

Project Scope – Oxford and Liverpool Street Cycleway

File No: X037203

Summary

This report describes the proposed new permanent cycleways on:

- Oxford Street between Flinders Street and College Street, and;
- Liverpool Street between College Street and Castlereagh Street.

The project will deliver a safe connection for people riding between the existing cycleways along Bourke Street and in the city centre on Liverpool and Castlereagh Streets.

The Oxford and Liverpool Street cycleway is part of the City's broader Cycling Strategy and Action Plan, the NSW Government's Principal Bicycle Network and a strategic cycleway network route in the NSW Government's Sydney City Centre Access Strategy. The proposal aligns with a well-used bike commuter route between the city centre and eastern suburbs. The majority of the proposed cycleway will be a separated cycleway, with the section at Taylor Square remaining as a shared path.

The project will provide a series of streetscape and footpath amenity improvements that will improve safety, connectivity and comfort for people walking and provide a more liveable, green street environment. The project would improve safety and amenity for people walking, sitting at cafés and restaurants, and visiting local business.

Community consultation for the project was undertaken in October and November 2021. One hundred and fifty-seven people made submissions. The majority were supportive of the cycleway works, with several suggestions made to improve the designs.

This report seeks Council's approval of the concept design.

Recommendation

It is resolved that Council:

- (A) approve the concept design for the Oxford and Liverpool Street cycleway as shown in Attachment B to the subject report for detailed documentation and construction tender; and
- (B) note the estimated project costs as detailed in Confidential Attachment D to the subject report.

Attachments

- Attachment A.** Sydney Bike Network Map
- Attachment B.** Community Consultation Drawings
- Attachment C.** Engagement Report
- Attachment D.** 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 Strategy includes an overall proposed Bike Network.
2. Priority 1 of the Strategy and Action Plan is to connect the bike network, as there is strong evidence that safe connected cycling infrastructure is essential to making bike riding a viable transport option for the majority of the population.
3. The Strategy and Action Plan target is to complete 80 per cent of the regional route network by 2024 and 100 per cent by 2030.
4. Direction 4 in the City's Community Strategic Plan is to make Sydney a city for walking and cycling. Its targets include a minimum of 10 per cent of City trips will be made by bicycle and 50 per cent by pedestrian movement by 2030.
5. Oxford and Liverpool Streets are important connections in Sydney's Bike Network, identified in Council's Strategy and Action Plan. These links are aligned with the NSW Government's Co-designed Bicycle Network (Principal Bike Network) for Inner Sydney.
6. The project aligns with a well-used bike commuter route between the city centre and eastern suburbs. It will connect existing cycleways along Bourke Street and in the city centre on Liverpool and Castlereagh Streets. It will also connect with the College Street cycleway to be completed in 2022.
7. Transport for NSW research has found that 70 per cent of Greater Sydney residents would ride, or ride more, if there were safe cycleways, separated from traffic. Recent surveys of residents in the City of Sydney and neighbouring council areas have consistently found over 70 per cent support for building a bike network and separated cycleways.
8. When the City builds new separated cycleways, it is common for the number of bike trips to double within one or two years. This growth is higher in the city centre or where the cycleway is well connected into the network.
9. There are over 2,000 daily bike trips on Oxford Street. Oxford Street has the highest number of reported bike crashes in the Local Government Area. The most common causes of reported bicycle crashes over the last ten years on Oxford Street are opening car doors, poor surface conditions, left turns and left side swipes. A dedicated cycleway would be expected to eliminate these crash causes.
10. In November 2020 the City consulted on a previous version of a plan for Oxford Street, for a centre running pop-up design. After community feedback and support from Transport for NSW for a permanent cycleway, the City developed new concept plans for a permanent, higher quality two-way cycleway on the north side of Oxford and Liverpool streets. Due to the significant design modification the City undertook a new month-long community consultation on the revised design in November 2021 (the subject of this council report).
11. The design approach is consistent with the NSW Government's Road User Space Allocation Policy and its hierarchy of road users which prioritises people walking, and with our commitment to build the network faster with less construction disruption by minimising kerb adjustments. The City collaborated closely with NSW Government agencies on the reallocation of one westbound traffic lane.

Concept Design and Scope of Works

Oxford Street cycleway

12. Oxford Street is a significant and important village high street. It is home to many local businesses, residents and important community services and destinations.
13. The proposal comprises a separated bi-directional cycleway along the northern kerb of Oxford Street between Flinders Street and College Street.
14. The northern kerbside lane on Oxford Street is proposed to be re-allocated to create a separated bi-directional cycleway between Flinders and College Streets. The cycleway along the northern side would reduce the number of westbound traffic lanes from three to two.
15. Access for people driving to destinations on or off Oxford Street and into and out of the city would be maintained. The reduction in the number of traffic lanes could impact the amount of through-traffic using Oxford Street during some periods of the day. People driving from the eastern suburbs along Oxford Street to a destination in the city or beyond (i.e. through traffic) have alternative routes such as Moore Park Road, the Eastern Distributor and the Cross-City Tunnel.
16. No changes are proposed to parking and loading on Oxford Street. Transport for NSW will monitor the performance of the southern (westbound) kerbside lane and use of off-peak parking and loading spaces for six months after the cycleway opens, to identify and consider potential improvements. This will include evaluating bus reliability and potentially changing off-peak parking and loading hours, in consultation with City of Sydney.
17. To improve road safety (especially for people walking) and better integrate the project into the traffic environment, the following traffic changes were developed in line with requests from Transport of NSW and are proposed as part of the project:
 - (a) a left-turn ban from Oxford Street (eastbound) north into Palmer Street; and
 - (b) the closure of Liverpool Street (east) to vehicles at Oxford Street. This addresses an existing safety issue of vehicles crossing a busy footpath as well as an existing impact on bus operations caused by vehicles waiting to turn into Liverpool Street (east) impeding eastbound bus flows

Liverpool Street cycleway

18. The proposal is for a separated bi-directional cycleway on Liverpool Street between College Street and Castlereagh Street in the northern kerbside lane.
19. The cycleway along the northern side would reduce the number of westbound traffic lanes from three to two.
20. Kerbside parking is to be removed along on the both the north and south side of the Liverpool Street.

21. To better integrate the project into the transport system and traffic environment, the existing bus stops on the northern side of Liverpool are to be relocated to Elizabeth Street and Wentworth Avenue. These changes were possible due to the South East Bus Plan that Transport for NSW recently implemented to support light rail. It removed some bus routes from City Centre, freeing up capacity to consolidate bus stops on Elizabeth Street, making it easier to understand for bus customers.
22. To improve road safety (especially for people walking) and better integrate the project into the traffic environment, the following traffic changes were developed in line with requests from Transport of NSW and are proposed as part of the project:
 - (a) a left-turn ban from Liverpool Street eastbound into College Street (heading north);
 - (b) a right-turn ban from Liverpool Street eastbound into Wentworth Avenue (heading south); and
 - (c) a right-turn ban - from Elizabeth Street northbound into Liverpool Street (heading east). Transport for NSW will reroute northbound / eastbound bus routes (routes 311 and 440) from Elizabeth Street to Oxford Street via Wentworth Avenue.
 - (d) A right-turn ban from Elizabeth Street southbound into Liverpool Street (heading west).

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030

23. 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 -
 - (i) The separated cycleways will provide a key missing link in the City's bike network.
 - (ii) The project supports behaviour change in the city and its villages and encourage a shift to sustainable travel modes.
 - (b) Direction 4 - A City for Walking and Cycling
 - (i) Objectives under this Direction include developing a network of safe, linked pedestrian and cycle paths integrated with green spaces throughout both the city and inner Sydney; giving greater priority to cycle and pedestrian movements and amenity in the City Centre; and promoting green travel for major workplaces and venues in the city.
 - (ii) As a key part of the cycle network, the cycleway proposed in this project will complete missing links in the bike network, which will provide a viable sustainable transport alternative that will contribute to lower carbon emissions and reduced pollution.

Organisational Impact

24. The project will create additional assets, such as new civil infrastructure and pavement markings, which will require ongoing maintenance.

Risks

25. 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.
26. Road Safety Audits will be carried out on the developed designs and at the completion of construction to further identify any risks associated with the proposals and develop mitigation measures. These will build on the road safety assessments undertaken during concept design phase.

Social / Cultural / Community

27. People will have improved access to safe cycling infrastructure to enjoy a healthy lifestyle with an increased level of physical activity. As part of the City's bike network, this project will contribute to better connected neighbourhoods, increased transport choice and a more socially connected, active and healthier community.
28. Reduced traffic capacity along Oxford Street (westbound) will discourage through traffic using this route. This will reduce traffic volumes and calm traffic while maintaining vehicle access to Oxford Street and surrounding areas.
29. By expanding the bike network, these cycleways will provide a viable travel choice for people to ride between the City and Eastern Suburbs and free up capacity on public transport and roads for people who need them.

Environmental

30. 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.
31. Cycling and walking are integral to our transport future because they are the most accessible, equitable, sustainable and reliable forms of transport.
32. Most construction waste will be diverted from landfill. Materials adopted will be in line with standard City of Sydney approved products, which are selected from responsible manufacturers and sourced within Australia.

Economic

33. The Cycleway will support the City's Economic Recovery plan and promote economic activity (including dining) along Oxford Street. Amenity along Oxford Street will improve due to lower traffic volumes and calming of traffic. Bus stop platforms will help declutter the northern side of Oxford Street and the cycleway will provide a quiet "buffer" between motor vehicles and the footpath.

Financial Implications

34. The proposed cycleways are to be partly funded by Transport for NSW.
35. The total forecast project construction costs are based on the concept plans. A summary of the financial implications is included in confidential Attachment D.
36. The project includes the upgrade of assets owned by third parties, such as traffic signals owned by Transport for NSW. These works will need to be recognised as expenditure within the City's operating budget for the relevant financial year in which they occur.
37. Two parking meters located along Liverpool Street, between College Street and Elizabeth Street will need to be removed. The anticipated loss in revenue is approximately \$123,000 per annum.
38. One parking meter located along Wentworth Avenue, between Lyons Lane and Commonwealth Street, will need to be removed. The anticipated loss in revenue is approximately \$3,000 per annum.
39. There are currently sufficient funds in the 2021/22 Capital Works budget and future year forward estimates to deliver the project. The project team will continue to review the costs of the project in consultation with an independent Quantity Surveyor and track against current market rates response.

Relevant Legislation

40. 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.
41. Attachment D contains confidential information which, if disclosed, would confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business.
42. 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.
43. Roads Act 1993 for road related approvals.
44. Local Government Act 1993 for construction procurement.
45. Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A) (Part 5) - The scope of works will be reviewed by a planner to assess consent requirements for the project under the EP&A Act. A Review of Environmental Factors will be completed.
46. Environmental Planning and Assessment (General) Regulation 2000.
47. State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

48. Key dates for the project are:

Milestone	Target dates
Design Development	February - September 2022
Local Pedestrian, Cycling and Traffic Calming Committee Approval	May 2022
Contractor engagement	January 2023
Construction commences	March 2023
Construction completion	February 2024

Options

49. Not building the cycleway would not achieve the City of Sydney's strategic objectives and its positive impacts and outcomes. This option is therefore not recommended.

Public Consultation

50. The City exhibited the concept design for the cycleways on Oxford and Liverpool Streets (refer Attachment B) and consulted with the community over four weeks between 28 October and 25 November 2021. One hundred and fifty-seven people made submissions.

51. The City consulted with the following stakeholders to inform the development of the concept design:

- (a) Transport for NSW;
- (b) Anzac Memorial;
- (c) Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras;
- (d) Community and business leaders;
- (e) Woollahra Municipal Council; and
- (f) Office of Member for Sydney, Alex Greenwich.

52. Consultation activities included:
- (a) Key stakeholders and the broader community were consulted on the updated plans from 28 October to 25 November 2021.
 - (b) Two information sessions were held online, being a lunch time session on 10 November 2021 and an afternoon session on 11 November 2021.
 - (c) Three in-person drop-in sessions were held at Taylor Square on 16, 17 and 18 November 2021.
 - (d) The Sydney Your Say page was visited 1,012 times during the consultation period. The plan was downloaded 213 times.
 - (e) A notification letter was sent to 12,500 properties.
 - (f) One hundred and twenty-six people dropped 193 pins on the Social PinPoint map-based survey.
 - (g) Thirty-one emailed submissions were submitted during the public exhibition period.
53. The majority of the submissions were supportive of the cycleway works, with several suggestions made to improve the designs.
54. The main themes in comments received during consultation were as follows:
- (a) Safe riding connections should be continued to Centennial Park, Flinders Street, St Vincents Hospital and Kings Cross.
 - (b) Ensure that access to the bus stops over the cycleway is safe, clearly marked and shelters have clear slight lines.
 - (c) Ensure traffic signal phasing prioritises people walking and riding.
 - (d) Ensure that the design prioritises safety and access for people walking.
 - (e) Support the closure of Liverpool Street east at Oxford St to improve safety .
55. The key issues raised by the community and the City's responses are summarised in the attached consultation summary report (Attachment C).

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