

Traffic Treatment - Proposed Road Closure - Farnell Street, Surry Hills

File No: X088131.005

Summary

The report recommends that Council approve the use of traffic treatments to close Farnell Street, Surry Hills, between Fitzroy and Sandwell Streets to vehicular traffic.

In October 2020, the City and NSW Government entered into a joint partnership to revitalise the city centre, establishing a \$20 million CBD Revitalisation Fund to boost the local economy and invite the public back to the City. Since November 2020, the City has installed 68 outdoor dining areas in various City streets. The City and NSW Government will continue this work by extending the outdoor dining program across the local government area until at least the end of June 2023.

A food and beverage business located at the eastern corner of Fitzroy and Farnell Streets, Surry Hills has applied for an outdoor dining area on Farnell Street as part of the Alfresco night-time business program supported by the NSW Government. Due to the current traffic arrangements it is not possible to approve this outdoor dining area without closing the road to vehicular traffic.

Farnell Street is a local two-way road that runs in a north-south direction between Sandwell Street in the north and Fitzroy Street in the south. Farnell Street is approximately 4.0 metres wide with no footpaths.

Farnell and Sandwell Streets provide vehicle access to rear driveways to properties fronting Hutchinson and Fitzroy Streets. There are four driveways and one loading dock on Sandwell Street and one driveway on Farnell Street.

The proposed use of traffic treatments to close Farnell Street, Surry Hills, between Fitzroy and Sandwell Streets to vehicular traffic would not impact vehicular access to the driveways in Farnell and Sandwell Streets.

Given that the existing vehicle speeds and traffic volumes are low along Farnell and Sandwell Streets, impacts to pedestrian safety and amenity are not expected. Following the installation of traffic treatments to close Farnell Street to traffic and the commencement of outdoor dining, pedestrian volume in the area is expected to increase.

The proposed installation of traffic treatments to close Farnell Street to traffic will continue to provide access to both pedestrians and bike riders. When the outdoor dining area is installed, adequate space would be provided to accommodate pedestrians in wheelchairs and prams and bike riders.

The installation of traffic treatments to close Farnell Street to traffic will be implemented initially using bollards to prevent vehicle access.

Transport for NSW (TfNSW) supports the installation of traffic treatments at Farnell Street, Surry Hills between Fitzroy and Sandwell Streets, to close the road to vehicular traffic. The proposal was endorsed by the Local Pedestrian, Cycling and Traffic Calming Committee (LPCTCC) on 20 October 2022.

Recommendation

That Council approve the installation of traffic treatments to close Farnell Street, Surry Hills, between Fitzroy and Sandwell Streets to vehicular traffic.

Attachments

Attachment A. Concept Plan

Attachment B. Traffic Management Plan

Attachment C. Local Pedestrian, Cycling and Traffic Calming Committee Endorsement
- 20 October 2022

Background

1. Farnell Street, Surry Hills between Fitzroy and Sandwell Streets is a local road under the control of the City in its capacity as roads authority.
2. Farnell Street runs in a north-south direction between Sandwell Street in the north and Fitzroy Street in the south. Farnell Street is approximately 4.0 metres wide with no footpaths and provides pedestrian access to residential properties located along the street.
3. There is only one driveway along the street providing access to a property's garage which can be also accessed from Sandwell Street. There is no kerb side parking in the street and "No Stopping" restrictions are installed along both the eastern and western kerb sides.
4. Sandwell Street, Surry Hills is a local two-way road that runs in an east-west direction between Hutchinson Street in the east and Farnell Street in the west.
5. Sandwell Street has no footpaths and provides pedestrian and vehicle access to residential properties and businesses located along the streets. There is no kerb side parking in the street and "No Stopping" restrictions are installed along both the northern and southern kerb sides.
6. The traffic surveys undertaken in Farnell and Sandwell Streets from Monday 9 December to Sunday 15 December 2019 showed that Farnell and Sandwell Streets experience low vehicle volumes and speeds. Both streets are mainly accessed by local traffic.
7. In October 2020, the City and NSW Government entered into a joint partnership to revitalise the city centre, establishing a \$20 million CBD Revitalisation Fund to boost the local economy and invite the public back to the city. Since November 2020, the City has installed 68 outdoor dining areas in various City streets. The City and NSW Government will continue this work by extending the outdoor dining program across the Local Government Area until the end of June 2023.
8. A food and beverage business located at the eastern corner of Fitzroy and Farnell Streets; Surry Hills has applied for an outdoor dining area on Farnell Street as part of the Alfresco night-time business program supported by the NSW government.
9. The width of the footpath on Fitzroy Street in front of the restaurant is unable to safely accommodate both footpath dining and pedestrian access. Given that Farnell Street has no footpaths, the business is also not eligible for footway dining on Farnell Street. As such, the business has requested consideration to close and utilise the roadway of Farnell Street to provide outdoor seating opportunities, improve pedestrian access, and activate the area.
10. Given that the existing vehicle speeds and traffic volumes are low in Farnell and Sandwell Streets, a road closure in Farnell Street between Fitzroy and Sandwell Streets is not expected to impact pedestrian safety and amenity.
11. The road closure of Farnell Street will be implemented initially using bollards to prevent vehicle access. The installation of traffic treatment on Farnell Street would commence after the driveway on Farnell Street. Vehicle access to the driveway will be to and from Sandwell Street. When the budget is available in the Capital Works Program, the traffic treatment would include streetscape treatment measures.

12. Transport for NSW (TfNSW) has supported the installation of traffic treatments to close Farnell Street, Surry Hills between Fitzroy and Sandwell Streets, to vehicular traffic.
13. The proposal was endorsed by the Local Pedestrian, Cycling and Traffic Calming Committee (LPCTCC) on 20 October 2022.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision

14. 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 report is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
 - (a) Direction 3 - Public places for all - The proposed road closure of Farnell Street would create an open, safe, inclusive and accessible traffic free space for residents and visitors.
 - (b) Direction 5 - A city for walking, cycling and public transport - The proposal will improve safety and accessibility for residents and visitors to the area. Pedestrians and bike riders can safely access the traffic free closed section of Farnell Street.
 - (c) Direction 8 - A thriving cultural and creative life - The proposed closure of Farnell Street provides an opportunity to activate the closed section of the street to promote outdoor dining, cultural and creative performances.
 - (d) Direction 9 - A transformed and innovative economy - The proposal would enhance the streetscape environment of Farnell Street by promoting outdoor dining, cultural and creative opportunities. It would attract visitors to the area enriching the local economy.

Organisational Impact

15. The installation of traffic treatments at Farnell Street will be implemented initially using bollards to prevent vehicle access.
16. When the budget is available in the Capital Works Program, the traffic treatments would include streetscape treatment measures.

Risks

17. A desktop risk assessment of the proposal was undertaken to gauge the impact to road users in the area resulting from the road closure of Farnell Street.
18. Farnell Street and Sandwell Street have an Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) of 10 vehicles/day and 24 vehicles/day respectively. With the proposed installation of traffic treatments at Farnell Street between Fitzroy and Sandwell Streets, traffic on Farnell Street will now be diverted through Sandwell Street. Given the low AADT on Farnell Street, the diverted traffic is not expected create traffic impacts on Farnell Street. Furthermore, Sandwell Street experiences low pedestrian volumes and the increased AADT of 10 vehicles/day is not expected to impact on pedestrian safety and amenity.

19. Given that the existing vehicle speeds and traffic volumes are low along Farnell and Sandwell Streets, impacts to pedestrian safety and amenity is not expected. Following the installation of traffic treatments at Farnell Street and commencement of outdoor dining, pedestrian volumes in the area is expected to increase. However, given the low traffic volumes and vehicle speeds along Sandwell Street, an impact to pedestrian safety and amenity is not expected.

Social / Cultural / Community

20. The installation of traffic treatments at Farnell Street would create a traffic free community space for local residents.
21. It would create opportunities for outdoor dining attracting visitors to the area thereby enhancing the local economy.

Environmental

22. The proposal would remove vehicular traffic from Farnell Street, improving the local amenity of the area.

Economic

23. To support local businesses in the area, the traffic treatments will provide outdoor dining opportunities in Farnell Street.
24. Attracting visitors to the area to enjoy the outdoor dining experience would enhance the local economy of the area.

Financial Implications

25. The road closure at Farnell Street will be implemented initially using bollards to prevent vehicle access. All costs associated with the initial road closure of Farnell Street will be borne by the City's outdoor dining program budget.
26. The area could be treated with streetscape treatments in the longer term, subject to priorities and budget availability in the City's Capital Works Program.

Relevant Legislation

27. Transport for NSW (TfNSW) is responsible for the control of traffic on all NSW roads and has delegated to Council certain functions to regulate traffic on local roads.
28. The Transport for New South Wales delegation gives Council authority to approve road closures under Part 8, Division 2, of the Roads Act 1993.
29. This delegation can only be exercised by the elected Council and is subject to a number of conditions and limitations, including the need to obtain the advice of Council's Local Pedestrian, Cycling and Traffic Calming Committee.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

30. To allow businesses in the area to utilise Farnell Street for outdoor dining, the City intends to close the road in January 2023.

Options

31. There are no options proposed. Not proceeding with the proposal may impact on helping local businesses in the area to recover from the economic impacts of the pandemic.

Public Consultation

32. In accordance with Section 116 of the Roads Act 1993, a public notice for the installation of traffic treatments at Farnell Street, Surry Hills Lane was published in the Sydney Morning Herald and Wentworth Courier, on 22 and 24 August 2022 respectively, allowing 28 days for the community to provide written submissions on the proposal to either the City or Transport for NSW.
33. The City also consulted local residents and businesses in the area. There were 422 letters sent out with four responses supporting the proposal and one response opposing the proposal. Two responses provided feedback on the proposal but neither supported nor opposed the proposal.
34. The following table summarises the feedback received and the City's response:

Submission no.	Support or Object	Description of submission	City's response
Submission 1 - 4	Support	Submissions supported the City's proposal to improve the amenity of the area and support a local business.	The proposal would provide outdoor dining opportunities for current and future businesses in the area, and improve pedestrian amenities and road safety in the area.
Submission 5	Object	The submission response stated that the closure would increase traffic on Hutchinson Street.	The AADT on Farnell Street is less than 10 veh/day. As such, any impact of diverted traffic onto Hutchinson Street is negligible. In addition, the closure of Farnell Street prevents rat-running through the street and improves road safety.

Submission no.	Support or Object	Description of submission	City's response
		<p>The response also stated that the closure would impact emergency access and tradesmen access to carry out urgent works in Farnell Street.</p>	<p>Emergency services personnel can remove the bollards to access the street during emergencies. Tradesmen requiring urgent access to the street can contact the City to arrange removal of the bollards.</p>
Submission 6	Feedback on proposal	<p>The submission requested for a pedestrian crossing on Fitzroy Street.</p>	<p>Given that Fitzroy Street is a two lane one-way westbound road, it does not satisfy the requirements for a pedestrian crossing.</p> <p>A midblock signalised pedestrian crossing also does not meet the requirements for a signalised crossing due to close proximity of the two signalised intersections at both ends of Fitzroy Street.</p>
Submission 7	Feedback on the proposal	<p>The submission requested the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - cost of the closure should not be borne using funds from rate payers. - a pedestrian crossing in Fitzroy Street - the impact of additional traffic on Hutchinson Street 	<p>The City is committed to supporting local businesses recover from economic impacts of Covid-19 and opportunities for outdoor dining as resolved by Council. The funding to close the road will be borne initially from City's outdoor dining program.</p>

Submission no.	Support or Object	Description of submission	City's response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a shared zone in Sandwell Street - convert Hutchinson Street to a one-way northbound 	<p>In the longer term, the road closure with streetscape improvements can be borne from a future capital works program subject to availability of funding and priorities.</p> <p>The City installs Shared Zones in areas where there is high pedestrian volume to improve pedestrian safety. Pedestrian volume in Sandwell Street is low and as such does not warrant a shared zone.</p> <p>Converting Hutchinson Street to a one way northbound is not supported as any impact of diverted traffic onto Hutchison Street is negligible and there have been no other requests from residents or businesses in the area.</p>

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