

Project Scope - Crown Street Upgrade

File No: X082236

Summary

This report outlines the proposed scope of works for the upgrade of Crown Street, Darlinghurst and Surry Hills.

The proposal for the Crown Street Streetscape Improvement project includes a new streetscape design with wider footpaths, concrete unit paving and bluestone kerb, undergrounding of electrical cables, new trees, landscaping and low-level planting, replacement of inefficient lighting with Smartpoles and LED lighting, installation of bubblers, bike racks, seating, and continuous footpath treatments at several intersections.

The City undertook community engagement on the concept plans in August and September 2022. In response to the community feedback, an independent design peer review was commissioned. The City consulted the community on the peer review recommendations in February and March 2023. Community feedback was broadly in support of the proposal. Community suggestions were considered and, where feasible, have been incorporated into the concept design as part of the design development.

This report recommends that Council endorse the project scope for the Crown Street Upgrade and approve the additional funds required to deliver the project.

Recommendation

It is resolved that Council:

- (A) endorse the project scope for the Crown Street Upgrade, as described in the subject report and as generally indicated at Attachment A to the subject report, for progression to detailed design, documentation and construction of works;
- (B) note the financial implications as outlined in Confidential Attachment D to the subject report; and
- (C) approve the additional funds required to deliver the project as outlined in Confidential Attachment D to the subject report.

Attachments

- Attachment A.** Refined Concept Design
- Attachment B.** Independent Design Peer Review
- Attachment C.** Final Engagement Report
- Attachment D.** Financial Implications (Confidential)

Background

1. Crown Street is defined as a local Village centre in Sustainable Sydney 2030 - 2050 Continuing the Vision, being a focal point for residents, businesses, shopping, meeting, culture and learning. Frontages along Crown Street are a complement of residential, commercial and special purpose, making it a major destination for both the local community and visitors to the area.
2. Crown Street is identified in the City's Liveable Green Network Strategy and Masterplan. The City has allocated funding to upgrade the streetscape of Crown Street, between Devonshire and Oxford Streets.
3. In response to a survey conducted with businesses in the southern precinct of Crown Street, the City completed the streetscape upgrade between Cleveland and Devonshire Streets in December 2014.
4. The City is now planning to commence the next phase of the streetscape upgrade, from Devonshire Street to Oxford Street. This will complete the upgrade of Crown Street, Surry Hills, to the City's Village Main Street pallet, in line with the City's Sydney Street Code.
5. A concept design has been prepared that:
 - (a) enhances the character of the area for locals and visitors and encourages a sense of belonging through additional greening and seating, and improved lighting and footpath treatments;
 - (b) improves pedestrian safety and connectivity along Crown Street, between Devonshire and Oxford Streets by calming traffic and enhancing opportunities for walking;
 - (c) benefits local businesses by supporting increased pedestrian activity, as well as provide space for alfresco dining or display of goods and services in public spaces; and
 - (d) increases the resilience of the infrastructure by undergrounding all overhead electrical cables, which reduces their susceptibility to extreme weather and provides opportunities for new tree planting and increase canopy coverage.
6. Street improvements will include:
 - (a) undergrounding of all overhead cables in Crown Street, removal of timber poles, and associated utility modifications to private properties where required;
 - (b) footpath widening throughout Crown Street;
 - (c) pedestrian improvements at signalised intersections;
 - (d) in-lane bus stops;
 - (e) replacing existing pavements with concrete unit pavers;
 - (f) installation of Continuous Footpath Treatments; and

- (g) installation of new garden beds, street trees, Smartpoles and energy efficient LED lighting, bubblers, bike racks and seating.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision

7. Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision renews the communities' vision for the sustainable development of the city to 2050. It includes 10 strategic directions to guide the future of the city, as well as 10 targets against which to measure progress. This project is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
 - (a) Direction 2 - A leading environmental performer - the project will involve the use of recycled materials, increase urban canopy and streetscape greening through additional planting.
 - (b) Direction 3 - Public places for all - the project will provide an improved public domain that meets the needs of a wide variety of user groups and provides opportunities for social interaction.
 - (c) Direction 5 - A city for walking, cycling and public transport - the project improves pedestrian amenity and safety through enhanced footpath treatments, localised footpath widening and Continuous Footpath Treatments, improved lighting and increased amenities such as seating and bubblers.
 - (d) Direction 7 - Resilient and diverse communities - this project will reduce the electrical network's susceptibility to extreme weather and provides opportunities for new tree planting and increase canopy coverage.
 - (e) Direction 9 - A transformed and innovative economy - the project will provide more space for economic activity in the public domain.

Organisational Impact

8. The organisational impact of the Crown Street project is taken into consideration as part of the City's annual Operational Plan review.

Risks

9. Undergrounding of overhead cables involves the modification of 22 private connections, which will require signed agreement from the property owners.
10. The City does not control, operate or own signalised intersections. The proposed pedestrian improvements at signalised intersections and mid-block pedestrian crossings are subject to approval from Transport for New South Wales.
11. Formal endorsement by Local Pedestrian Cycling and Traffic Calming Committee (LPCTCC) is required. The project is currently scheduled for consideration at the 20 April 2023 Local Pedestrian Cycling and Traffic Calming Committee
12. The project is being delivered with a schedule of rate contract which allows for annual increases in rates based on CPI.

Social / Cultural / Community

13. The project will provide improved amenities for local residents, businesses and visitors to the City to encourage walking and social interaction.
14. The project will improve the material quality of the public domain. This provides opportunities for the community to highlight the characteristics of Crown Street.

Environmental

15. A review of the existing trees will be undertaken with the City's arborist during the detailed design development stage of the project. The following tree management is proposed as part of the works:
 - (a) retention of existing street trees along Crown Street and the addition of approximately 40 new trees;
 - (b) establish a construction methodology with the City's arborist to maximise tree root health; and
 - (c) planting new shrubs and ground covers and use of permeable tree base materials to minimise the extent of paving in the vicinity of tree roots.

Economic

16. The upgrade will provide additional footpath space that can be used by businesses for alfresco dining and display of goods or services in public space. Where the footpath is extended for these purposes, each section will be made up of open, paved space bounded on all sides by trees and plants. This will create inviting, multi-use spaces where people can walk and gather when they are not being used by businesses.
17. The upgrade will add to the area's attractiveness for families and visitors, increasing pedestrian foot traffic along shop frontages, which may assist the viability of local businesses.

Financial Implications

18. This scoping report is seeking to allocate funds in the 2022/23 and future year Capital Works Budgets to deliver this project. A summary of the financial implications is included in Confidential Attachment D.
19. Cost associated with modifying the private utility connections necessary for the undergrounding of overhead cables will be borne by the City and not the private property owners.

Relevant Legislation

20. Local Government Act 1993 - Section 377(1)(n) states that only Council can resolve to carry out work on private land for an amount that is less than the amount or rate fixed by Council for the carrying out of any such work. As there is no rate fixed for undertaking the type of work proposed on private lane, Council approval is required before the works can proceed.

21. 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.
22. Attachment D to the subject report contains confidential commercial information which, if disclosed, would confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom the council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business.
23. 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.
24. Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EPA) (Part 4 and 5). A planner will review the scope of works to assess consent requirements for the project under the EPA Act.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

25. Key dates for the project are as follows:
 - (a) Local Pedestrian Cycling and Traffic Calming Committee April 2023
 - (b) Service investigation April 2023
 - (c) Design finalisation June 2023
 - (d) Construction commencement Mid-2023
 - (e) The forecast completion date is still to be determined as the City is committed to working with local businesses to accommodate their trading needs.

Public Consultation

26. Prior to public consultation, the design was also informed by advice from the City's Design Advisory Panel (DAP).
27. The design process for the streetscape improvement of Crown Street has undergone two rounds of community engagement.
28. The first round of consultation commenced with the distribution of 2,450 letters to the surrounding area on 8 August 2022, following which community feedback was received until 19 September 2022 via the City's "Sydney Your Say" web site. During the feedback period, two community meetings were held.
 - (a) A community pop-up event was held on the 27 August 2022 from 11am to 11:30am where the Lord Mayor along with City of Sydney employees met with the community at Shannon Reserve, Surry Hills to discuss the proposal.
 - (b) An additional meeting was held with the local businesses via Surry Hills Business Partnership at the Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre on 12 September 2022 where feedback from the local businesses was collected.

29. Consultation activities included:
- (a) The Sydney Your Say page was visited 7,422 times during the consultation period. The plan was downloaded 1,027 times.
 - (b) 129 people left a total of 328 comments on our interactive map
 - (c) 172 surveys were completed, of which:
 - (i) 62 per cent live there;
 - (ii) 50 per cent shop, eat and go out on Crown Street;
 - (iii) 37 per cent work in the area; and
 - (iv) 10 per cent have a business there.
 - (d) 110 email submissions were received, of which 18 were business owners.
 - (e) Approximately 60 people attended the pop-up in Shannon Reserve.
30. Comments included:
- (a) Strong overall support for the design with 76 per cent of survey respondents supporting the proposal.
 - (b) 14.5 per cent opposed the proposal.
 - (c) Concerns raised include:
 - (i) nine businesses and 15 community members mentioned loss of on-street parking in email submissions;
 - (ii) 15 submissions asked for a delay in construction;
 - (iii) small amount of concern that in-lane bus stops slow traffic; and
 - (iv) specific local impacts such as individual parking spots were raised about the design in email submissions and via the interactive mapping tool.
 - (d) Surry Hills Business Partnership posed questions about the extent of outdoor dining, parking loss and construction impacts.
 - (e) Crown Street Public School P&C raised issues about road safety in relation to the proposed replacement of the signalised crossing with a raised zebra pedestrian crossing in front of the school.
31. The City's response to key issues raised by the community are summarised below:
- (a) An independent peer review of the design and consultation feedback was commissioned. The review made the following recommendations, which have been incorporated into the design:
 - (i) changes to on-street parking in Crown Street and side streets;
 - (ii) changes to the location and width of garden beds;

- (iii) retention of the signalised pedestrian crossing at Crown Street Public School;
 - (iv) additional in-lane bus stops; and
 - (v) re-distribution of footpath widening.
- (b) Construction will start near the Oxford Street end of the upgrade to allow more time to pass before the project team reach the Devonshire Street end, to minimise disruption on businesses impacted the most by light rail construction;
- (c) Allowances made to work closely with businesses and residents to minimise disruption during construction. Ongoing consultation will also explore opportunities to accelerate works where possible.
32. The peer review recommendations were presented to the community at meetings on 27 and 28 February 2023, with feedback accepted until 10 March 2023. The presentation by the independent reviewer is included in Attachment B.
- (a) At the 27 February 2023 meeting, attended by 11 business owners, two businesses were not satisfied with the amount of on-street parking in Crown Street recommended from the peer review.
 - (b) At the 28 February 2023 meeting, attended by 15 community members, concerns were expressed about the lack of resident on-street parking in the streets in Surry Hills, as well as residents' inability to use the loading zones in Crown Street.
33. Attachment C to the subject report provides details of all feedback received.

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