

Project Scope - Glebe to Ultimo Walking and Cycling Improvements

File No: X021146

Summary

This report describes the proposed Glebe to Ultimo walking and cycling improvements.

The project will deliver a safe, two-way, east-west connection for people riding between Glebe and Ultimo, with a separated cycleway on Kelly, Wattle and Mary Ann Streets. It connects low traffic streets in Glebe with the Goods Line, Darling Harbour and Haymarket.

The project includes a new pedestrian and bike crossing on Mary Ann Street at Jones Street, and the cycleway on Mary Ann Street will replace the existing shared path outside the TAFE.

There are two new trees proposed at the south-west corner of the intersection of Mary Ann and Harris Streets. There will be no impact to existing trees.

The project will retain 85 of the 117 existing on-street car parking spaces along the route.

This cycleway is part of the City's broader Cycling Strategy and Action Plan, the NSW Government's Co-designed Bicycle Network (Principal Bike Network) and a strategic cycleway network route in the NSW Government's Sydney City Centre Access Strategy.

The City carried out community consultation for the project from Monday 10 October to Monday 7 November 2022, which included sending notification letters to 2,250 properties and two on-site consultation events at the corner of Mary Ann and Jones Streets near TAFE. Further, 91 people made email submissions or left comments on the map survey. 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 Glebe to Ultimo Walking and Cycling Improvements as shown in Attachment B to the subject report for finalising detailed documentation and construction; 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.** Concept Design 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. 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, and doing so has strong support from the community.
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 55 per cent of the regional routes and approximately 25 kilometres of separated cycleway, which uses approximately 1.25 per cent of the City of Sydney's road space.
4. Direction 5 in the City's Community Strategic Plan is to make Sydney a city for walking, cycling and public transport. 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. Surveys of residents in the City of Sydney and neighbouring council areas in recent years have consistently found over 70 per cent support for building a bike network and separated cycleways.
6. Glebe to Ultimo is an important east-west connection in Sydney's Bike Network, connecting Forest Lodge and Glebe with the City's south, as identified in Council's Strategy and Action Plan. It is aligned with the NSW Government's Co-designed Bicycle Network (Principal Bike Network) and their Sydney City Centre Access Strategy. It is identified as an existing bike route (route 6) in the 1997 South Sydney Bike Plan.
7. 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 a cycleway is well connected to the network. A bike count between 6am and 9am and 4pm and 7pm in October 2022 counted 300 bike trips on Wattle Street between Kelly and Mary Ann Streets, and 340 bike trips on Jones Street between Thomas and Mary Ann Streets. We expect the new cycleway will have approximately 500 bike trips per day initially.
8. The design approach is consistent 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.
9. The proposed design and traffic signal changes have agreement in principle from Transport for NSW. 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.

Concept Design and Scope of Works

10. Kelly Street is a local, partially one-way road which provides access to several business premises and the International Grammar School. Wattle Street is a state road which has had a separated cycleway on the section linking Kelly and Mary Ann Streets since at least 2007. Mary Ann Street is a quiet, mostly one-way, local road which provides access to homes, businesses, and the TAFE and UTS. It currently has a shared path on the southern side to provide access for people riding westbound.
11. The proposal comprises:
 - (a) a separated bi-directional cycleway on the southern side of Kelly Street between Bay Street and Wattle Street. The recently built shared environment intersection at Mountain Street and upgraded pedestrian crossing on Kelly Street were designed to cater for the proposed cycleway;
 - (b) minor changes to the existing separated bi-directional cycleway on the eastern side of Wattle Street, between Kelly and Mary Ann Streets to connect to the new cycleway at each end;
 - (c) removal of the existing right-turn bicycle lane on Kelly Street at its intersection with Wattle Street;
 - (d) a separated bi-directional cycleway on the northern side of Mary Ann Street (replacing the existing shared path on the southern side);
 - (e) a new pedestrian and parallel bike crossing of Mary Ann Street at Jones Street;
 - (f) footpath widening at the south-west and south-east corners of Mary Ann Street and Harris Street intersection, with two additional trees;
 - (g) connections to both the Goods Line and to Omnibus Lane to connect to Darling Harbour, Haymarket and City South; and
 - (h) retention of 85 of the 117 existing on-street car parking spaces.
12. The cycleway will provide east-west bike access between Forest Lodge and Glebe, and Haymarket and City South, as well as to the International Grammar School, workplaces and hotels, and TAFE and UTS campuses. The cycleway is important for the safety of school and tertiary students, commuters and food delivery riders.
13. The new pedestrian crossing, and footpath widenings will improve safety and convenience for people walking, as will the replacement of existing shared path areas.
14. The proposal retains access for people driving to destinations on and nearby Kelly, Wattle and Mary Ann Streets.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision

15. 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 2 - A leading environmental performer - Transport is the second biggest contributor to emissions. Half of Sydney's car trips are less than five kilometres long. Improving infrastructure and conditions for walking and cycling enables many people to reduce their transport emissions by walking and cycling for short trips.
 - (b) Direction 5 - A city for walking, cycling and public transport - Walking and riding bikes should be the first choice for short trips. It is imperative we do all we can to make it attractive and comfortable for people to walk and ride around the city. This report is directly delivering on Objective 5.1 - Street space is reallocated for people, places and planting; Objective 5.3 - More people walk more, because walking is the most attractive choice for short trips in the local area; Objective 5.4 - More people ride more, because it is an attractive, convenient and safe option for everyday transport; and 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.
 - (c) Direction 6 - An equitable and inclusive city - Improving conditions for walking and cycling improves access to jobs and services for citizens who cannot drive (for example, due to disability) or choose not to drive. In Glebe and Forest Lodge, 32 per cent of households have no motor vehicle.

Organisational Impact

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

Risks

17. 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.
18. Road Safety Audits (RSAs) on the concept and developed designs will be completed to identify risks associated with the proposal and to develop mitigation measures. Further Road Safety Audits will be undertaken at the completion of construction to identify any remaining safety risks prior to opening the cycleway and within the first few months of operation.

Social / Cultural / Community

19. 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.

20. By expanding the bike network, this cycleway will provide a viable travel choice for people to ride into the city, or to school or tertiary education, and free up capacity on public transport and roads for people who need them.

Environmental

21. 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.
22. Cycling and walking are integral to our transport future because they are the most accessible, equitable, sustainable and reliable forms of transport.
23. 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

24. The improvements will support the City's Economic Recovery plan and promote economic activity along the streets. Amenity will improve due to calming of traffic. The improvements will provide a quiet "buffer" between motor vehicles and the footpath on one side of the street.

Financial Implications

25. The City has accepted a funding offer from the NSW Government in November 2022 as part of the Transport for NSW Active Transport Program which will fund the construction component of the project, based on current cost estimates, as detailed in confidential Attachment D. The Active Transport Program has provisions for the City to apply for additional funding, if required.
26. The total forecast project construction costs are based on the preliminary design plans using the City's panel contract rates (panel contract 1840) and compared with the recently completed Saunders Street and Miller Street Cycleway project. A summary of the financial implications is included in confidential Attachment D.
27. 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.
28. On Mary Ann Street there are five ticket machines and a total of 28 ticket parking spaces expected to be removed on the northern side. The impact on revenue per annum is estimated at around \$39,000. On Kelly Street there are two ticket machines and a total of six ticket parking spaces expected to be removed on the southern side. The impact on revenue per annum is estimated at around \$24,000.
29. 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 the City's panel contractor.

Relevant Legislation

30. 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.
31. 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.
32. 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.
33. Roads Act 1993 for road related approvals.
34. 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.
35. Local Government Act 1993 for construction procurement.
36. Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A) (Part 5) - The scope of works will be reviewed by a planner to assess the environmental impacts and requirements for the project under the EP&A Act. A Review of Environmental Factors will be completed.
37. Environmental Planning and Assessment (General) Regulation 2000.
38. State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

39. Key dates for the project are:

Milestone	Target dates
Design Development	January to October 2023
Local Pedestrian, Cycling and Traffic Calming Committee	April 2023
Contractor engagement	January 2024
Construction commences	February 2024
Construction completion	September 2024

Options

40. Not building the cycleway would not achieve the City of Sydney's strategic objectives and its positive impacts and outcomes. It would leave a gap in the bike network and be a risk to the safety of school and tertiary students, commuters and food delivery riders. This option is therefore not recommended.
41. East-west connectivity in this area is constrained by steep topography to the north, large property parcels and discontinuity, and state roads. There are no other connected and appropriate east-west routes within a suitable distance. Therefore, another route is not a recommended option.

Public Consultation

42. The City consulted residents and businesses in the area from Monday 10 October to Monday 7 November 2022, which included sending notification letters to 2,250 properties.
43. A project page was available at sydneyyoursay.com.au and was viewed 1,336 times and the related documents were downloaded 460 times.
44. Two in-person drop-in sessions were held at the corner of Mary Ann and Jones Streets near TAFE on Tuesday 18 October 2022 and Thursday 27 October 2022.
45. City staff met with International Grammar School representatives on site to discuss the project. Their main concern was the number of drop-off/pick-up spaces. The project team are working with Traffic Operations to add more short-term parking nearby.
46. City staff spoke with the NSW Taxi Council, and confirmed that the project will not close any streets or require motor vehicle traffic to reroute. There are no taxi ranks along the project route.
47. Sixty people dropped 174 pins on the Social PinPoint map-based survey. Some people dropped more than one pin. Of the 80 different comments, 51 (64 per cent) were positive, 22 (27 per cent) were neutral and seven (nine per cent) were negative. The five comments which had the highest "upvotes" from others were:
 - (a) Support (no further comments) - 152 upvotes and one downvote
 - (b) Improve bike access on the Goods Line - 122 upvotes
 - (c) Expand the scope of the project to provide a safe crossing over Bay Street - 61 upvotes and one downvote
 - (d) Continue the concrete separator all the way to the intersection (at Wattle Street) - 52 upvotes
 - (e) Use a solid concrete barrier so that cars don't cross into the cycleway (at Kelly Street near Bay Street) - 51 upvotes.

48. The City received a total of 31 email submissions during the public exhibition period, including from the Glebe Society, TAFE NSW and Bicycle NSW.
49. City staff have responded to each of the issues raised in the map comments, emails and group submissions in Attachment C Engagement Report.

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