

Relevant Information for Council

FILE: X090157 **DATE:** 17 November 2022

TO: Lord Mayor and Councillors

FROM: Kim Woodbury, Chief Operating Officer

THROUGH: Monica Barone, Chief Executive Officer

SUBJECT: Information Relevant To Item 10.4 - Project Definition and Scope - Dixon Street Improvements

For Noting

This memo is for the information of the Lord Mayor and Councillors.

Background

At the meeting of the Transport, Heritage, Environment and Planning Committee on 14 November 2022, further information was sought on the following:

Works in Chinatown

The upgrade of Dixon Street was endorsed at the 18 October 2021 Council meeting. This follows the Chinatown Public Domain Plans of 2010 and 2015 which also recommended Dixon Street as a priority project.

The scope of the Dixon Street upgrade covered in this report reinforces the key themes outlined in the Haymarket Vision Engagement Report.

The next step is to engage a multi disciplinary design team to develop the concept design and commence documentation. The design team undertaking this work will be required to develop the design in response to many factors including the social and cultural heritage of Chinatown. A concept design will be reported back to Council around mid-2023.

In parallel with the Dixon Street upgrade the City will update the 2015 Chinatown Public Domain Plan. This will assist Council in determining future priority projects and be reported back to Council around mid-2023. This will also go on public exhibition for further community input.

At the same time, a broader Thematic History of Chinatown study is underway. Community input will be sought on this, commencing late 2022. The outcomes of this work will be available to the Dixon Street design team, alongside a range of other background material.

An Economic Study of the wider precinct is also underway and will be reported to Council in early 2023. The outcomes of this work will also be available to the Dixon Street design team.

All these projects are being internally coordinated.

It is recommended Council proceed with the Dixon Street upgrade with no further delay to ensure we assist the community in bringing vibrancy back to Dixon Street.

Protecting Heritage and Culture

A Thematic History of Chinatown is underway as a foundational study to provide a broad historical context. The purpose of the study is to understand the history and themes of Chinese migration and settlement, uncovering the places and stories that are important. The study will help us to better recognise and celebrate Chinese heritage and culture of the area.

Planning controls protect 45 listed heritage items in the Haymarket area currently, including the Former Kwong War Chong building at 84 Dixon Street. The Haymarket/Chinatown Special Character Area, in the Development Control Plan (DCP), can be updated in the future following the finalisation of the Thematic History Study.

The restoration of the Dixon Street Gates has commenced. A consultant has been engaged and is preparing a Statement of Significance to inform restoration the work. The original architect is being consulted on the project.

Public Art Strategy

There are a range of potential public art opportunities as part of the Dixon Street public domain upgrade. These include creative lighting, bespoke furniture and paving design.

The updated Chinatown Public Domain Plan will incorporate a review of the 2015 Chinatown Public Art Plan and set forward how public art will be integrated within the precinct.

Diversity of Public Domain Spaces

Maximising the diversity of public domain spaces, improving accessibility, public seating, and amenity (including shade and comfort) are fundamental to the City's public domain planning. This is underpinned by the Gehl Architects, Public Space and Life Study 2020 (and 2007) (the strategy that guides our public spaces in the city) which recommends that our public spaces be designed for diversity and maximise accessibility for all ages.

Timelines and Options

The recommended option is to proceed with the upgrade of Dixon Street now.

An option to delay until the economic and thematic history studies are completed is available, however this would delay the upgrade by another six months. In depth consultation has taken place on Dixon Street and sufficient information on social and cultural history is available to inform commencement of design teams.

Activation

A range of activations within the Chinatown/Haymarket Precinct from the Festivals and Events Sponsorship Grants program are before Council in November 2022. Additional grants (Business Support Sector and Festivals and Festivals Sponsorship) will open up in February 2023 for implementation in 2023/24.

The Sydney Lunar Festival will take place in early 2023. Dixon Street Mall is a key focus area for the festival. It is the centre of the Sydney Lunar Streets festival launch event, and features an overlay of decorative installations attracting audiences throughout the festival period.

Opportunities for additional activations will be investigated.

Memo from Kim Woodbury, Chief Operating Officer

Prepared by: Bridget Smyth, City Architect, Executive Director City Design and Public Art

Approved

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P.M. Barone', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

MONICA BARONE

Chief Executive Officer