

Item 7.

Project Scope - Pitt Street North Walking and Cycling Improvements

File No: S111914

Summary

This report describes the proposed walking and cycling improvements on Pitt Street between Circular Quay and King Street. The project will deliver increased space for walking and a separated cycleway, which will form part of the Regional and Local Bike Network identified in the City's Cycling Strategy and Action Plan 2018-2030.

As a major north-south link within the CBD, a pop-up separated two-way cycleway was installed on the western side of Pitt Street. This alignment minimises conflicts at major intersections and maintains passenger vehicle loading on the eastern side of the street.

The cycleway is highly used. Since opening, the number of weekly bike trips has increased by 500 per cent to 6,270 trips in the first week of March 2021.

Community consultation was undertaken in March and April 2021. The proposal is to continue the operation of the existing Pitt Street two-way separated cycleway on Pitt Street between King Street and Underwood Street in Sydney for a period up to two years. It is also proposed to subsequently finalise the design of, and construct, a permanent cycleway to replace the pop-up in a similar alignment and configuration.

The City received a total of 89 submissions comprising 75 survey responses and 14 email submissions. 47 responses were supportive, 7 responses were in opposition and 35 were qualified responses with suggestions.

A consortium of six property owners along the route provided a submission to the City. Prepared by planners, Urbis, the submission supports a cycleway in Pitt Street but argues that it is better situated on the eastern side rather than the proposed west side as there are more off-street carparks on the west side. Intersection operation safety and efficiency is the primary reason for the City proposing west side alignment. Transport for NSW have indicated that it would not support a cycleway on the eastern side of Pitt Street. The City will liaise with the consortium on their concerns, and issues raised related to driveway crossovers will be addressed during detailed design of the permanent cycleway. Refinements will also be implemented on the pop-up cycleway in the interim, if required.

This report seeks Council approval of the proposal for increased space for walking and a new permanent separated cycleway in Pitt Street, which will replace the existing "pop-up" cycleway built in the same location.

Recommendation

It is resolved that Council:

- (A) note the Review of Environmental Factors for the Pitt Street pop-up cycleway to be retained for a period of up to two years, as shown in Attachment B to the subject report;
- (B) approve the Chief Executive Officer signing the determination associated with the exhibited Review of Environmental Factors for the Pitt Street pop-up cycleway;
 - (i) the City is the self-assessment authority for the projects and holds the authority to assess and grant approval to activities under Part 5 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979;
 - (ii) the proposed projects identified in the Review of Environmental Factors is an “activity” under Division 17 (Road infrastructure facilities) within State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007. The activity constitutes in part “exempt development” and in part activities that are “development that is permissible without consent” and therefore Part 5 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979; applies;
 - (iii) the Review of Environmental Factors has been carried out for the projects addressing the environmental impacts of the temporary retention of the pop-up cycleway in accordance with Clause 228(2) of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000; and
 - (iv) subject to compliance with the mitigation measures outlined in each Review of Environmental Factors, the proposed activity will not result in a significant impact on the environment and may be approved under Part 5 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979;
- (C) note the Pitt Street permanent cycleway Review of Environmental Factors, as shown in Attachment C to the subject report;
- (D) approve the concept design for the Pitt Street North Walking and Cycling Improvements, as shown in Attachment D to the subject report, for detailed documentation and construction tender;
- (E) note the estimated project costs as detailed in confidential Attachment F to the subject report; and
- (F) note that the City has accepted a funding offer from the NSW Government as part of the Transport for NSW Active Transport Program for construction of the project, conditional on the works being commenced in the 2021/22 financial year.

Attachments

- Attachment A.** Bike Network Map
- Attachment B.** Pitt Street Pop-up Cycleway - Review of Environmental Factors
- Attachment C.** Pitt Street Permanent Cycleway - Review of Environmental Factors
- Attachment D.** Community Consultation Drawings - Concept Design for Pitt Street North Walking and Cycling Improvements - King Street to Circular Quay
- Attachment E.** Engagement Report
- Attachment F.** Financial Implications (Confidential)

Background

1. In November 2018, Council endorsed the Cycling Strategy and Action Plan 2018-2030, for incorporation into the City's community strategic plan Sustainable Sydney 2030. The Cycling Strategy and Action Plan includes an overall proposed Bike Network which is being implemented over time.
2. The Plan designates Pitt Street as a north-south Bike Network link through the central part of the city centre, as shown in Attachment A to the subject report. The Pitt Street cycleway is part of the broader NSW Government Co-designed Bicycle Network Blueprint and is consistent with the aims of 'Sydney's Cycling Future' as it will improve the safety of - and facilities for - people riding bikes.
3. People walking account for 81 per cent of all movements along Pitt Street north of King Street. Bikes, buses, trucks and cars account for less than one-fifth. This proposal increases the amount of space provided for walking while also improving access for people riding, accommodating kerbside use for passengers, freight and servicing and maintaining vehicular access to properties.
4. Concept designs for the Pitt Street North Walking and Cycling Improvements, as shown in Attachment D to the subject report, have been developed and consultation was undertaken in March and April 2021.
5. In May 2020, Transport for NSW approached the City with the proposal to deliver pop-up cycleways in response to the pandemic, to allow people to travel more safely and maintain physical distancing. Pitt Street north was identified as a suitable route for a pop-up to improve safety for people riding within Central Sydney. The pop-up was also identified to reduce the demand on public transport and on roads through greater use of cycling for transport. The City subsequently constructed a pop-up cycleway along Pitt Street north on the west-side alignment proposed in this report.
6. Bike counters are in place along Pitt Street north. Since opening, the number of weekly bike trips has increased by 500 per cent to an average of 5,794 trips per week in February 2021 and 6,270 trips in the first week of March 2021.
7. The road space changes have supported the provision of more outdoor space for businesses and for people to sit and walk.
8. The cycleway connects Pitt Street Mall and the existing shared path between Reiby Place and Alfred Street at Circular Quay. It will also connect to the proposed King Street cycleway (a critical east-west link) and the Castlereagh Street cycleway when these links are completed.
9. The pop-up cycleway has provided an opportunity to observe and understand how the design contributes to the desired outcomes and it has enabled safety issues to be addressed and incorporated into the pop-up cycleway and in the design of the proposed permanent cycleway for further resolution if necessary.
10. To provide increased space for walking and safe cycling connections within the wider network, the proposal includes the same functional arrangements and reallocation of road space that have been implemented for the pop-up cycleway and are described below.

11. The proposal for the permanent cycleway will be reported to a future meeting of the Local Pedestrian, Cycling and Traffic Calming Committee for endorsement once the detailed design has been completed.

Review of Environmental Factors Pop-up Cycleway

12. The Review of Environmental Factors assesses the proposal to continue the operation of the existing Pitt Street two-way separated cycleway currently operating along the western side of Pitt Street between King Street and Underwood Street in Sydney for a period up to two years, during which time the City proposes to build the permanent cycleway.
13. The purpose of the Review of Environmental Factors is to describe the proposal, assesses the potential for the proposal to result in environmental impacts, and inform the decision to proceed with the proposal.
14. The Review of Environmental Factors was prepared by environmental planning consultants on behalf of the City of Sydney. The proposal and associated environmental impacts have been described in the context of clause 228 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000 (EP&A Regulation), fulfilling the requirements of Section 5.5 of the EP&A Act.
15. The Review of Environmental Factors found that the proposal would not result in any significant impacts upon the environment and as such may be approved with relevant mitigations applied.
16. The pop-up cycleway provides a safe connection within Central Sydney and usage has steadily increased over time to an average of 5,794 trips per week in February 2021 and 6,270 trips in the first week of March 2021.
17. To continue the operation of the pop-up cycleway, no new major construction works are required. Adjustments for improved safety will be made if required. Maintenance works may involve replacement of the safety barriers with other materials that may be more suitable for ongoing operation.
18. The full Review of Environmental Factors of the pop-up cycleway is provided as Attachment B of this report.

Concept Design and Scope of Works

Separated two-way cycleway

19. A separated two-way cycleway was identified for the western side of Pitt Street during bike network planning and this project's development phase. This alignment minimises conflicts at major intersections and maintains passenger vehicle loading on the eastern side of the street.
20. A western side-aligned cycleway will connect safely to the future continuation of the King Street separated cycleway east of Clarence Street.
21. There are several public car parks located on the western side of Pitt Street. The final design will consider improvements to driveway crossings, noting that drivers are required to give way to people on the footpath and cycleway.

22. This proposal reallocates the western kerbside lane to people walking and creates opportunity for additional outdoor dining. The space will remain at road level therefore minimising changes to kerb alignments, stormwater drainage, pavements, utilities and services.
23. The cycleway's continuation between Underwood Street and Reiby Place will be further developed in the design development phase. An interim solution will be provided for the remainder of the construction period of the One Circular Quay development between Pitt Street and George Street along Alfred Street.
24. The proposal for the permanent cycleway is shown in Attachment D to the subject report.

Road space reallocation

25. The cycleway replaces one southbound vehicle travel lane along Pitt Street. The street serves as local access within the road network. The proposal maintains vehicular access to properties and provides for deliveries and servicing.
26. Emergency vehicles have the same level of access and can use the cycleway in an emergency.
27. The parking lane on the western side of Pitt Street will be replaced with space for people to walk and will provide opportunity for kerb-side dining.
28. Previously, 89 per cent of people riding a bicycle on Pitt Street were using the footpath. Providing a dedicated space for people riding removes the incentive to ride on the footpath, thus increasing safety for people walking.

Changes to intersection with Spring Street

29. As part of the Pitt Street pop-up cycleway, the entry traffic lane of Spring Street was closed to vehicles at Pitt Street. The closure improved safety by preventing traffic from Bond Street crossing Pitt Street into Spring Street. The closure has simplified traffic movements at this intersection and creates a safer environment for all road users, particularly people walking and riding.
30. It is proposed to retain the closure of the entry traffic lane of Spring Street from Pitt Street when formalising the Pitt Street Cycleway.
31. The closure increases footpath space within this area. Alternative access routes are available nearby for drivers that need to access Spring Street.
32. In February 2021, Transport for NSW approved a Traffic Management Plan for the proposed permanent closure.
33. The proposal will be considered by a future Local Pedestrian, Cycling and Traffic Calming Committee meeting for endorsement, and reported back to Council for approval.

Kerbside use changes

34. As part of the pop-up cycleway, the City developed and implemented a Kerbside Use Plan in collaboration with Transport for New South Wales, to meet likely kerbside needs. The City will monitor needs of businesses and respond with any required minor adjustments to the Kerbside Use Plan as required.

35. Kerbside use on the western side includes 30 daytime loading zones. During the evening and weekend, most of these operate as meter parking, mobility spaces, a mail zone, taxi zone and a small number of short-stay spaces.
36. Most of the existing parking on the eastern kerb is of high value, especially for passenger transport.
37. The Kerbside Use Plan focuses on activating some unused kerb space, increasing the operating hours of the significant number of remaining and new loading zones, and meter parking, timing replacement mobility parking, and minor changes in some adjacent streets (primarily Spring and Bond Streets).
38. The changes implemented as part of the Kerbside Use Plan are proposed to be made permanent as part of this proposal.

Traffic signals

39. For the pop-up cycleway, Transport for New South Wales implemented all the required traffic signal changes. No further changes are required for the proposed permanent cycleway with the exception of the intersection with King Street where the detailed design process will consider minor signal modifications to improve performance and safety of this intersection.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030

40. Sustainable Sydney 2030 is a vision for the sustainable development of the City to 2030 and beyond. It includes 10 strategic directions to guide the future of the City, as well as 10 targets against which to measure progress. This report is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
 - (a) Direction 3 - Integrated Transport for a Connected City - The project includes traffic calming initiatives that support behaviour change in the city and its villages and encourages a shift to sustainable travel modes.
 - (b) Direction 4 - A City for Walking and Cycling - The proposal will meet the objective of implementing priority projects to improve safety, accessibility, connectivity and amenity across the local government area for people cycling and walking.
 - (a) Direction 5 - A Lively and Engaging City Centre - The proposal improves place, such as additional space for outdoor dining and live music performances can be heard above street noise.

Organisational Impact

41. The project will create additional assets, including new civil infrastructure and pavement markings, which will require ongoing maintenance. The pop-up cycleway is subject to regular inspection and maintenance.

Risks

42. Risks associated with the proposal have been considered through the concept design and consultation phases. These include safety for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists, environmental and economic impacts, and community concerns.

43. A Road Safety Audit was carried out on the completed pop-up cycleway and identified risks have been mitigated through amendments to the pop-up. The Road Safety Audit will also inform the design development for the permanent design.
44. Further Road Safety Audits will be carried out on the developed designs to further identify any risks associated with the proposals and develop mitigation measures.

Social / Cultural / Community

45. People will have improved access to safe cycling infrastructure. The proposed bike network connections will contribute to better connected neighbourhoods, increased transport choice and a more active and healthier community. It will create a safe option for people travelling between workplaces, schools, health care and the city centre.
46. People will have increased footpath space and there will be additional outdoor dining opportunities.

Environmental

47. The project aligns with the City's Sustainable Sydney 2030 goals which aim to provide a better environment for people walking and riding bikes, resulting in lower carbon emissions and reduced pollution.
48. Cycling and walking are integral to our transport future because they are the most accessible, equitable, sustainable and reliable forms of transport.

Economic

49. The additional footpath space has provided new opportunities for kerb side dining and, along with building cycleways, supports the City's Economic Recovery Plan.

Financial Implications

50. The Pitt Street North cycleway is funded by NSW Government Active Transport Priority Cycleways program.
51. The total forecast project construction costs are based on the concept plans and have been verified by independent quantity surveyors. A summary of the financial implications is included in confidential Attachment F.
52. Nine parking meters located along the western kerb of Pitt Street, between King Street and Reiby Place will need to be removed. The anticipated loss in revenue is approximately \$240,000 per annum. The parking meters were deactivated as part of the "pop-up" implementation.
53. There are sufficient funds in the 2020/21 Capital Works budget and future year forward estimates to deliver this project.

Relevant Legislation

54. Roads Act 1993.
55. Local Government Act 1993.

56. Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.
57. Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000.
58. State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007.
59. Local Government Act 1993 - Section 10A provides that a council may close to the public so much of its meeting as comprises the discussion of information that would, if disclosed, confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom the council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business.
60. Attachment F contains confidential information which, if disclosed, would confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business.
61. Discussion of the matter in an open meeting would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest because it would compromise Council's ability to negotiate fairly and commercially to achieve the best outcome for its ratepayers.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

62. Key dates for the Pitt Street North cycleway are:

Milestone	Target Dates
Design Development	May - September 2021
Local Pedestrian, Cycling and Traffic Calming Committee Approval	August 2021
Tender period and approval to appoint contractor	October - January 2021
Construction commences	April 2022

Options

63. Leaving the existing "pop-up" cycleway in place permanently would mean forgoing implementing improvements informed by feedback from the monitoring and evaluation phase of the project. It would also mean forgoing replacement of the pop-up's yellow plastic-based product separator kerb with stone kerb that is usually used in the CBD. This option is therefore not recommended.

64. Relocating the cycleway to the eastern kerb was investigated, however, this option is not recommended because:
- (a) The required arrangements at the signalised intersections are considered less safe. They would require either a left turn ban for vehicles, which is unusual and therefore carries a high risk of non-compliance and resulting conflict between cars and bike riders, or would require a separate traffic signal phase for left turning vehicles, which would reduce green time for bike riders and hold up through traffic.
 - (b) Right turns (west towards George Street) would be allowed, increasing the amount of traffic crossing the Light Rail at George Street. As the Light Rail is given priority at those intersections, further traffic delays would be anticipated.
 - (c) Passengers would be boarding or exiting vehicles on the roadside as the parking lane would be located on the right-hand side. This is considered less safe.
65. Decommissioning of the "pop-up" cycleway at the end of the COVID-19 Development-Temporary Cycleways Order 2020 without replacing it in permanent materials. The removal would reverse the positive impacts and outcomes of the cycleway. This option would not achieve the City of Sydney's strategic objectives. This option is therefore not recommended.

Public Consultation

66. The City consulted residents and businesses in the area between 12 March and 9 April 2021. 2,920 letters were sent out.
67. Notification as required under Section 116 of the Roads Act 1993, was also carried out from 9 March to 12 April 2021 for the proposed road closure into Spring Street.
68. A project page was available at sydneyyoursay.com.au and was viewed 501 times and the related documents were downloaded 257 times
69. The City received a total of 89 submissions including 75 survey response and 14 email submissions comprising:
- (a) 47 responses in support of the proposal;
 - (b) 7 did not support the proposal; and
 - (c) 35 were qualified responses with suggestions.
70. Key points raised during community consultation include:
- (a) general support for more safe riding and the connection this project will provide;
 - (b) support for spaces for allocation of space for riding in place of parking spaces is supported by some respondents; and
 - (c) more people will ride knowing that these connections are there.

71. Concerns people raised about the project include:
 - (a) The reduction in traffic lanes causes traffic congestion; and
 - (b) Accessing driveways and changes to deliveries.
72. Following the completion of the pop-up cycleway, a survey found that 97 per cent of people felt safer riding on the separated cycleway. The traffic speeds have not changed significantly, and median speeds continue to remain below 40 km/h. Most community feedback has been positive and supportive of the pop-up.
73. During the pop-up cycleway public engagement period, six property owners along the route provided a submission to the City. Prepared by planners, the submission supports a cycleway in Pitt Street but argues that it is better situated on the eastern side rather than the proposed west side as there are more off-street carparks on the west side. Intersection operation safety and efficiency is the primary reason for the proposed west side alignment. The City has meet with the property owners on their concerns. Issues raised relating to driveway crossovers will be addressed during detailed design of the permanent cycleway, or with changes made to the pop-up in the interim if required.
74. Submissions from Committee for Sydney and Uber were received supporting the pop-up cycleway and the plan to make it permanent.
75. A detailed Engagement Report is included at Attachment E.

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