

Project Scope - Castlereagh Street Cycleway

File No: X026113

Summary

This report describes the proposed Castlereagh Street cycleway, footpath widening and public domain upgrade, between Liverpool and King Streets in the city centre.

The cycleway is part of the City's broader Cycling Strategy and Action Plan, the NSW Government's Principal Bicycle Network and is nominated as a strategic cycleway network route in the NSW Government's Sydney City Centre Access Strategy. It has been designed and developed in collaboration with the NSW Government, which will fund the cycleway portion of the project.

The cycleway will deliver a safe, two-way, north-south connection for people riding in the heart of the city centre and provide a connection between Green Square and Circular Quay.

A series of streetscape and footpath amenity improvements will be provided to improve safety, connectivity and comfort for people walking and will provide a more liveable, green street environment for local businesses and residences.

The City consulted residents and businesses in the area over six weeks between 25 March and 6 May 2022. A notification letter was sent to 3,420 properties. One hundred and thirty-two (132) submissions were received by email and online. 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 Castlereagh Street cycleway and footpath widening as shown in Attachment B to the subject report for finalising 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 in the City's community strategic plan, Sustainable Sydney 2030 - 2050. 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. Currently the City has completed approximately 25 kilometres of separated cycleway, which uses approximately 1.25 per cent of the City of Sydney's road space.
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 to be made by bicycle and 50 per cent by pedestrian movement by 2030.
5. 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.
6. Castlereagh Street is an important, central, north-south connection 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 and their Sydney City Centre Access Strategy.
7. An extension of the existing Castlereagh Street cycleway is proposed between Liverpool Street and King Street. It would connect:
 - (a) the existing section of Castlereagh Street between Liverpool and Hay Streets;
 - (b) the existing cycleway on Liverpool Street between Castlereagh Street and Darling Harbour;
 - (c) the proposed cycleway on Liverpool Street and Oxford Street between Castlereagh Street and Taylor Square; and
 - (d) the King Street cycleway under construction between Pitt and Phillip Streets. It will then connect, via King Street, to the Pitt Street to Circular Quay.
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 to the network.
9. There are currently between 500 and 900 bike trips on the southern half of Castlereagh Street per day, between 1,300 and 2,000 bike trips per day on the connecting Liverpool Street cycleway, and between 700 and 1,100 per day on the western end of King Street near its northern end.

10. In December 2021, Transport for NSW consolidated most bus routes onto Elizabeth Street with the result that only a small number of evening peak express buses now use Castlereagh Street.
11. The design approach is consistent with the Town Hall Public Domain Plan that Council adopted in October 2021 and with the NSW Government's Movement and Place Framework, its Road User Space Allocation Policy and its hierarchy of road users, which prioritises people walking. The City collaborated closely with NSW Government agencies on the reallocation of the traffic and parking lane.
12. The proposal 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.
13. The existing Kent Street cycleway and soon to be re-instated College Street cycleway only serve a portion of the City Centre. Light rail currently precludes riding on George Street, and Pitt Street is one way for much of its length. This means that heavily trafficked Elizabeth Street is currently the only option for legally riding the length of the CBD in both directions.

Concept Design and Scope of Works

14. Castlereagh Street is a historically significant street with many important businesses and destinations. People walking make up half to three-quarters of trips on the various blocks of Castlereagh Street, but are currently provided with approximately a third of the space.
15. The proposal comprises:
 - (a) a separated bi-directional cycleway on the western side of Castlereagh Street, between Liverpool and King Streets; and
 - (b) widening of the western footpath by around 2.6 metres for most of this length.
16. The cycleway would provide two-way bike access through the City Centre to workplaces, businesses, and residences. The cycleway is important for the safety of both commuter and delivery bike riders.
17. The footpath widening along most of the western side of Castlereagh Street supports City and TFNSW public domain policies and initiatives for greening, economic development and safety and will:
 - (a) improve comfort for people walking and to reduce crowding on footpaths;
 - (b) would improve safety for people walking by reducing crossing distances at intersections; and
 - (c) provide space for more economic activity in the public domain, and more street furniture and trees to increase shade and reduce temperatures along the street.
18. Transport for NSW's December 2021 consolidation of bus routes into Elizabeth Street enables the eastern kerbside to be used for loading and servicing. Sixty-five of the current 103 spaces are proposed to be retained, except during the evening peak. Most loading and servicing in the city centre occurs before 3pm.

19. The proposal retains access for people driving to destinations on Castlereagh Street. The reduction in the number of traffic lanes could impact the amount of through-traffic using Castlereagh Street during some periods of the day. Transport for NSW nominates Elizabeth Street as the preferred a north-south traffic route.
20. The proposal includes improvements to road safety developed at the request of, and in collaboration with, Transport for NSW for the benefit of people walking, including:
 - (a) Right-turn bans from Castlereagh Street into Park and Liverpool Streets. Instead, drivers wanting to make these two westbound movements would do so from Elizabeth Street. This will provide two-fold benefits of reducing traffic along Castlereagh Street and removing the risk of vehicles turning right blocking the southbound lane of Castlereagh Street. Emergency vehicles are exempt from turn restrictions under road rules 306.
 - (b) A left-hand turn ban from Castlereagh Street into Bathurst Street. This would simplify the operation of this intersection while maintaining the ability for emergency vehicles to travel from the Fire Station east along Bathurst Street

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030

21. 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.
22. This report is aligned with Strategic Direction 5: A city for walking, cycling and public transport. The City is greener and calmer, with more space for people on the streets – including footpaths and cycleways. More people choose to walk, ride and use public transport. All vehicles in the City are zero emissions.
 - (a) Objective 5.1 - Street space is reallocated for people, places and planting
 - (i) 5.1.2 - Reallocation of street space - Advocate and plan for reallocating street space from vehicles to people, place and planting
 - (ii) 5.1.3 - Partnerships to improve road safety and reduce traffic - Partner and work with state government stakeholders to improve road safety and reduce traffic speed.
 - (b) Objective 5.3 - More people walk more, because walking is the most attractive choice for short trips in the local area
 - (i) 5.3.1 - Improve safety, connectivity and amenity - Develop and progress a program of works to improve safety, connectivity and amenity for all people walking
 - (c) Objective 5.4 - More people ride more, because it is an attractive, convenient and safe option for everyday transport
 - (i) 5.4.1- Safe, connected cycleways - Build and manage a network of safe, connected cycleways that operate effectively.

- (d) Objective 5.5 - Freight, servicing and parking will be managed to support the efficient functioning of the city while improving the amenity of city spaces
 - (i) 5.5.1 - Efficient freight and servicing - Manage, plan and advocate for efficient freight and servicing that supports businesses and residents and supports amenity.
 - (ii) 5.5.2 - Manage parking and kerbside space - Plan for and allocate parking and kerbside space to the most appropriate use to support activities and place.

Organisational Impact

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

Risks

- 24. Risks associated with the proposal have been considered through the concept design and consultation phases. These include safety for people walking, cycling and driving, environmental and economic impacts, and community concerns.
- 25. The City carried out Road Safety Audits (RSA) on the concept and developed designs to identify risks associated with the proposal and develop mitigation measures. A further Road Safety Audit will be undertaken and at the completion of construction to identify any remaining safety risks prior to opening the cycleway.

Social / Cultural / Community

- 26. 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 and workplaces, increased transport choice and a more socially connected, active and healthier community.
- 27. Reduced traffic capacity along Castlereagh Street will discourage through traffic, reducing traffic volumes and calming traffic while maintaining vehicle access.
- 28. By expanding the bike network, this cycleway will provide a viable travel choice for people to ride north-south through the city and to access the heart of the city, and free up capacity on public transport and roads for people who need them.

Environmental

- 29. The project aligns with the City's Sustainable Sydney 2030 - 2050 goals which aim to provide a better environment for people walking and riding bikes, resulting in lower carbon emissions and reduced pollution.
- 30. Cycling and walking are integral to our transport future because they are the most accessible, equitable, sustainable and reliable forms of transport.
- 31. 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

32. The Cycleway will support the City's Economic Recovery plan and promote economic activity (including dining) along Castlereagh Street. Amenity along Castlereagh Street will improve due to lower traffic volumes and calming of traffic. The cycleway and footpath widening will provide a quiet "buffer" between motor vehicles and the western footpath.

Financial Implications

33. The City has accepted a funding offer from the NSW Government as part of the Transport for NSW Active Transport Program to fully fund the cycleway component of the project only, based on current cost estimates, as detailed in confidential Attachment D. The public domain component of the project is to be funded by the City.
34. The total forecast project construction costs are based on the detailed design plans. A summary of the financial implications is included in confidential Attachment D.
35. 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.
36. Of the 15 parking meters located along Castlereagh Street, between Liverpool Street and King Street, seven will need to be removed. The anticipated loss in revenue is approximately \$156,000 per annum.
37. There are currently sufficient funds in the 2022/23 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.

Relevant Legislation

38. 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.
39. 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.
40. 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.
41. Roads Act 1993 for road related approvals.
42. The proposal 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.

43. Local Government Act 1993 for construction procurement.
44. 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.
45. Environmental Planning and Assessment (General) Regulation 2000.
46. State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

Key dates for the project are:

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

Options

47. 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.
48. In 2012, Transport for NSW investigated routes for a direct and safe north-south cycling connection for the City Centre. It built the existing cycleway along Castlereagh Street between Hay and Liverpool Streets on that basis. In its options assessment, Transport for NSW found that cycleways along Castlereagh Street, between Hay and King Streets, and along Pitt Street, between King Street and Circular Quay, was the best option as:
 - (a) The existing Kent Street cycleway and soon to be re-instated College Street cycleway only serve a portion of the City Centre (north of Liverpool Street).
 - (b) Light rail precludes riding on George Street.
 - (c) Elizabeth Street is the preferred all-day bus route and busy traffic route for the City Centre.

- (d) A separated cycleway along Pitt Street would be substantially less feasible as it is two-way south of Liverpool Street and includes Pitt Street Mall north of Market Street.

Public Consultation

- 49. The City consulted residents and businesses in the area over six weeks between 25 March and 6 May 2022. A notification letter was sent to 3,420 properties.
- 50. A project page was available at sydneyoursay.com.au and was viewed 1,560 times and the related documents were downloaded 567 times.
- 51. An online information session was held.
- 52. In-person drop-in sessions were held at Belmore Park and Queen's Square on Tuesday 5, Wednesday 13 and Thursday 14 April 2022.
- 53. Seventy-four people made one or more submissions at sydneyoursay.com.au using the Social Pinpoint map-based survey, including:
 - (a) 84 per cent of pins dropped on the map support the project;
 - (b) 5 per cent of pins oppose the project;
 - (c) 11 per cent of pins made comments without clearly supporting or opposing the project.
- 54. Fifty-eight email submissions were received. Eleven were made from property owners and organisations, and 47 were from individuals. Seventy-nine per cent of emails received from individuals and 55 per cent of emails from organisations support the project.
- 55. Key points raised during community consultation include:
 - (a) general support for the project;
 - (b) support for traffic signal phasing and detection that is favourable for people riding;
 - (c) more physical protection in front of the Fire Station;
 - (d) space allocation and turn lanes for motor vehicles;
 - (e) requests for more trees, bike racks, motor bike parking, more loading zones - whereas others wanted fewer loading zones and more general parking; and
 - (f) connections and interfaces with other cycleways.

56. The City consulted with the following stakeholders to inform the development of the concept design:
- (a) Transport for NSW;
 - (b) Castlereagh Street Boutique Hotel; and
 - (c) Fire and Rescue NSW.

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