

Public Exhibition - Access Strategy and Action Plan - Continuing the Vision

File No: X095505

Summary

The City of Sydney's current integrated, comprehensive access strategy for the whole local government area, Connecting Our City, was approved in 2012.

Access and transport were key themes and enablers of Sustainable Sydney 2030. There have been many significant achievements in access and transport since Sustainable Sydney 2030 was adopted in 2008, including light rail/George Street transformation; extensive delivery of our cycleway network; and NSW Government rolling out high capacity Metro rail and stations.

Access and transport remain of primary importance in meeting the outcomes in Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 – Continuing the Vision and the Community Strategic Plan – Delivering Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050. Many Transformative Project Ideas in Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 - Continuing the Vision relate directly to transport projects. Others rely heavily on changed approaches to access and transport.

The City has now developed a draft Access Strategy and Action Plan - Continuing the Vision. It builds on the City's achievements. It explains our plans to achieve the city for walking, cycling and public transport. It explains why transport and access are crucial to creating a city that is environmentally sustainable, inclusive and economically productive. It identifies the high level of consistency between the City's approach to transport and access, and NSW Government policies. The document also outlines the City's extensive programs that contribute directly to the outcomes in the Community Strategic Plan.

The draft Action Plan contains 17 actions. Some actions relate directly to Transformative Project Ideas as contained in Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 – Continuing the Vision. Some actions provide an overview of existing or proposed City strategies. There are advocacy actions for the City to influence the NSW Government, generally on issues or positions where the NSW Government has made strategy or policy announcements but not delivered on these.

The City is seeking Council approval to exhibit the draft Access Strategy and Action Plan for consultation with the community.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council approve for public exhibition the draft Access Strategy and Action Plan, as shown at Attachment A to the subject report;
- (B) Council note that the Access Strategy and Action Plan, including any recommended changes, will be reported to Council for adoption following the exhibition period; and
- (C) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to make minor editorial amendments for clarity or correction of drafting errors prior to the exhibition of the draft Access Strategy and Action Plan.

Attachments

Attachment A. Draft Access Strategy and Action Plan - Continuing the Vision

Background

1. Access and transport were key themes and enablers of Sustainable Sydney 2030. There have been many significant achievements in access and transport since Sustainable Sydney 2030 was adopted in 2008, including light rail/George Street transformation, extensive cycleway delivery and NSW Government rolling out high capacity Metro rail and stations such as Barangaroo, Waterloo and Pyrmont.
2. Access and transport remain of primary importance in meeting the outcomes in Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 – Continuing the Vision and the Community Strategic Plan – Delivering Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050. Many Transformative Project Ideas in Sustainable Sydney 2030-50 - Continuing the Vision relate directly to transport projects. Others rely heavily on changed approaches to access and transport to enable their implementation.
3. This is the first integrated, comprehensive access strategy for the whole City for Sydney since Connecting our City in 2012.
4. The City undertook extensive technical studies from 2018-20 to inform Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 – Continuing the Vision. These studies included access to global leaders in implementing change in major cities, such as London and New York.
5. They underpin Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 – Continuing the Vision's Direction 5 - Create a city for walking, cycling and public transport.
6. The studies developed approaches to leverage the major NSW Government infrastructure program of Metro (supported) and motorways (not supported). These infrastructure programs allow a change in transport system management that enables street space reallocation in the city centre and other key precincts – all the while maintaining access for people and goods.
7. City Access and Transport worked with key units within the City to develop the strategy and/or specific actions – including Strategic Planning and Urban Development; Sustainability; City Design and Economic Strategy.
8. The City was also able to engage with the key NSW Government agencies (Transport for NSW, Department of Planning and Environment, and Infrastructure NSW) to build an understanding of and support for these approaches. The City was thus able to argue or advocate for the approaches in a number of parallel processes:
 - (a) the City's CityPlan 2036;
 - (b) NSW Government South East Sydney Transport Strategy (commitment to Metro extension to Zetland);
 - (c) NSW Government Metro West (Pyrmont Station); and
 - (d) NSW Government Tech Central Place-Based Transport Strategy (commitment to MetroWest Extension Investigations at Central and Camperdown, transformation of Broadway including reallocation of street space).

9. The City has now developed an integrated access strategy and action plan to support and contextualise the specific strategies and proposals. It builds on the City's achievements, with the aim of continuing progress towards the vision. It explains our plans to achieve the city for walking, cycling and public transport. It explains why transport and access are crucial to creating a city that is environmentally sustainable, inclusive and economically productive. It identifies the high level of consistency between the City's approach to transport and access, and NSW Government policies. The document also outlines the City's extensive programs that contribute directly to the outcomes in the Community Strategic Plan.
10. The first element is a strategy, comprising 10 key elements. It is a strategy:
 - (a) to deliver an integrated transport and land use system providing high levels of access without relying on high levels of mobility;
 - (b) for reallocating street space;
 - (c) to inform planning of key precincts;
 - (d) that improves places;
 - (e) that responds to the climate emergency and builds resilience;
 - (f) that enables the City to continue to grow;
 - (g) to assist pandemic recovery;
 - (h) that strengthens inclusion;
 - (i) that saves lives; and
 - (j) that shapes the city around a networked public transport system.
11. The action plan comprises 17 actions:
 1. Broadway – a green axis for Tech Central, a city centre gateway
 2. Park Street – a green gateway for the city centre, reconnecting Hyde Park
 3. Oxford and Flinders Streets – a green gateway supporting culture
 4. City centre place improvements - from vehicles to people
 5. Plan Sydney Metro precincts to improve the public domain and increase space for people
 6. Sydney Metro as a catalyst – bringing forward the Metro West extension
 7. Connecting Green Square
 8. A city for walking
 9. A city for cycling
 10. Moving kerbside deliveries off-street over time

11. Reforming Traffic Committees – letting local government manage local roads
 12. Funding public domain works via parking space levies
 13. Reducing the impacts of buses in the city centre
 14. Electrification of City transport
 15. Reducing vehicle speeds
 16. Supporting car sharing
 17. Pricing to achieve more equitable access outcomes.
12. Actions 8, 9 and 14 relate to existing strategies: the City is implementing the Cycling Strategy and Action Plan. The City is updating the Walking Strategy and Action Plan. The City is finalising the Electrification of Transport Strategy and Action Plan for Council consideration, following exhibition earlier in 2023. The treatment of these issues in the overarching draft Access Strategy and Action Plan is thus high level, explaining the general approaches and showing how they align to and benefit from the broader approach to access and transport.
13. For the other actions, the draft Strategy and Action Plan provides:
- (a) a description of the action;
 - (b) the issues and opportunities that this action addresses; and
 - (c) the key enablers of the action and the next steps.
14. The draft Access Strategy and Action Plan reflect the City's relatively limited direct role in managing access and transport. Rather, multiple advocacy actions seek NSW Government commitment towards actions to achieve generally agreed outcomes.
15. The draft Access Strategy and Action Plan continue the City's advocacy for the Metro West extension to Zetland by 2030, and light rail to Green Square now. Elsewhere, the primary focus is on street space reallocation, in the city centre and in key precincts such as Tech Central and Oxford Street. For Broadway and Oxford Street, the City sees a role for light rail, building on its success and popularity. The overall approach will support the improvement of public places, even as the City grows significantly.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision

16. 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 plan is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
- (a) Direction 2 - A leading environmental performer - by supporting the transition to Net Zero Emissions in the transport sector.
 - (b) Direction 3 - Public places for all - by creating the opportunity for reallocating street space away from vehicles to people, places and planting.

- (c) Direction 5 - A city for walking, cycling and public transport - this is the key focus of the draft Access Strategy and Action Plan.
- (d) Direction 6 - An equitable and inclusive city - by identifying the need for access for all sections of the community, and by supporting more affordable transport options.
- (e) Direction 7 - Resilient and diverse communities - by creating the transport system that will provide access that responds to economic, environmental or public health challenges.
- (f) Direction 8 - A thriving cultural and creative life - by helping create more vibrant high streets such as Oxford Street, while maintaining access.
- (g) Direction 9 - A transformed and innovative economy - by supporting high quality places with improved access, in Tech Central, Pyrmont and the city centre.

Organisational Impact

17. The draft Access Strategy and Action Plan has no organisational impact. Actions do not require additional staff resourcing.

Risks

18. There is no direct significant risk arising from Council adopting the Access Strategy and Action Plan.
19. Implementation of the Access Strategy and Action Plan faces risk in the level of NSW Government support for specific street space reallocations, even when forming part of government strategies or announcements.
20. Another risk is the expectation risk that the City will be able to fund public domain works when street space is reallocated. The City will look to other levels of government to increase funding for these works, and implement tactical approaches to allow costs to be scaled over time where appropriate. The City will also look for funding from development, exemplified by the Public Domain Plans and specific contributions. The Strategy and Action Plan also identifies an option for increasing funding (Action 12, funding public domain works through the Parking Space Levy).

Social / Cultural / Community

21. The draft Access Strategy and Action Plan includes strategies and actions that support a more accessible and inclusive City of Sydney. They aim for a city based around walking, cycling and public transport, supported by options such as car sharing. These are more affordable options.
22. The draft Access Strategy and Action Plan however acknowledge the need for trips by private motor vehicles, especially for less mobile people. Maintaining access for these sections of the community is a fundamental element of the draft Access Strategy and Action Plan.

Environmental

23. The key environmental challenge for the transport sector is Net Zero emissions by 2035. The City aims to reduce vehicle emissions, supporting the transition to Net Zero while reducing harmful impacts of local emissions. The City's overall approach is to reduce emissions by reducing the amount people need to travel by private motor vehicle. Electrification of transport systems then completes the transition to Net Zero.
24. A related issue is mitigating the impacts of heat. A key element of the draft Access Strategy and Action Plan is to support more space for plantings by creating more space by reallocating it away from vehicle traffic where appropriate.

Economic

25. The draft Access Strategy and Action Plan are consistent with the City's economic vision, encapsulated in Direction 9 of Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 – Continuing the Vision. The extension of Metro West to Zetland (as part of an extension to at least Randwick) will create major productivity benefits in centres served by Metro. The overall approach to reallocate street space in precincts such as the city centre, Tech Central and Pyrmont are fundamental to supporting high value growth in the innovation sector, as well as directly enabling the city centre tower clusters fundamental to the Central Sydney Planning Strategy.

Financial Implications

26. There are no direct financial implications arising from the draft Access Strategy and Action Plan. Many actions are underway within committed resources. No additional staff are required to implement the actions. Where minor amounts of funding could be required, for example for technical studies to develop high level concepts for a Green Avenue, these are subject to the City's established operational budget processes.

Relevant Legislation

27. There is no legislation with direct impact on the draft Access Strategy and Action Plan, or which require it. The draft Access Strategy and Action Plan relate generally to allocation of transport and traffic responsibilities under the Local Government Act 1993, the Roads Act 1993 and the Road Transport Act 2013.

Options

28. The City could consider advocating for specific projects or approaches based on existing Council strategies such as Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision and CityPlan 2036. However there would be less collective understanding without an integrated access strategy, which illustrates in more detail why and how specific actions are required.

Public Consultation

29. The starting point for the draft Access Strategy and Access Plan is the consultation that influenced Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision. The community's desire for greener, safer and more inviting streets - while maintaining access - is the cornerstone of the draft Access Strategy and Action Plan.
30. Relevant NSW Government agencies provided input on the overall approach and the merit of specific actions. In a parallel process, City representatives provided input into NSW Government strategies, such as the Tech Central Place Based Transport Strategy. For these reasons there is significant alignment between the draft Access Strategy and Action Plan and NSW Government published positions - a primary focus of the document is to increase the City's influence in having the government act to implement actions consistent with those positions.

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