

Relevant Information for Council

FILE: X037203 **DATE:** 23 June 2023

TO: Lord Mayor and Councillors

FROM: Kim Woodbury, Chief Operating Officer

THROUGH: Monica Barone, Chief Executive Officer

SUBJECT: Information Relevant To Item 11.8 – Traffic Treatment – Proposed Closure of Liverpool Street to Traffic at Oxford Street, Darlinghurst

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 19 June 2023, further information was sought about the design development for the Oxford Street West Cycleway, how the City worked with Mardi Gras organisers and what changes the City had made to accommodate operations of the annual Mardi Gras parade.

On 21 February 2022, Council unanimously resolved to "approve the concept design for the Oxford and Liverpool Street cycleway as shown in Attachment B to the subject report for ongoing consultation with Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras during the next phase of detailed design and documentation prior to construction tender" and "note the changes the City is already making to the design following community feedback as outlined in the subject Information Relevant To memorandum".

The Information Relevant To memorandum explained that the needs of the annual Mardi Gras parade were a key consideration in the decision to change from a temporary, centre-running design to a permanent cycleway along the northern side, and that City staff met with representatives of Mardi Gras prior to the 2021 community engagement. It stated:

"In response to the issues raised by Mardi Gras the City is making the following changes to the design exhibited to the public in late 2021 as we further develop the detailed designs:

- *remove the existing median in Liverpool Street to provide additional marshalling and manoeuvring space for Mardi Gras; and*

- *change the design to remove proposed concrete traffic medians on Liverpool Street (near Wentworth Avenue) and Oxford Street (near Brisbane Street) and replace them with painted medians so as to provide extra marshalling, manoeuvring and parade space. "*

It also covered Mardi Gras' concerns about additional operational time, resources and money to deal with the cycleway separator being within the spectator area, as a potential trip hazard.

The cycleway separator is within the spectator viewing area and does not inhibit or impact the width of the existing parade route. As requested by Mardi Gras, the design removes the existing central concrete median in Liverpool Street to improve the marshalling area for the event.

Progress since Council adoption of the scoping report

Since the scoping report to Council in February 2022, City staff have held multiple workshops with Mardi Gras Organisers. During the workshops, the City:

1. Sought to understand the risks and challenges of running the annual parade on a reconfigured Oxford Street (that incorporates a cycleway along the northern side):
 - Viewing - People may stand on the cycleway separators and block the view of the people behind them
 - Hazard - People may trip on the separators
 - Crowd behaviour – viewing impacts could increase antisocial behaviour.
2. Investigated multiple options to address challenges, including:
 - Modifications to the permanent design
 - Event overlays (temporary installations)
 - Event management

Mardi Gras supported modifying the permanent design, as the best way to reduce risks and challenges. Additional design modifications that the City made included:

- Increase areas where the cycleway is flush with the footpath
- Reduction in the garden beds along Oxford Street
- Longer lean rails on the bus platform islands
- Flush continuous paved footpath at the closed intersection at 'Little' Liverpool Street.

Mardi Gras and the City did not support event overlays (temporary installations) due to the cost and time to install/dismantle and store.

City staff will continue to work with Mardi Gras. Mardi Gras was sent a copy of the updated plans on 28 April 2023 (see Attachment A), and the City has agreed to keep them updated on the construction program, ensuring that the parade is unaffected by construction.

The Local Pedestrian, Cycling and Traffic Calming Committee (LPCTCC) endorsed the design at its meeting on 20 April 2023, with the plans and report available on the [City's website](#) (Item 30).

Mardi Gras assessed the need for some additional planning, lighting, security, volunteers and crowd management personnel, and traffic control. For this, Mardi Gras organisers have sought additional grant funding from the City for the years following the reconfiguration of Oxford Street.

An additional \$100,000 in cash funding per year (for four years) as a contribution towards the cycleway safety treatment for the Mardi Gras parade and remediation of damage to City parks during Mardi Gras Festival events is recommended for approval by Council on 26 June 2023.

Memo from Kim Woodbury, Chief Operation Officer

Prepared by: Fiona Campbell, Manager Cycling Strategy

Attachments

Attachment A. Liverpool and Oxford Street West Cycleway - General Arrangement Plan

Approved

P. M. Barone

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Chief Executive Officer