

Provision should be considered for small 'activity points' – such as busking, artisan workstations (art & craft), mini-carnival game spots, etc. The slope of the surface might require small movable platforms to create level surfaces.

Other suggestions included converting the steps of the McKell Building into a hanging garden with lunch spots and an egress path down the steps; interactive art pieces, soundscapes and/or music; food stalls or food trucks; and 'events' more generally.

A final suggestion that incorporates elements from other comments above was:

My suggestion is for some form of tiered seating that would allow for informal pausing, waiting, gathering, eating lunch, but also provide a setting for varied performances - music, theatre, talks, dance, activism and beyond. Somewhat inspired by the Monument to Sandro Pertini in Milan.

FOOTWAY DINING (7)

A small number of comments discussed footway dining. These comments were generally supportive of encouraging outside dining in pedestrian areas, making statements such as:

An excellent idea to drive the economy and improve the usability & ambience towards a city for the people

alfresco dining makes perfect sense to liven up that area! I walked through there this morning and found it looked like a deserted post apocalyptic wasteland. Not at all what people expect from the most popular city in Australia. Yes to cafe culture

One respondent opposed the use of footpath space for dining, noting that pedestrians rely on street awnings for shelter from the elements and they should therefore be left unoccupied by restaurants and bars.

PARKING AND ACCESS (5)

A few comments were made by respondents who were overall supportive of the concept design, but had concerns about how the proposed works would impact access and parking in the area. In particular, these comments discussed the negative implications that reduced accessibility for loading and service vehicles could have on businesses and other organisations in the area. Examples used were the need for delivery vehicles to access businesses, the need for coaches/buses to be able to service hotels/hostels in the area, and the need for tradespeople to have access to buildings and work sites. One respondent stated:

The only concern we have is the lack of loading zones around the area. Since the inception of the Lightrail project, the number of Loading zones around my building have steadily decreased. This creates a problem for contractors and deliveries visiting the building and the other 27 businesses around the Location.

One of these comments related to the Christ Church St Laurence (CCSL) Anglican church, and urged Council to ensure that parishioners, many of whom are elderly, still have access to the church.

CONSTRUCTION TIMING (3)

A few comments were received that expressed concern about the time it will take to complete construction, and the disruption that will result from this work. These comments included:

I am writing to support the proposal, but more specifically, to encourage both the planning process and the delivery to be done quickly and expeditiously.

The only issues seem to be how long and stressful the work will be. I wonder if it's possible to cut off traffic, and use existing footpath space for dining, while using existing street space for walking.

OTHER (3)

One comment suggested that CoS find a more appropriate name for this proposed pedestrian area. This respondent expressed the view that much of Sydney's nomenclature was based too heavily on early British explorers. The respondent argued that the term 'pedestrian boulevard' could be substituted for something more fitting and less Euro-centric – perhaps something based on First Australians or Aboriginal figures or culture.

Another comment suggested that buildings along the proposed route should be included in the "makeover", while another suggested:

the current temporary closure alienates pedestrians by the fence of orange poles and the double trip hazard of concrete either side of the tram line - a single orange paint line should suffice in future. Currently it's offensive as a 'pedestrian' zone.

Unsupportive

30 comments

Respondents who were unsupportive of the Concept Design made a considerable number of comments expressing their concerns.

PARKING AND ACCESS (9)

Parking and access were the main issues commented on by respondents who were unsupportive of the Concept Design. A couple of comments were made regarding access to the Christ Church St. Laurence, suggesting that the proposal to remove a number of existing car parks on both sides of George Street from Rawson Place to Pitt Street was discriminatory against those who rely on cars to access the church. Another comment, also relating to CCSL, noted the need for emergency services access to the church, stating:

The Plan would increase the time taken from the 000 call to the ambulance arriving at CCSL. This time can make the difference in an emergency situation

A couple of comments discussed the need for 'loading zone' parking, or reconsideration of the removal of car parks and changes to traffic, such as prohibiting left turns from George Street (southbound) into Pitt Street. These comments argued that these changes would cause significant inconvenience to those who rely on private vehicles. One respondent noted the negative impact that the proposal could have on them:

So far as I can see I shall be unable to get to various places on George Street that I have used for decades and shall have serious problems as a result. The city is ignoring the needs of the disabled and elderly

A couple of suggestions were made that could reduce the negative impact of proposed changes on access, including:

Extending bus and coach parking zones on the eastern side of George Street (CCSL side) including encroaching on the current zone 'Reserved for Weddings and Funerals' outside the church which is only 2 car spaces

Retaining the left turn from George Street southbound into Pitt Street

At the intersection of Rawson Place and George Street, re-introducing a 'left turn for local traffic only' to compensate for the complete loss of access to George Street and hence CCSL southbound from any intersection along the full length of George Street

DESIGN FOR THE PERMANENT CLOSURE (4)

A small number of comments made suggestions about the design. One respondent suggested that the proposal to widen the footpath on the northern side of Ultimo Road would be detrimental to business and public use, due in part to the fact that this section of footpath is often in the shade, and that the affected businesses would not utilise the wider footpath to enhance vibrancy through outdoor seating or alfresco dining. Instead, this respondent proposed widening the southern side of the street where maximum benefit can be achieved for both businesses and the public. This would allow an established

heritage hotel on the corner of George Street and Ultimo Road to provide sunny outdoor seating and activities, which the public could enjoy.

A few other suggestions for the design of pedestrian areas included removing raised obstacles on footpaths and ensuring that walking areas are well maintained and clear of litter.

CYCLE ACCESS (3)

A few respondents discussed bicycle access to the area. Two of these comments supported including cycle access such as cycleways, while one comment expressed concern at the fact that bicycles are sometimes ridden in a “dangerous manner” on footpaths, contrary to road rules.

TRAFFIC (3)

Traffic was mentioned in three comments, which discussed concerns about access to the Christ Church St. Laurence, as well as the area generally. One comment suggested that restricting the choices available to the public in terms of how they wish to access George Street and surrounding areas will have negative consequences on businesses and the vibrancy of the area.

FOOTWAY DINING (2)

One respondent whose comment is mentioned above in the ‘design for permanent closure’ section suggested widening the footpath on the southern side of Ultimo Road (rather than the northern side as proposed), which would allow the Mountbatten Hotel to provide alfresco dining for its patrons.

Meanwhile, another comment condemned footway dining, expressing concern that footpaths would become congested with drunken patrons of restaurants and pubs.

EVENTS & ACTIVATION OF NEW PEDESTRIAN AREAS (1)

One respondent noted that they wished to see footpaths kept clear for use by pedestrians, rather than being cluttered with “sandwich boards, dumped bicycles and Telstra and other advertising obstructions”.

CONSTRUCTION TIMING (1)

One respondent expressed concern about the length of time that the area would be closed during construction, noting that extended closures could harm businesses. This comment also referenced the noise, congestion and difficulty of access caused by construction work, suggesting these factors will deter the public from visiting the area.

OTHER (7)

Other comments included a few responses suggesting that there was inadequate consultation with stakeholders, including CCSL parishioners, prior to the proposal being released to the public. Additionally, a few comments were made which expressed outright opposition to the proposed pedestrianisation of this area. Reasons given for this opposition included negative impacts on businesses already hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic, and negative impacts on access.

Neutral

29 comments

A considerable number of comments were made about the Concept Design by respondents who were neutral in their opinions of the proposal.

CYCLE ACCESS (10)

The most frequently made comments by neutral respondents were about cycling. These respondents felt that the areas proposed for pedestrianisation could also be used as a safe area for cyclists to travel along. One respondent made the following argument for cycle access to the area:

Overall I love that more space is being dedicated to people, rather than cars, however the lack of cycleways through the area (both Devonshire and George Streets) mean that fewer people can access these pedestrianised areas without cars/buses.

Another respondent suggested that instead of pedestrianising the area, it would be more suitable as a cycle way. This comment stated:

The footpaths are already wide enough for pedestrians and this would provide a great connection between the heavily used shared path in Prince Alfred Park and the Bourke Street cycleway. You could trial a pop-up cycleway to see if it works first.

TRAFFIC (6)

A small number of comments about traffic were made, which discussed proposed changes to traffic management in the area. In particular, a few comments discussed how the proposed traffic changes in George Street would disrupt access to Christ Church St Laurence. Some of these comments discussed access in general terms, while another specified that vehicular access to the church is crucial for weddings, funerals and other religious ceremonies held at the church.

In addition, a couple of respondents questioned the merit of preventing cars from turning left into Pitt Street from George Street (southbound), suggesting that this will cause unnecessary and lengthy detours for drivers. Another respondent asked:

What further traffic flow, parking, congestion and driving inconvenience will the proposed changes cause? How will Chalmers Street and Devonshire Street cut offs cope?

DESIGN FOR THE PERMANENT CLOSURE (6)

Comments about design for the permanent closure included suggestions about how the area's design could be improved. The following suggestions were made by a stakeholder:

- *Widening of the southern side will enhance the pedestrian mall already in place on Thomas St.*

- *More than half of the northern side footpath is fronted by a bank, Laser Skin Clinic and the Entry/Exit driveway. They are not likely to avail themselves of the widened footpath.*
- *The southern side has a Hotel, Restaurant and Asian Grocer amongst others who can use the additional space. Our Hotel currently uses 18sqm of the footpath fronting Ultimo Road, we would look to increase this space if the southern footpath was widened.*
- *The predominant weather patterns affecting Sydney are southerly in nature, the northern side of Ultimo Road would be exposed whilst the southern side would be protected to a degree, affording pedestrian's more comfort.*

Additionally, the heritage architect of the Christ Church St Laurence made a small number of suggestions to help protect the amenity of the church and its important historical significance:

- *Remove trees in front of the church building to ensure there is a clear and uninterrupted view to the building, particularly along the axis of Valentine Street.*
- *Relocate the garbage bin on the west side of George Street outside the visual setting of the church.*
- *Consider creating a paved forecourt to the church, aligning with the property boundaries and extending to the curb to establish the significance and importance of the site and its connection to George Street.*
- *Adjust tree positions to create a framed and symmetrical planted setting either side of the church frontage.*

Another respondent connected to the CCSL suggested that surrounding buildings should be required to be 'smartened up' to preserve the heritage and history of the building, which dates back to 1845 and is Sydney's second oldest Anglican church.

PARKING AND ACCESS (6)

Similar to comments relating to traffic, a small number of comments were made about parking or access to properties on George Street, including for loading and servicing. Three of these comments related to the CCSL Anglican church and expressed concern at the lack of consideration for the church's parishioners, many of whom are elderly or disabled and therefore require access by car and adequate parking provision. Additionally, comments suggested that access for the rector, tradespeople, and other vehicles needed for various religious ceremonies would be unnecessarily impeded.

EVENTS AND ACTIVATION OF PEDESTRIAN AREAS (1)

One comment was made about the activation of pedestrian areas, which suggested removing seats from in front of the CCSL building to create an uninterrupted formal setting for events and processions that take place.

Mixed

10 comments

Some of the written submissions received did not indicate whether their feedback was supportive, neutral, or unsupportive. Others selected more than one of these options. These responses have been discussed below:

DESIGN FOR THE PERMANENT CLOSURE (3)

Comments about the design of the pedestrian area included one comment about the materials used for paving. This respondent suggested that currently, paving can be a trip hazard, particularly for the elderly. This respondent suggested:

I strongly urge the replacement of existing paving with a material that provides better traction for mobility assistance devices and pedestrians of all ages.

The remaining two comments discussed urban planning, suggesting that City of Sydney's planners should take inspiration from Asian cities such as Tokyo, Seoul and Hong Kong, instead of continuing to create public spaces inspired by European cities such as London or Paris. These comments also urged CoS to ensure that enough greenery is incorporated into the design, and materials are pedestrian friendly.

CYCLE ACCESS (3)

A few comments discussed the need to better include cyclists in the proposed works for George Street and the surrounding area. One respondent stated:

I support closing the streets to motor vehicle traffic. I do not support the closure of the streets to people on bicycles.

Another comment discussed why adding a cycle way to the pedestrian area would be beneficial, stating:

It is relatively flat and separated from motorists which makes it an even better and safer alternative for cyclists, in comparison to other main roads.

PARKING AND ACCESS (2)

One comment urged CoS to ensure that emergency services can easily access the area in the event of an emergency.

One respondent made a personal plea to CoS to consider elderly and disabled people's access to the area, in particular to the Christ Church St. Laurence, which they noted they would be unable to attend if parking is removed.

FOOTWAY DINING (1)

One respondent suggested that there was not widespread desire to sit and dine outside on George Street, as Sydney has many better places to do this such as Glebe or Balmain.

OTHER (1)

One comment expressed concern at the lack of consultation with stakeholders prior to the proposals being decided upon by CoS.

Below is a summary of points made by respondents about the Local Access Plan for George Street, based on their overall sentiment towards the proposal.

Supportive comments

- There were more comments in support of the proposal than unsupportive, neutral or mixed comments.
- A moderate number of comments offered clear support for the proposal in the form of general, undetailed comments. Generally, these respondents appreciated the proposal's focus on pedestrians over cars.
- Several respondents made comments about traffic. These included calls for traffic light timings to be adjusted to allow longer crossing times for pedestrians, and shorter waiting periods. A small number of other comments supported restricting vehicle access to the area.
- Several respondents who supported the proposal overall also expressed concerns about its potential impact on parking and access. These comments expressed a need for businesses to be able to receive deliveries and other services, and for parishioners to have unobstructed access to CCSL.
- Cycle access was mentioned by several respondents, who supported opening up pedestrian areas to cyclists as well.

Unsupportive comments

- Overwhelmingly, the most frequently commented on issue for respondents who were unsupportive of the proposal was parking and access. Around two thirds of these comments came from respondents with connections to CCSL, who echoed the concerns about access mentioned in the sections above. These comments suggested that the proposed changes made access to the church too difficult, particularly for elderly and less mobile parishioners. Other access comments expressed concerns regarding restricting vehicle access and how it would negatively impact business in the area.
- Other comments relating to traffic were made by a moderate number of respondents. These comments argued that businesses would be negatively impacted by some of the proposed changes, which would create unnecessary detours and obstacles for both commercial and private drivers.

Neutral comments

- Comments from neutral respondents were similar to those from respondents who were unsupportive of the proposal. Concerns about parking and access were discussed by several respondents, who saw potential issues for both local businesses and CCSL.
- A small number of comments suggested incorporating a separated cycle lane to allow both pedestrians and cyclists to use the proposed pedestrian areas.

Mixed comments

- A small number of comments were discussed in this section, and covered topics such as cycle access; parking and general access; and design.

Note that because respondents were able to select more than one document (*Concept Design, Local Access Plan or Review of Environmental Factors*) to provide feedback on, some of the comments in this section are also discussed above in the 'Design Concept' section. Analysts have made their best efforts to include the points relevant to each topic.

Supportive

73 comments

Comments about the Local Access Plan were more often supportive than unsupportive, neutral, or mixed.

GENERAL SUPPORT (19)

A moderate number of comments contained generally supportive feedback about the proposal. These comments were often general in nature, and made simple statements such as "I strongly support this proposal", "It is a very, very good idea" or "all reasonably good, thank you."

Other comments that contained more detailed support included:

This is a fantastic initiative that will encourage people to spend more time in these 2 areas. In parts of Melbourne where it's been done, businesses have definitely benefited as well

This is long overdue and wonderful that the city is giving equal footing - pun intended to pedestrians

As discussed in the above 'Concept Design' section, respondents were supportive of closing the area to cars and vehicles, and prioritising pedestrians. Respondents felt that this would make the area more enjoyable to be in, and overall supported "fewer cars, more people".

TRAFFIC (15)

Respondents made several comments about traffic. A few comments noted that traffic lights could be better timed to favour pedestrians, with one respondent stating:

It takes ages to cross the road and get from say Devonshire St to Chinatown. I hope that they improvements will also include changing pedestrian prioritisation of traffic lights to include more and longer opportunities to cross.

A small number of other respondents were supportive of restricting vehicle access to the CBD, making comments such as:

Where possible, I would like to see motor vehicle access prohibited during peak pedestrian/shopping/dining times.

I think that they should make all of Sydney traffic free. They could deliver to businesses after 7pm

Other comments about traffic called for clear signage following changes to roads and introducing a 'congestion charge' to further deter motor vehicle use in the CBD.

PARKING AND ACCESS (10)

Several comments were made about parking and access, including loading and servicing. Respondents who made these comments were generally supportive of the proposal, but offered suggestions as to how parking and access could be improved. These comments were generally concerned with how local businesses would fare if access was restricted for delivery vehicles, vans and coaches. One respondent summed up the overall sentiment of these comments, stating:

Need to ensure sufficient amount of loading zones remain at southern end of George Street and need to ensure there is sufficient coach parking to service Sydney Central YHA on Rawson Place - a lot has been taken away with the Light Rail stop going in at Rawson Place.

A couple of comments also expressed concern about access being restricted to Christ Church St Laurence, suggesting that parking should be retained near the church.

DESIGN FOR THE PERMANENT CLOSURE (8)

Respondents who made comments about the design of the proposed pedestrian areas commented mostly on trees and vegetation. Respondents felt it important to ensure that enough trees are incorporated into the pedestrian area, both to beautify it, and to provide shade. Other comments about design included:

Should be limiting the size and where the massive Telstra phonebooths are as well, which are basically large just to have more ad space on the back.

I think that providing lots of comfortable and shaded seating is very important in these new spaces so that people are invited to sit. Ideally there would be opportunities to sit alone as well as opportunities for groups to have lunch together.

Absolutely support having large footpaths, currently lots of bottlenecks.

CYCLE ACCESS (8)

Several comments discussed bicycle access, suggesting that the area should cater to both pedestrians and cyclists. Examples that sum up the overall sentiment of these comments include:

This is fantastic however I really think that cycle lanes along George St and Devonshire St would help move Sydney in the right direction encouraging more active transport and less congestion. Sydney needs more bike lanes and a pedestrian boulevard is a fantastic place for them, and can help separate pedestrians areas from the light rail corridor.

Please don't ban bicycles on George St! There is plenty of space to accommodate people, light rail and bicycles.

One respondent wanted to see bicycles banned from pedestrian areas.

FOOTWAY DINING (5)

A small number of comments wanted to see footway dining encouraged. The following comments represent the overall sentiment of this group:

There should be a liberal approach to permitting outdoor dining on both George St & Devonshire St.

Footway dining is not only good for social distancing, it is a really social and fun way to dine, and feel part of the city.

CONSTRUCTION TIMING (4)

A small number of respondents who supported the proposal overall noted that they wanted to see it completed in a timely manner to ensure minimal impact on business in the area.

EVENTS AND ACTIVATION OF PEDESTRIAN AREAS (3)

Suggestions around how the area could be activated and enjoyed by the public included: providing lots of comfortable seating with options to sit alone or in groups; family areas with changing facilities and shady places to sit; art installations and events, and; pop up food stalls and other vendors.

OTHER (1)

One respondent expressed concern about how the proposed changes would impact neighbouring streets, stating:

Improving the amenity and vibrancy of George Street should not come at the expense of neighbouring streetscapes and congestion on these neighbouring streets. The displacement of so many vehicles has the potential to cause undue and unintended consequences.

Unsupportive

63 comments

A substantial number of comments were made by respondents who were unsupportive of the Local Access Plan.

PARKING AND ACCESS (32)

The most common concerns amongst respondents who were unsupportive of the Local Access Plan were parking and access. Around two thirds of these comments related specifically to Christ Church St Laurence (CCSL), all of which made similar arguments. These respondents were concerned that limiting parking spaces in the area would prevent some parishioners, particularly the elderly or less mobile, from accessing church services and events.

I wish to voice my objection to the proposed changes to George St between Rawson Place and Railway Square. My wife and I regularly bring her mother who is 90 years old to church on Sundays. She is frail and cannot walk far so the removal of car parking spaces in the area near the church is a major concern.

A small number of comments also referenced the proposal to prohibit traffic from turning left into Pitt Street from George Street (southbound). These comments note that the resulting detour would add several minutes to the journey for many of those who drive to and from CCSL. Similarly, respondents called for 'loading zones' to be provided to help those who need to travel by car to CCSL. One such comment reads:

As a busy involved member of this very busy city parish church I am in this area several times a week transporting elderly people to the two large residential aged care facilities in Albion Street...the removal of a left turn into Pitt Street horrifies me, no parking even for 5 or 10 minutes along George Street makes it seemingly impossible to convey the sick and elderly to service, why can't weekday loading zones be used for private cars on weekends?

The following comment sums up the concerns shared by this group of respondents:

Access to street parking, especially for the aged or infirm is essential, not to mention the vehicular access required by the church for deliveries, tradespeople and in order to conduct weddings and funerals.

One comment suggested that the proposed changes to access to CCSL could have severe consequences in the event of an emergency, where "every minute is vital", as they would increase the time it would take for emergency services to reach the church.

Several other comments discussed potential consequences for businesses in the area. In particular, these comments expressed concerns about disruptions to delivery and service vehicles, upon which many businesses rely.

One respondent also noted that some businesses in the area rely on bus, coach or van access. The Marigold Restaurant is an example of this. Due to its central location and large size, it is a popular venue for group functions, often for older people or people with

disabilities who are transported by vans and coaches, making the experience easy and accessible for all. Without such transport options available, respondents feel the area will become less accessible and businesses may lose patronage as a result.

TRAFFIC (18)

A moderate number of comments expressed concerns about proposed traffic changes around the area. In particular, these comments argued that businesses would be negatively impacted by some of the proposed changes, which would create unnecessary detours and obstacles for both commercial and private drivers. Examples of such concerns include:

There are existing and there will be additional future retail, commercial and residential buildings in Chinatown that require vehicular access for their occupants, visitors and delivery of goods to support their habitat, work and business.

Under the proposal, vehicles (cars and freight and service vehicles) from the bridge, city north and city east will be required to take a longer and more convoluted route to reach Citymark Building, that involves turning corners 6 more times than the current route. Apart from causing more frustration and creating more stress for drivers, the convoluted route will also create more opportunities for accidents.

I drive through and walk past George St between Gourlburn St and Liverpool St every day. the closure of the street adds 10 to 20 mins for driver like me

Again, several comments were made by parishioners of CCSL, who argued a similar point, noting that those who rely on cars to attend church services and events will be required to make several detours as a result of proposed changes, resulting in significantly more time spent in the car on the way to and from CCSL. These comments also noted that once parishioners arrive at CCSL, they will be unable to find sufficient street parking under the current proposal.

A couple of respondents made the point that while pedestrianising is beneficial in some ways, closing off vehicle access to the city centre would put increased pressure on neighbouring streets, resulting in more congestion, accidents, and damage to roads.

CYCLE ACCESS (3)

Three comments were made about cycle access in the area. These comments all made similar points and can be summed up by the following:

Plans do not sufficiently provide for bicycle access in this area. Essential to maintain local access for bicycle travel to link to local destinations. Omitting bicycle access will force cyclists onto highly trafficked streets and increase journey times.

DESIGN FOR THE PERMANENT CLOSURE (1)

One respondent expressed concerns with the proposal to close off Thomas Street at Hay Street, noting that this would have little benefit for businesses. This respondent argued that

the area will remain a thoroughfare to somewhere else, rather than a pedestrian mall due to a lack of outward facing window displays and shopfronts.

CONSTRUCTION TIMING (1)

One comment expressed concern for local businesses given the potentially lengthy disruption of construction works. This respondent noted that many businesses are already struggling due to prolonged construction of the light rail, and most recently, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

OTHER (8)

Several comments expressed frustration about a lack of consultation with stakeholders prior to the proposal being decided upon and released to the public. These comments came from local business owners and parishioners of CCSL Anglican church.

One respondent suggested that proposed traffic and roading changes would result in greater carbon emissions:

Closing Thomas Street at Hay Street will require vehicles (cars and freight and service vehicles) from the bridge, city north and city east to spend more time and more fuel on a longer route and produce more carbon emission, creating worse air quality pollution.

Neutral

26 comments

PARKING AND ACCESS (11)

Parking and access were the most frequently commented on aspects of the Local Access Plan by neutral respondents. Over half of these comments came from respondents connected to Christ Church St Laurence and expressed concerns about the lack of nearby parking provisions in the proposal. These respondents were concerned that the proposed changes to George Street may make it difficult for some parishioners to attend church, and may disrupt weddings, funerals and other religious ceremonies that require vehicle access to the church.

The remaining comments about parking and access related to businesses and residences in the area. One comment discussed the proposed widening of the footpath on the northern side of Ultimo Road, noting that the northern side has a large Entry/Exit driveway servicing 653 George Street that is active 24 hours a day, while there are no active driveways on the southern side. This respondent suggested that it would therefore be more appropriate to widen the footpath on the southern side of Ultimo Road instead.

TRAFFIC (7)

Concerns about traffic changes were shared by a small number of respondents. Again, over half of these comments were from respondents with connections to CCSL, and their concern was with accessing the church by car. These respondents felt that the proposed changes, in particular the introduction of a no-left turn onto Pitt Street from George Street (southbound) would cause unnecessary detours for drivers and increase the risk of accidents.

One respondent had concerns about pedestrians and cyclists crossing the driveway of the Central Baptist Church on George Street without looking for traffic. This respondent suggested that: mirrors be installed to ensure drivers have a clear view of pedestrians crossing the driveway; more warning signage be erected in the area; and blocking cyclists from this section of George Street.

CYCLE ACCESS (6)

A small number of comments suggested incorporating a separated cycle lane to allow both pedestrians and cyclists to use the proposed pedestrian areas.

DESIGN FOR THE PERMANENT CLOSURE (1)

One respondent made a few suggestions about the footpath design, suggesting that widening the southern side of Ultimo Road would be more beneficial than widening the northern side, as currently proposed. This suggestion was backed up both by practical and aesthetic reasons, including the fact that the southern side of Ultimo Road gets more sunlight and would be better sheltered from the common southerly winds, thus affording pedestrians and footway diners more comfort.

OTHER (1)

One other comment contained a question from a member of the public seeking clarification around the intersection of Quay Street and Ultimo Road. This question has been answered by Council.

Mixed

6 comments

CYCLE ACCESS (2)

Two comments were made that suggested opening pedestrian areas to cyclists as well; one of these comments advocated for a separated bike path to increase the safety of both cyclists and pedestrians.

PARKING AND ACCESS (2)

One respondent expressed concern about the impacts of proposed changes on their ability to access Christ Church St Laurence on George Street. This respondent noted that they rely on parking near the church to get dropped off and picked up, urging Council to retain street parking in this area. Another comment discussed the need for emergency services to have easy and fast access to the area, in particular to CCSL.

DESIGN FOR THE PERMANENT CLOSURE (1)

One respondent noted the need for Council to carefully consider the materials used for footpaths in pedestrian areas. This respondent noted that currently, paving in some areas is slippery, and also expressed concern about the proposal to add more trees to the area, noting that fallen tree debris can create additional hazards on the footpath.

TRAFFIC (1)

Traffic was mentioned by one respondent, who supported the closure of the streets to motor vehicle traffic.

Below is a summary of points made by respondents about the Review of Environmental Factors for George Street, based on their overall sentiment towards the proposal.

Supportive comments

- There were more comments in support of the proposal than unsupportive, neutral or mixed comments.
- Several comments offered general support for the proposal. These were mostly general in nature and included comments such as “I strongly support this proposal”.
- Other elements that were mentioned by a small number of respondents included design; traffic; events and activation of pedestrian areas; and construction timing.

Unsupportive comments

- The main concerns for respondents who were unsupportive of the proposal were parking and access. Almost all of these comments referenced access to Christ Church St Laurence specifically, while one discussed access more generally and noted that the proposal would make accessing the area harder for elderly and disabled people.

Neutral comments

- Only a small number of comments were made by neutral respondents. These included comments on parking and access; cycle access; and construction timing.

Mixed comments

- Only a small number of comments were discussed in this section. These included comments on parking and access; cycle access; and design.

Note that because respondents were able to select more than one document (*Concept Design, Local Access Plan or Review of Environmental Factors*) to provide feedback on, some of the comments in this section are also discussed above in the ‘Design Concept’ and/or ‘Local Access Plan’ sections.

Supportive

24 comments

GENERAL SUPPORT (10)

Several comments offered general support for the proposal. These were mostly general in nature and included comments such as “I strongly support this proposal”. Other, more detailed comments included:

I think this is a great idea for the city. For space for pedestrians will encourage people to come into the city, spending money and boosting the economy, as well as encouraging the use of public transport, cycling, and walking, reducing carbon emissions

Absolutely love the plan. I am firmly in favour of pedestrianising the CBD as much as possible, and reducing the impact and presence of cars. Thank you

DESIGN FOR THE PERMANENT CLOSURE (4)

A couple of comments expressed support for the proposal but expressed a desire for more trees and greenery to be included in the proposal, both to provide shade and to beautify the area. Other comments about design suggested: incorporating ‘playable’ street furniture for children; incorporating family spaces with shaded seating and change tables; and ensuring rubbish bins are provided.

TRAFFIC (4)

All four of these comments commended the proposal’s people-centered approach and were supportive of the aspiration to reduce the amount of motor vehicle traffic in the area.

EVENTS AND ACTIVATION OF PEDESTRIAN AREAS (2)

Two comments discussed the activation of pedestrian areas, calling for seating areas; family-friendly spaces and play equipment; and food stalls and other vendors.

CONSTRUCTION TIMING (2)

A couple of respondents who were supportive of the proposal overall, noted that they wished to see construction work completed as quickly as possible in order to reduce negative impacts on businesses. One respondent noted that the construction of the light rail had already affected a number of businesses in the area so they wished to see this project completed with minimal disruption to local businesses.

FOOTWAY DINING (1)

One respondent was strongly in favour of encouraging more footway dining in the area. This respondent felt that it was an excellent way to “liven up” the area.

OTHER (1)

One respondent expressed concern about the cost of the proposed works, noting that significant rate payer money was spent on footpath paving, kerbing and guttering during the light rail construction, much of which will need to be ripped up and redone for this project.

Unsupportive

7 comments

PARKING AND ACCESS (6)

A small number of comments discussed parking and access. All but one of these comments came from respondents associated with Christ Church St Laurence. These comments expressed concern over loss of car parking near the church, as well as proposed traffic changes which would make vehicle access to the church more difficult and time consuming. Another respondent noted that the proposed changes would make access to the area difficult for elderly and disabled people.

OTHER (1)

One comment expressed frustration at the lack of meaningful consultation with the community and stakeholders before the proposal was decided upon and released to the public. This comment called for reconsideration of the proposal, and more meaningful engagement with the community to ensure that they are well informed and involved in the potential changes to the area.

Neutral

4 comments

PARKING, ACCESS, AND TRAFFIC (2)

Two respondents expressed concerns about how parking and access would be affected by the proposed changes. One comment discussed the implications for parishioners of Christ Church St Laurence, noting that the removal of car parks and the proposed traffic changes to surrounding streets will make it difficult for some parishioners to attend.

CONSTRUCTION TIMING (1)

One resident of George Street requested that noisy construction work not be conducted between 10pm and 7am. This respondent recounted having a negative experience during the construction of the light rail, where they noted loud activity including jackhammering was conducted past 1am, disrupting them in their home.

CYCLE ACCESS (1)

One respondent wanted to see safer cycle lanes added to the proposal for George Street, noting that overseas cities have successfully reduced their reliance on private cars after introducing cycle lanes in city centres.

Mixed

3 comments

PARKING AND ACCESS (1)

One comment stressed the importance of maintaining access for emergency services, focusing particularly on Christ Church St Laurence on George Street.

DESIGN FOR THE PERMANENT CLOSURE (1)

One respondent noted the need for Council to carefully consider the materials used for footpaths in pedestrian areas, stating that currently, paving in some areas is hazardous. This respondent suggested that slippery surfaces should be avoided, and that fallen tree debris should be factored into the design process as it can be a trip/slip hazard.

CYCLE ACCESS (1)

One respondent suggested that a separated cycle path would be a good addition to the proposal, allowing both cyclists and pedestrians to benefit from the reduced motor vehicle traffic in the area.

OTHER

17 COMMENTS

Some respondents did not provide feedback on any of the three documents discussed above. Instead, these respondents selected '*other*' and specified what their feedback was regarding in the text box provided in the survey. These comments are discussed below:

Below is a summary of points made by respondents about '*other*' aspects of the proposal for George Street, based on their overall sentiment towards the proposal.

Only a small number of comments were made on this section. The topics discussed were relatively similar across comments by respondents who were supportive, unsupportive, neutral and mixed in their opinions of the proposal.

- There were more comments in support of the proposal than unsupportive, neutral or mixed comments.
- Only a small number of comments were made by respondents on any topic.
- Cycle access was the most frequently mentioned topic. All but one comment supported adding cycle access into the proposal.

Supportive

11 comments

CYCLE ACCESS (6)

A small number of comments were made that suggested the proposal would be enhanced by including considerations for cyclists. A couple of respondents advocated for separated cycle paths, while others suggested that the pedestrian areas should be shared spaces for both cyclists and pedestrians. One respondent expressed concern at the behaviour of cycle delivery riders who "charge around pedestrian areas".

PARKING, ACCESS, AND TRAFFIC (1)

One respondent suggested that all of Sydney should be traffic-free, and deliveries to businesses could be made after 7pm.

DESIGN FOR THE PERMANENT CLOSURE (1)

One respondent called for more trees, shrubs and flowers, separated cycle paths, and attractive street furniture to be included in pedestrian areas.

EVENTS AND ACTIVATION OF PEDESTRIAN AREAS (1)

One comment called for pedestrian areas to be used for "activities that bring communities together". They also wanted a focus on healthier lifestyles, so encouraged less emphasis on

pubs, bars and nightclubs, and more emphasis on learning and creating together. This respondent suggested activities such as poetry, handicrafts and music.

GENERAL SUPPORT (1)

One comment expressed general support, stating that they thought the proposal was a “very, very good idea”.

OTHER (1)

One respondent suggested that this engagement process was a “pointless, tokenistic exercise” after hearing through the Sydney City News newsletter (October 2020) that the project was definitely going ahead.

Unsupportive

3 comments

PARKING AND ACCESS (2)

One respondent noted that the suggested area chosen for seating take “little notice of the windy and cold conditions often present or of the small pedestrian traffic this area attracts even in normal times”. This respondent also noted that as they cannot walk long distances or take public transport, and cannot afford to taxi, they rely heavily on being driven by car. As such, they suggest that it is not necessary to block vehicle access or remove parking, both of which they rely on to get to church and into the CBD.

Another respondent simply noted that they would not be able to go to various places on George Street that they have used for decades if the proposed works go ahead, noting that this would have serious consequences.

DESIGN FOR THE PERMANENT CLOSURE (1)

One respondent suggested that the southern side of Ultimo Road should be widened, instead of the northern side as currently proposed, due to “solar access and use”.

Neutral

2 comments

CYCLE ACCESS (1)

One respondent wanted to see cycleways added to both George Street and Devonshire Street, to better connect the CBD and create a more people-centered transport network.

DESIGN FOR THE PERMANENT CLOSURE (1)

One respondent urged Council not to fill pedestrian space with pot plants, seats or “those funny little green electricity box things”. They suggested that if these things were necessary, they should be placed to the side, or in car parking spaces.

Mixed

1 comment

CONSTRUCTION TIMING (1)

One respondent, a property owner on George Street, expressed concern about the impact that construction could have on their tenants. This respondent noted that tenants had already been negatively impacted during the construction of the light rail, and that extended street closures and construction work could further exacerbate these impacts. To reduce harm to businesses, this respondent suggested that work should be done in sections, with only small sections of the street blocked off at any time.

Proposal for Devonshire Street

Note that many of the respondents whose comments are discussed below indicated that their feedback related to both Devonshire Street and George Street. Therefore, many of the comments analysed below are also discussed in the above section of this report that relates to George Street.

CONCEPT DESIGN

120 COMMENTS

Below is a summary of points made by respondents about the Concept Design for Devonshire Street, based on their overall sentiment towards the proposal.

Supportive comments

- There were significantly more comments from respondents who were supportive of the proposal, than from those who were unsupportive, neutral or mixed.
- A considerable number of respondents offered general support for the proposal. These comments embraced the concept design, welcoming the pedestrian-centric development and looking forward to its implementation.
- A similar number of respondents discussed the design for the permanent closure of Devonshire Street. These comments called for more trees and greenery in pedestrian areas; careful consideration of seating options; and ensuring that the design enhances the flow of foot traffic.
- A moderate number of respondents, while supportive of the concept design, requested greater provision of cycleways.
- Several respondents discussed traffic concerns and offered suggestions in how to improve traffic congestion in the city beyond the removal of cars on Devonshire Street.
- Several respondents agreed that the concept design would favour local businesses and encourage more footway dining.

Unsupportive comments

- Only a small number of comments were received from respondents who were unsupportive of the proposal for Devonshire Street. These comments discussed cycle access and traffic.

Neutral comments

- Only a small number of comments were received from respondents who were neutral about the proposal for Devonshire Street. These comments mostly supported adding more cycle access to the proposal.

Mixed comments

- Only a small number of respondents made comments in this section. Again, comments mostly discussed a desire for better cycle access in pedestrian areas.

Supportive

103 Comments

GENERAL SUPPORT (38)

A considerable number of respondents embraced the concept design, welcoming the pedestrian-centric development and looking forward to its implementation. Respondents were pleased with proposal in general; the following comments capture this sentiment:

I love this proposal, making the city even more pedestrian friendly.

Amazing work as always City of Sydney. Fully supportive of these works as a proud resident, worker, landowner, architect, and developer. Less cars, more pedestrian friendly is the future.

An excellent idea to drive the economy and improve the usability & ambience towards a city for the people.

Amazing idea and I cannot wait to see it succeed.

DESIGN FOR THE PERMANENT CLOSURE (21)

The permanent closure of Devonshire Street was keenly discussed by a moderate number of respondents. Having people and the community as the guiding factor was commended and respondents appreciated how the removal of cars would enhance the pedestrian flow as well as accessibility of the area for both visitors and everyday users.

I LOVE this and support it whole heartedly. I have been a resident of the City of Sydney for over 20 years and we are a local walking/bike riding family.

As a resident of the City of Sydney who regularly visits these locations, I would greatly appreciate having pedestrianised areas that are more pleasant to walk on, better designed, and community-oriented.

I think this is a fantastic plan and as someone who lives, works and spends a lot of time in the City of Sydney.

Aligned with these comments were calls for further vegetation to be considered, though this was often coupled with respondents praising the current inclusion of greenery.

I'm enthusiastic about the increase in tree cover in these areas.

My main concern is the simple usage of shade trees and not an advanced/comprehensive approach to ensuring it is comfortable to use this space on hot days, increasing green space etc.

The more tree and plant coverage the better, these paved areas get extremely hot in Sydney summer and natural shade is necessary. Would love to see native species and wildflowers.

Respondents carefully noted how any streetscape additions such as seating, trees and phone booths must not restrict the pedestrian flow, as the area is heavily used and can often have bottlenecks.

Sydney Council needs to be focused on ensuring that pedestrians can walk in congested areas.

I would be mindful in the design to ensure that pedestrian flow (especially at peak times) is not adversely impacted by poorly placed street furniture.

CYCLE ACCESS (18)

A moderate number of respondents, while supportive of the concept design, requested a greater provision of cycleways. Respondents reported a current lack of access for cyclists and would like this to be amended, while also specifically noting that the removal of cars from the street would aid in facilitating this.

This is fantastic however I really think that cycle lanes along George St and Devonshire St would help move Sydney in the right direction encouraging more active transport and less congestion. Sydney needs more bike lanes, and a pedestrian boulevard is a fantastic place for them and can help separate pedestrians areas from the light rail corridor.

I would like cyclists to have access to these spaces where possible, with either dedicated cycle lanes (Devonshire St Surry Hills) or in shared zones.

The footpath is already pretty wide there, the extra space on the road could be used as a cycleway instead.

I am extremely disappointed that there is no provision for cycling here. It could be easily accommodated; in fact you can cycle between the light rail tracks easily enough (you just aren't supposed to).

TRAFFIC (10)

Several respondents discussed traffic concerns and offered suggestions in how to improve traffic congestion in the city beyond the removal of cars on Devonshire Street. These

comments were largely varied, from electric buses to congestion tolls, the following quotes give a flavour of the ideas that respondents were trying to convey:

Great idea, good to keep cars out of Central Sydney. We should have a Congestion Charge like they have in London. That is a Boundary right around the Centre if motorists go in it, they pay £10 per vehicle per day

I hope that the improvements will also include changing pedestrian prioritisation of traffic lights to include more and longer opportunities to cross.

I am very supportive of both projects and anything that enhances the pedestrian environment and priority. It would be great to see a pedestrian crossing across George St at the Railway Square intersection now that the traffic volumes entering George Street are much, much lower.

We should also move buses to electric as soon as possible because they are a major health hazard.

FOOTWAY DINING (8)

Several respondents agreed that the concept design would favour local businesses and encourage more footway dining. Comments reflected how respondents felt that the removal of cars would revitalise the street and create a more attractive atmosphere for users and retailers.

I think it is a wonderful idea to make as much of the city as possible as traffic free and pedestrian/diner friendly as possible. Footway dining is not only good for social distancing, it is a really social and fun way to dine and feel part of the city.

Any move to increase pedestrian dominance in the CBD & make it easier to navigate will improve the experience. There should be a liberal approach to permitting outdoor dining on both George St & Devonshire St.

Experience overseas has shown that such developments encourage more, longer, and more extensive local shopping.

EVENTS AND ACTIVATION OF PEDESTRIAN AREAS (5)

A small number of respondents noted how events should be utilised to activate the area and demonstrate the advantage of pedestrianised streets. These respondents felt that such events were key to ensuring the success of the concept design and making the area a hub for socialising and connectivity in the future.

Events and other kinds of area activation would be invaluable in introducing these new spaces to the community and showing their benefit.

The plan will allow more people to safely access these areas as well as increase space for outdoor seating and events. This will incentivise new business to open in the area and revitalise the precinct.

PARKING AND ACCESS (3)

Three respondents, though supportive of the changes, raised concerns over how delivery and service vehicles would access the precinct following the removal of cars, and equally, how residents and retail owners would be affected.

I think it is also very important to manage access to the businesses better during construction.

How will delivery riders, residents, staff and visitors with bicycles access properties and where will they park?

Unsupportive

3 Comments

CYCLE ACCESS (2)

Two respondents who did not support the plan maintained that the pedestrian access offered currently was sufficient and that any changes should instead be dedicated to cyclists and providing better access for them.

The current existing pedestrian path on Devonshire St is large enough. The proposed expansion should be replaced by a cycleway.

Plans do not sufficiently provide for bicycle access in this area. Essential to maintain local access for bicycle travel to link to local destinations. Omitting bicycle access will force cyclists onto highly trafficked streets and increase journey times.

OTHER (1)

One respondent strongly opposed the proposal and rejected that it would benefit the local residents or businesses. They noted how the addition of the light rail has significantly restricted access and the residents have been subjected to constant construction nuisance due to it. They had little faith that the proposed changes would be any different and argued that the plans were an unnecessary “ideological effort”.

Neutral

10 comments

CYCLE ACCESS (9)

Several respondents made comments about bicycle access. All of these comments supported allowing cyclists to use pedestrian areas. The general sentiment of these responses can be summed up by the following comment:

Overall I love that more space is being dedicated to people, rather than cars, however the lack of cycleways through the area (both Devonshire and George Streets) mean that fewer people can access these pedestrianised areas without cars/buses. Adding cycleways, ESPECIALLY on Devonshire St, to connect Bourke Street cycleway to the central station cycleway will make this place even more

people-centric and enable residents and visitors to move in more environmentally friendly ways.

TRAFFIC (1)

One respondent, whose comment has been discussed in earlier sections of this report asked:

What further traffic flow, parking, congestion and driving inconvenience will the proposed changes cause? How will Chalmers Street and Devonshire Street cut offs cope?

Mixed

4 comments

CYCLE ACCESS (3)

Three respondents made comments suggesting that cyclists should be permitted to use pedestrian areas, whether on separated or shared cycle paths. One respondent noted:

By building a cycleway along Devonshire St, Bourke St becomes even more useful and an entirely new area of the city becomes safe for cycling. Even if at this point a cycleway is not feasible, all efforts should be made to ensure the area can be easily converted into a cycleway in the future.

TRAFFIC (1)

One comment commended the goal to reduce motor vehicle traffic in the CBD.

LOCAL ACCESS PLAN

55 COMMENTS

Below is a summary of points made by respondents about the Local Access Plan for Devonshire Street, based on their overall sentiment towards the proposal.

Supportive comments

- There were more comments from respondents who were supportive of the proposal, than from those who were unsupportive, neutral or mixed.
- General supportive comments were the most frequently made in this section. Many of these comments lacked detail but were clear in their support.
- Several comments suggested that cycle access should be added to the proposal. A few comments suggested separated cycle paths, while others favoured shared paths for both cyclists and pedestrians.
- A small number of respondents discussed traffic. Generally, these comments supported reducing the amount of traffic in the area.

Unsupportive comments

- Only a small number respondents were unsupportive of the proposal for Devonshire Street, discussing cycle access, traffic and general opposition.

Neutral comments

- Only a small number of comments were received from respondents who were neutral about the proposal for Devonshire Street. All of these comments discussed cycle access and wanted to see this better incorporated into the proposal.

Mixed comments

- No mixed comments were made in this section.

Supportive

47 comments

GENERAL SUPPORT (20)

A moderate number of comments were made that expressed general support for the proposal. Many of these comments lacked detail but were clear in their support. Examples include:

Amazing idea and I can't wait to see it succeed

I agree with your plan 100%, do it as soon as possible.

Other, more detailed comments commended the proposal's focus on reducing the number of motor vehicles in the CBD, and prioritising pedestrians.

I think this is a great idea for the city. For space for pedestrians will encourage people to come into the city, spending money and boosting the economy, as well as encouraging the use of public transport, cycling, and walking, reducing carbon emissions.

CYCLE ACCESS (8)

Several comments suggested that cycle access should be added to the proposal. A few comments suggested separated cycle paths, while others favoured shared paths for both cyclists and pedestrians. Overall, adding dedicated cycle paths was seen as a good way to connect the city and provide safe options for both cyclists and pedestrians.

TTRAFFIC (7)

A small number of comments were made about traffic. Generally, these comments supported reducing the amount of traffic in the area. The reasons given for this support included that it would make the area easier and safer for pedestrians to navigate and reduce emissions. One respondent also noted the need for traffic lights to be updated to

reflect reduced traffic volumes, ensuring lower waiting times and longer crossing times for pedestrians.

DESIGN FOR THE PERMANENT CLOSURE (4)

Comments about design were made by a small number of respondents who supported increasing the amount of greenery and vegetation in pedestrian areas; having larger footpaths; and beautifying the space more generally. Other suggestions offered included limiting the size of phone booths and where they can be put; providing shaded seating areas; and having street furniture that children can play on.

FOOTWAY DINING (4)

A small number of respondents expressed enthusiasm for footway dining in the area. These comments suggested that allowing people to enjoy dining outside would help make the area more vibrant. One respondent suggested allowing street food vendors to sell food in pedestrian areas without lengthy registration process or high fees.

PARKING AND ACCESS (2)

One respondent wanted to see all of Sydney become “traffic free” during the day. Meanwhile, another respondent suggested that access to businesses in the area needs to be carefully managed during construction to ensure minimal impact.

EVENTS AND ACTIVATION OF PEDESTRIAN AREAS (2)

A couple of comments suggested ideas of how the space could be activated. One respondent suggested that allowing street food vendors to operate in pedestrian areas without difficult or expensive regulatory processes would help to liven up the area. Another respondent suggested that family areas with seating, changing facilities and rubbish bins could be provided in pedestrian areas.

Unsupportive

4 comments

CYCLE ACCESS (2)

Two comments questioned the omission of cycle access from the proposal, noting that separated bike paths along Devonshire Street would provide a safe and easy way for cyclists to travel around the CBD.

GENERAL OPPOSITION (1)

One comment expressed general opposition to the proposal, suggesting that there are no benefits to Surry Hills residents or businesses. This respondent noted that light rail has already negatively impacted the Surry Hills community through disrupted access as well as noise pollution, and opposes further construction work in the area.

TRAFFIC (1)

One respondent had the following complaint about access to Devonshire Street:

Have you actually tried to get to Devonshire Street from Chalmers St? You and the state government have royally screwed up access for residents to get to Devonshire St. Open Waterloo Street. It confounds all residents as to how you

expect us to get into the area. Apart from having to go to Albion Street, 500m away then backtrack to Devonshire St, or try coming up Randle St then cross over 2 lanes of merging traffic to get to Devonshire St is ridiculous and at times quite perilous.

Neutral

4 comments

CYCLE ACCESS (4)

All of the comments from neutral respondents about the Local Access Plan relating to Devonshire Street called for cycle access to be included in the new pedestrian areas. Comments expressed confusion at the omission of a cycle lane in the plan, arguing that this would connect the city and create a safer route for people on bikes.

Please ensure that those on will be able to use these thoroughfares. These are most safe direct routes for those commuting on bicycles. Devonshire provides a s direct link between the new central station cycleway and the Bourke street.

Mixed

0 comments

No comments were made in this section.

REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

26 COMMENTS

Below is a summary of points made by respondents about the Review of Environmental Factors for Devonshire Street, based on their overall sentiment towards the proposal.

Supportive comments

- There were more comments from respondents who were supportive of the proposal, than from those who were unsupportive, neutral, or mixed.
- The most frequently made comments in this section were generally supportive of the proposal. In particular, they commended the plan's focus on pedestrians over cars.
- Other topics that respondents commented on include traffic; footway dining; events and activation of pedestrian areas; and cycle access.

Unsupportive comments

- Only a small number of comments were received from respondents who were unsupportive of the proposal for Devonshire Street. These respondents felt that the proposed changes to access would negatively impact them, and therefore expressed general opposition to the proposal.

Neutral comments

- Only one comment was received from respondents who were neutral about the proposal for Devonshire Street. This comment questioned how

traffic flow, access, congestion and driving convenience would be affected by the proposal.

Mixed comments

- No comments were made on this section.

Supportive

23 comments

GENERAL SUPPORT (14)

Several comments were made that expressed general support for the proposal. These included comments such as "All reasonably good, thank you" and "I strongly support this proposal". Below is an example of some of the more detailed comments:

Pedestrianization of the CBD is long overdue and more should be implemented. I grew up in Italy in the nineties and the same arguments against pedestrianization were heard there back then. Now everyone over there can reap the benefit of that choice. Macquarie Street next!

TRAFFIC (2)

A couple of respondents supported reducing the amount of motor vehicle traffic in the area, with one respondent specifically mentioning the noise created by busses. This comment stated that Council should aim convert to electric busses.

FOOTWAY DINING (2)

Two comments expressed support for footway dining in the CBD, including small food stalls or food trucks.

EVENTS AND ACTIVATION OF PEDESTRIAN AREAS (2)

Two respondents offered suggestions around how pedestrian areas could be activated and enjoyed by the public. These suggestions included installing interesting and comfortable street furniture options including equipment that children can play on; and allowing pop-up food stalls or food trucks and other vendors to occupy the area without having to pay large fees or endure long regulatory processes.

CYCLE ACCESS (2)

Two respondents suggested adding cycle access to the proposal so that both cyclists and pedestrians can enjoy the area and its reduced traffic volumes.

PARKING AND ACCESS (1)

One respondent noted that it is important to consider access to businesses during construction, and manage this in such a way that reduces the negative impact that street closures and construction work could have on them.

Unsupportive

2 comments

GENERAL OPPOSITION (2)

Two respondents made comments expressing general opposition to this proposal, due to the perceived negative impacts it would have on their lives and access to the city centre.

Neutral

1 comments

PARKING, ACCESS, AND TRAFFIC (1)

Only one comment was made by a neutral respondent. This comment questioned how traffic flow, access, congestion and driving convenience would be affected by the proposal.

Mixed

0 comments

No comments were made in this section.

OTHER

14 COMMENTS

Below is a summary of points made by respondents about 'other' aspects of the proposal for Devonshire Street, based on their overall sentiment towards the proposal.

A moderate number of comments fell into this section. The topics discussed were relatively similar across comments by respondents who were supportive, unsupportive, neutral, and mixed in their opinions of the proposal.

- There were more comments in support of the proposal than unsupportive, neutral, or mixed comments.
- Only a small number of comments were made by respondents on any topic.
- Cycle access was the most frequently mentioned topic. All but one comment supported adding cycle access to the proposal.

Supportive

10 comments

CYCLE ACCESS (6)

A small number of comments suggested incorporating cycle access into the proposal to allow both pedestrians and cyclists to benefit from the proposed changes.

PARKING, ACCESS, AND TRAFFIC (1)

One respondent suggested that all of Sydney should be traffic-free, and deliveries to businesses could be made after 7pm.

DESIGN FOR THE PERMANENT CLOSURE (1)

One respondent called for more trees, shrubs and flowers, separated cycle paths, and attractive street furniture to be included in pedestrian areas.

EVENTS AND ACTIVATION OF PEDESTRIAN AREAS (1)

One comment called for pedestrian areas to be used for "activities that bring communities together". They also wanted a focus on healthier lifestyles, so encouraged less emphasis on pubs, bars and nightclubs, and more emphasis on learning and creating together. This respondent suggested activities such as poetry, handicrafts and music.

GENERAL SUPPORT (1)

One comment expressed general support, stating that they thought the proposal was a “very, very good idea”.

Unsupportive

1 comment

PARKING AND ACCESS (1)

One respondent noted that if the proposal goes ahead, they will be unable to access the places that they are used to accessing, and suggested this would have negative consequences for them.

Neutral

3 comments

CYCLE ACCESS (2)

Two comments suggested that cycleways should be added to the proposal to provide a safer route for cyclists to travel in the CBD, and to better connect the city.

DESIGN FOR THE PERMANENT CLOSURE (1)

One respondent urged Council not to fill pedestrian space with pot plants, seats or “those funny little green electricity box things”. They suggested that if these things were necessary, they should be placed to the side, or in car parking spaces.

Mixed

0 comments

No comments were made in this section.

Appendix

Appendix A – The survey questions

1. My feedback is regarding (select all that apply)
 - George Street, Sydney
 - Devonshire Street, Surry Hills
2. I would like to comment on (select all that apply)
 - ☐ Concept design – proposed plan of the new pedestrian areas.
 - ☐ Local access plan – proposed traffic and access arrangements.
 - ☐ Review of environmental factors – addresses impacts of the proposal and how they will be managed.
 - ☐ Other (please specify)
3. My feedback is about (select all that apply)
 - ☐ Driveway access
 - ☐ Loading and servicing
 - ☐ Emergency services access
 - ☐ Design for the permanent closure
 - ☐ Footway dining
 - ☐ Events & activation of pedestrian areas
 - ☐ Approval process
 - ☐ Construction timing
 - ☐ Other (please specify)
4. My submission is
 - ☐ Supportive of the proposal
 - ☐ Neutral
 - ☐ Unsupportive of the proposal
5. Please provide your feedback (open text box)
6. You can also choose to upload a document as part of your submission
7. Please provide your contact information
8. Please identify your relationship to the project
 - ☐ Resident on/near George Street, Sydney
 - ☐ Resident on/near Devonshire Street, Surry Hills

- ☐ Property owner on/near George Street, Sydney
- ☐ Property owner on/near Devonshire Street, Surry Hills
- ☐ Business/organisation on/near George Street, Sydney
- ☐ Business/organisation on/near Devonshire Street, Surry Hills
- ☐ Other (please specify)

9. If your submission is on behalf of an organisation, please provide the organisation's name here
10. Feedback may be published in publicly available reports at the end of the consultation period. Do you give permission for your name or organisation's name to appear in these reports, with your feedback attributed? We will not publish your email address.

Appendix B – Pre-formatted letter from CCSL

Below is a copy of a pre-formatted letter sent in by parishioners of the Christ Church St Laurence Anglican church. Thirty-five people signed and sent it as their submission on this engagement process.

17 October 2020

TO: City of Sydney Council

Roads and Maritime Services, Transport for NSW

RE: Proposal to extend the pedestrian boulevard of George Street Sydney from Bathurst Street to Railway Square - Submission by parishioners and friends of Christ Church St Laurence, Railway Square, Sydney

As a parishioner of Christ Church St Laurence, I have a number of concerns about the deleterious logistical and community access impacts of the proposal to create a pedestrian boulevard on George Street, Sydney, from Bathurst Street to Railway Square.

Christ Church St Laurence (CCSL) has been here since 1845. It is a national Heritage listed building. There are 23 services held here over 7 days a week, and numerous organ recitals and concerts. Plus, in a 'normal' year, the church is open every day for people to visit, pray and seek solace.

My concerns about the proposal are:

- The apparent removal of half the existing street parking on both sides of George Street from Rawson Place to Pitt Street intersection discriminating against those who can only drive to CCSL, especially the elderly
- No left turn permitted southbound from George Street into Pitt Street. This means no option to drive city-bound or east-bound directly from CCSL
- Extending bus and coach parking zones on the eastern side of George Street (CCSL side) including encroaching on the current zone 'Reserved for Weddings and Funerals' outside the church which is only 2 car spaces

- Closing traffic access onto George Street from Bathurst Street to Rawson Place curtailing access routes to CCSL for parishioners who live in northern and eastern suburbs

To address these concerns about the proposal, I suggest:

- Increasing the loading zone parking in this block of George Street and ensuring some of the proposed loading zones in this block of George Street include paid street parking during week days at all hours as well as the current all hours on Sunday and most of Saturday. Move some bus and coach parking to the western side of Pitt Street
- Retaining the left turn from George Street southbound into Pitt Street
- That the 2 vehicle parking spaces directly outside the front of CCSL 'Reserved for Weddings and Funerals' should include disabled parking and eliminate bus and coach parking
- At the intersection of Rawson Place and George Street, re-introducing a 'left turn for local traffic only' to compensate for the complete loss of access to George Street and hence CCSL southbound from any intersection along the full length of George Street.

This report has been prepared by:

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