

Item 39.**Traffic Treatment - Proposed Timed Road Closure and Streetscape Improvements - Loftus Street, Customs House Lane and Reiby Place, Sydney**

TRIM Container No.: 2022/598638

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee endorse the following traffic and parking changes in Sydney, subject to Transport for New South Wales (TfNSW) approving the Traffic Management Plan (TMP):

- (A) Installation of a one-way northbound 10km/h Shared Zone treatment in Loftus Street, between the points 0 metre and 76 metres north of Reiby Place;
- (B) Installation of a one-way eastbound 10km/h Shared Zone treatment for the whole of Customs House Lane between Loftus and Young Streets;
- (C) Timed closure of the proposed Shared Zones in Loftus Street and Customs House Lane between 11am and 12 midnight 7 days a week;
- (D) Installation of a mid-block raised threshold in the Customs House Lane Shared Zone;
- (E) Widening the footpath on the northern side of Reiby Place between Loftus and Pitt Streets;
- (F) Installation of a continuous footpath treatment in Reiby Place, west of Loftus Street;
- (G) Installation of a continuous footpath treatment in Reiby Place, east of Pitt Street;
- (H) Reallocation of parking on the eastern side of Loftus Street, between the points 0 metre and 42 metres north of Reiby Place as "Loading Zone 12 midnight - 11am"; and
- (I) Reallocation of parking on the western side of Loftus Street, between the points 0 metre and 76 metres north of Reiby Place as "No Stopping".

Voting Members for this Item

Voting Members	Support	Object
City of Sydney	[Insert]	[Insert]
Transport for NSW	[Insert]	[Insert]

NSW Police – Sydney City PAC	[Insert]	[Insert]
Representative for the Member for Sydney	[Insert]	[Insert]

Advice

Advice will be updated after the meeting.

Background

The City seeks to conduct public domain and pedestrian upgrade works within the road reserves across Loftus Street, Reiby Place, Customs House Lane in Sydney.

The works seek to revitalise and upgrade the public spaces through the prioritisation of pedestrian movements whilst maintaining appropriate vehicle access through a 'shared pedestrian/vehicle' traffic arrangement.

The works will result in additional public spaces being prioritised for pedestrians through increasing the size of the pedestrian footpaths, creation of a shared zone and provision of footpath continuations. The works will also encompass demolition, tree removal, earthworks, public embellishment works including new trees, benches, smartpoles and lighting. The development works are primarily along Loftus Street but extend towards Reiby Place and Custom House Lane.

As a result of the works, the northern end of Loftus Street (north of Reiby Place) will be prioritised to pedestrians, with a shared zone for special service and delivery vehicles. The vehicle lanes along Reiby Place and Custom House Lane will be narrowed and the pedestrian area widened.

The project is consistent with Council's strategic vision for the locality outlined in the City North Public Domain Plan 2015 and implements the City's Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision Project Idea: City Space Improvement Program. This Plan highlights ideas for improving streets and open spaces which can be used as guidelines for future development. The proposed works will implement targets set by the plan with regards to improving pedestrian links and providing for a more walkable CBD.

Comments

Shared Zones and Time Closures

Loftus Street between Reiby Place and Customs House Lane will be converted to a one-way northbound 10 km/h Shared Zone with one travel lane and one parking lane.

Customs House Lane between Loftus and Young Streets will be converted to a one-way eastbound 10km/h Shared Zone with one travel lane only.

Both Shared Zones will operate between 12 midnight and 11am 7 days a week to allow for service and delivery vehicles to access the area during those times. Vehicles will enter the Shared Zones from Loftus Street and exit onto Young Street via Customs House Lane.

Between 11am and 12 midnight, the Shared Zones will be closed to vehicular traffic, which improves pedestrian safety, access and amenity in the area. The timed closure will also provide opportunities for outdoor dining and events.

A combination of retractable and manually removeable bollards will be installed at the Loftus Street entry point to facilitate the timed closure of the Shared Zones.

The proposed measures do not impact on existing vehicle access routes when the Shared Zones are open between 12 midnight and 11 am 7 days a week. Vehicles can continue to use Reiby Place, Customs House Lane and Loftus Lane to exit Loftus Street during the times when the Shared Zones are open.

Traffic surveys carried out in in March 2022 show that there is an average of 40 - 70 vehicles per hour in Customs House Lane between the proposed closed hours of 11am and 12 midnight. Under the proposed access arrangements, these vehicles will be redistributed to Loftus Lane and Reiby Place when the Shared Zones are closed. The reassigned traffic will not adversely impact the surrounding road network.

Continuous Footpath Treatment and Footpath Widening in Reiby Place

The proposed pedestrian improvement works in Reiby Place will help improve general safety in the area as part of City's commitment to calm traffic and improve pedestrian safety and accessibility. The proposals will maintain traffic access for large vehicles (i.e coaches and construction vehicles).

Parking

The proposal will result in a net loss of six parking spaces. Despite the parking loss, the proposal will significantly improve pedestrian safety, accessibility and amenity, calm traffic and enrich the streetscape. The proposal will also provide opportunities for outdoor dining and events.

Consultation

Between February and March 2022, City of Sydney staff met with a number of key stakeholders to seek early feedback on the proposal, prior to the development of a concept design. The purpose of the early engagement was to understand servicing and delivery requirements of properties affected by the project, as well as any other issues or impacts.

The City sought feedback from the community between 10 October – 8 November 2022, during a public exhibition of the concept design, local access plan and review of environmental factors.

Community consultation included the following activities:

- 28-day public exhibition of the proposal
- Community notification distributed to over 450 surrounding property owners, residents and businesses
- E-mailout to 54 registered stakeholders

- 8 individual briefings with affected stakeholders
- An advertisement in the Sydney Morning Herald
- Media announcement
- Sydney Your Say web page
- Online feedback form

Overall, this engagement received:

- 14 online survey responses
- 3 submissions in submitters' own words (via email)
- Note that one submitter stated they were responding on behalf of 160 residents of a residential housing building.
- Notes from 3 stakeholder meetings

Online Survey Responses

10 respondents indicated that they were supportive of the proposal.

Two respondents stated they were unsupportive of the proposal; note that one of these stated they were responding on behalf of their fellow 160 residents of an apartment building.

Two respondents stated they were neutral on the proposed changes to Loftus Street, Customs House Lane, and Reiby Place.

Supporting submissions agreed that the proposal was good but wanted to see Loftus Street traffic reduced or slowed considerably by way of making nearby Loftus Lane residents only traffic, and/or limiting speed on Loftus Street to 10km/h. Not only was this thought to deter "rat-racing", but it was deemed safer and quieter for residents.

Written Submissions

Three submissions were made by local residents.

Submission	City of Sydney Response
One submission was made by two members of the Strata Committee of Bridgeport apartments (which they note houses 160 units), with noise being their main concern. The submitter wanted to see changes to the proposal to reduce noise impacts of development and taxis/Ubers and their users, or, alternatively, they called for funds be provided for double glazing of residents' windows. They stated their preferred amendments to the proposal are to:	<p>As part of the City North Public Domain Plan, there are plans to improve pedestrian amenity in Loftus Street, south of Bridge Street.</p> <p>Loftus Lane is a public road and cannot be restricted as a resident only road. It is currently designated as a two-way 10km/h Shared Zone to discourage through traffic use.</p> <p>The City allocates parking restrictions to balance the different parking needs in the</p>

<p>(a) make Loftus Street (south of Bridge Street) a pedestrian-dominated area;</p> <p>(b) retain 2-way traffic for Loftus Lane but restrict traffic to residents only;</p> <p>(c) install planting or bollards at the Loftus Street end; and</p> <p>(d) move taxi rank to Bridge Street or north of Bridge Street to Loftus, Young, or Gresham Streets.</p>	<p>CBD. The City will work with TfNSW and Taxi Council to review parking for taxis and ride share vehicles in the area.</p>
<p>Two other residential submitters expressed concern about access – both the physical ability to access places of residence, and the safety of said access. They shared concerns about the placement of the taxi rank, specifically the additional traffic and the potential for increased congestion at the top end of Loftus Street. The following suggestion was made by one submitter and seconded by the other:</p> <p>The City of Sydney first needs to create a viable taxi/UBER rank- possibly near the Opera House.</p> <p>One of those submitters was worried that the changes would have a broader negative impact on traffic throughout the area. They listed various existing problems (limited driver visibility for pedestrians crossing, blockages when buses come down Bridge Street, heavy southbound traffic on Young Street), predicting that the proposed changes would worsen these issues and “have a domino effect with cars banked down Loftus Lane potentially blocking access to car parks.”</p>	<p>The City allocates parking restrictions to balance the different parking needs in the CBD. The City will work with TfNSW and Taxi Council to review parking for taxis and ride share vehicles in the area.</p> <p>According to TfNSW guidelines, a local street should not carry more than 300 vehicles per hour. Loftus Lane carries less than 200 vehicles per hour and the reassigned traffic due to the proposal is not expected to deteriorate its function as a local road.</p> <p>The City will continue to monitor traffic conditions in Loftus Lane to determine if further treatments are required.</p>
<p>One submission questioned the need for more pedestrian space, arguing there is sufficient space already thanks to Circular Quay Plaza, and citing the potential for amenity issues to arise (related to the consumption of food and seagull invasion, as well as skateboarders “expanding their territory”).</p>	<p>The project is consistent with Council’s strategic vision for the locality outlined in the City North Public Domain Plan 2015 and implements the City’s Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision Project Idea: City Space Improvement Program.</p> <p>This Plan highlights ideas for improving streets and open spaces which can be used as guidelines for future development. The proposed works will implement targets set by the plan with regards to improving</p>

	pedestrian links and providing for a more walkable CBD.
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Organisation Feedback

<p>Feedback was also received on behalf of organisations: Dexus and Café Sydney. Dexus attended a meeting with the council, while Café Sydney sent in a submission.</p> <p>Both organisations expressed concern about loss of access to their respective premises for clients/customers, and loading and deliveries (i.e., the ability of large vehicles to continue to access Loftus Street, the limited times when deliveries will be able to be made, and the reduction in the number of loading bays). Access for emergency services was highlighted as a critical issue.</p> <p>Café Sydney also noted they will lose access to the Loftus Street roller doors if plants are to be positioned here.</p>	<p>Parking restrictions on the eastern side of Loftus Street, south of Reiby Place will be maintained as "Loading Zone 6am-6pm Mon-Fri 6-10am Sat" and "4P Ticket 6-12 Midnight Mon-Fri 10am-12Midnight Sat 8am-12Midnight Sun". These restrictions will continue to provide parking access for delivery vehicles and customers outside of the timed closure hours.</p> <p>Sydney Police, Ambulance NSW and Fire & Rescue NSW were consulted and raised no objections to the proposal.</p> <p>The roller doors on Loftus Street currently provides pedestrian access only to the loading docks. The pedestrian access will be maintained as part of the proposal</p>
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Financial

Appropriate funding for the proposal will be secured once greater certainty on the construction timeline is reached.

CLEMENT LIM - TRAFFIC MANAGER - NORTH