

Public Exhibition - Haymarket Public Domain Plan

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Summary

This report seeks Council's approval to publicly exhibit the draft Haymarket Public Domain Plan 2023 (the draft Plan).

The Haymarket public domain precinct is bounded by Liverpool Street to the north, Darling Drive to the west, Broadway and Eddy Avenue to the south and Elizabeth Street to the east (Attachment A).

In 2022, the City undertook community consultation to develop the shared vision in A Community Vision for Haymarket 2022. This vision has informed community themes which are coordinated across the draft Plan and the draft Haymarket and Chinatown Revitalisation Strategy (subject to a separate report).

The draft Plan (Attachment B) provides recommended improvements for streets and public spaces in the precinct that are informed by the vision and community themes in particular the importance of identity, history and culture as well as the principles and directions set out in Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision and Public Space Public life 2020. The draft Plan also covers public art directions to be integrated into the public domain.

The project proposals are not fully developed designs but are intended to illustrate opportunities for streets and public spaces within the precinct to facilitate consultation with community stakeholders, State government agencies and private developers about the future direction of the area.

It is recommended that the draft Plan be placed on public exhibition concurrently with the draft Haymarket and Chinatown Revitalisation Strategy for a period of four weeks to seek comment on project directions and priorities. Post exhibition, the draft Plan will then be formally presented to Council for adoption as the Haymarket Public Domain Plan.

The Dixon Street improvement project is underway with consultants engaged to prepare a design proposal. A draft concept design will be available for community feedback during the exhibition of the draft Haymarket Public Domain Plan.

An implementation plan with project priorities will be developed and reported back for adoption with the draft Plan following the public exhibition.

Ongoing stakeholder engagement and further feasibility assessment, in particular with Transport NSW, will be used to develop the Plan and guide the City's long term planning and capital works programming.

It is intended that the Haymarket Public Domain Plan will supersede the existing Chinatown Public Domain Plans 2010 and 2015 and Public Art Plan for Chinatown 2010 and 2015, given that the draft Plan provides a more up to date status on precinct context, future change and community priorities.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council approve for public exhibition the draft Haymarket Public Domain Plan, as shown at Attachment B to the subject report, for a minimum period of 28 days;
- (B) Council note that the Haymarket Public Domain Plan including any recommended changes and a project implementation plan, will be reported to Council for adoption following the exhibition period;
- (C) Council note that further stakeholder engagement and feasibility assessments will be required to develop a more refined scope for individual projects and guide the City's long term planning and capital works programming; and
- (D) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to make minor amendments to the draft Haymarket Public Domain Plan for clarity or correction of drafting errors prior to public exhibition.

Attachments

Attachment A. Haymarket Public Domain Plan Study Area and City Centre Precincts

Attachment B. Draft Haymarket Public Domain Plan 2023

Attachment C.

Background

1. Haymarket is one of Sydney's most iconic neighbourhoods and has long been recognised as a focal point for Asian food, cultures and communities both locally and internationally.
2. In response to concerns about the impact of Covid-19 on economic activity, competition from Darling Square, and the dated presentation of the precinct, the City undertook a community engagement process to help create a vision and community themes for Haymarket.
3. From this engagement, A Community Vision for Haymarket 2022 was prepared, and Haymarket emerged as 'A vibrant, bustling place that celebrates diverse Asian cultures, that preserves its history and character while embracing contemporary forms of cultural expression'.
4. This engagement process has informed the preparation of the draft Haymarket Public Domain Plan (the draft Plan), and the draft Haymarket and Chinatown Revitalisation Strategy (subject to a separate Council report).
5. The draft Revitalisation Strategy outlines the City's overarching approach including: renewal of the heart; planning and heritage; public domain and art; culture, events and activation; and collaboration.
6. The draft Plan is part of a broader City Centre Public Domain planning process whereby the City is divided into precincts (Attachment A).
7. Each precinct's streets, laneways and public spaces are studied to develop a series of projects to increase the amount and quality of the city centre public domain, whilst maintaining servicing levels to support the daily activities of the precinct. In addition public art directions are integrated in the public domain plan.
8. A key objective of the city centre public domain plans is to rebalance space allocation of streets to provide more room for people to walk, cycle and stay and delivers on Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision public domain directions.
9. Public domain plans that have been completed to date are Chinatown 2010 and 2015, Harbour Village North 2012, George Street 2013, Town Hall 2021, City South 2021 and City North 2015 and 2022.
10. A public domain plan for the Central Station precinct is currently in development.

Haymarket Public Domain Plan

11. The Haymarket Public Domain Plan provides a coordinated response to the precinct, identifies opportunities for public domain improvements, and recommends priorities for the City's capital work program. It will also inform public domain works undertaken by government agencies and the private sector.
12. The draft Haymarket Public Domain Plan is attached (Attachment B).

Study area

13. The Haymarket public domain precinct is bounded by Liverpool Street to the north, Darling Drive to the west, Broadway and Eddy Ave to the south and Elizabeth Street to the east (Attachment A).
14. The study expands the Chinatown Public Domain Plan 2015 area eastward of George Street to encompass Belmore Park and the core Thai Town area, in response to the transformation of George Street South and the new opportunity to unite the precinct east and west and reinstate the historic connection between Chinatown and Belmore Park.

Development of the draft Plan

15. To increase the amount and quality of available public space, a key objective of the draft Plan is to rebalance space allocation of streets to provide more room for people to walk, cycle and stay, as well as to accommodate additional tree canopy, public art, and cultural events.
16. The draft Plan is also strongly informed by the community's feedback on the precinct which highlighted the following key issues:
 - (a) The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the Chinatown area, especially businesses largely reliant on international students, tourists and city workers. The core Chinatown area is recovering from Covid-19.
 - (b) Chinatown faces competition from nearby Darling Square and other Chinatowns across Sydney. These factors have contributed to a drop in the number of visitors and decline in the once vibrant area;
 - (c) George Street has been transformed into a tree-lined pedestrian boulevard. Improved connections and public amenities are needed in the surrounding streets to realise the opportunity of new pedestrian activity in the area;
 - (d) The City South area is undergoing change and growth, including Central Precinct and development proposals within the Haymarket precinct, which will put more use and capacity pressures on the public domain; and
 - (e) Haymarket has evolved from a traditional Chinatown to a diverse Asian village, including Thai Town and Koreatown and there is a need to develop a contemporary cultural identities for the precinct that respects its history.
17. In response to community feedback, the following community themes have been developed to guide public domain outcomes:
 - (a) Respectful of history and celebrates culture. Haymarket has a rich history. It is a place where diverse traditions and cultures inform the character of the area, are reflected in the built environment and are celebrated in the public domain;
 - (b) Global, diverse, and evolving. Haymarket is globally connected, lively throughout the day and night, and constantly evolving;
 - (c) Accessible and connected. Haymarket is easy to get to and get around within. Places within the precinct are connected and people of all ages find it accessible;

- (d) Authentic, affordable and local. Haymarket serves and reflects its local communities. It has a range of offers, places and spaces that are unique to the area, support everyday life. Visitors are attracted to its unique character;
 - (e) Green, clean and welcoming. Haymarket is clean, green, safe and welcoming to the community. It is more comfortable, with a good balance of light, shade and amenity. The streets and public spaces are well-designed and maintained by Council, residents and local businesses; and
 - (f) Through partnerships and in collaboration. Haymarket's revitalisation is led by people who are passionate about its future. Its identity is shaped by its communities. Haymarket thrives through partnerships, a willingness to collaborate and leadership.
18. The draft Plan also builds on the public domain improvements undertaken over previous years. These include:
- (a) George Street South transformation, including improvements to intersections at Ultimo Road and Hay Street as well as footpath widening along Hay Street between Sussex Street and Harbour Street;
 - (b) Barlow Street closure and installation of the permanent Barlow Street Forest;
 - (c) Thomas Street new public space including public artwork "The Garden of Cloud and Stone" by Lindy Lee and Jane Irwin Landscape Architecture;
 - (d) Sussex Street paving and poles upgrade;
 - (e) Little Hay Street, Factory Street and Kimber Lane upgrades;
 - (f) Public artwork "In Between Two Worlds" in Kimber Lane by Jason Wing; and
 - (g) Red Lantern Information Kiosk including artwork "Pao Cha" by Pamela Mei-Leng See.
19. A consultant team has been engaged to prepare a design proposal for Dixon Street that will recognise it as the historic core of Chinatown and realise its potential as a vibrant public space. The design will include creative lighting overlays, restoration of the Chinatown ceremonial gates, improved seating, improved services to support events, and paving treatments. A draft concept design will be available for community feedback.

Project Opportunities

20. The draft Plan includes public domain project opportunities to facilitate consultation with the community and stakeholders on community priorities and precinct needs. High level images and sketches have been used to illustrate design concepts for each project to communicate possible design directions for improvements.
21. These concepts are not fully worked designs but are rather intended to be the basis for advocacy, technical and feasibility assessment, and to inform collaboration with State government agencies to achieve successful outcomes.
22. The efficient functioning of the city, including servicing and loading, will be a prime consideration in developing the project proposals.

23. Identified project opportunities include:
- (a) Belmore Park - improve safety and create a welcoming city centre park that encourages events, community gatherings, and everyday use;
 - (b) Creative Lighting master plan - develop a range of deliverable projects reinforces the precinct cultural identity and night time destination;
 - (c) Events and Cultural Celebrations - support Haymarket's rich program of cultural events with flexible, well-equipped public spaces at a variety of scales;
 - (d) Dixon Street - revitalise the historic place of cultural memories at the heart of Chinatown. This project is underway;
 - (e) Campbell Street - welcome people to Thai Town with an entry public artwork and a street of lights, food and events;
 - (f) Hay Street West - create a softer, greener street for everyday activity that welcomes events and cultural programming;
 - (g) Harbour Street - street improvements with a generous, green pedestrian space that supports events and affordable everyday uses, unifies precinct with Darling Quarter, and draw people into Chinatown ;
 - (h) Sussex Street - create a green city spine that is celebrated with public art, and that balances all uses including its cultural use as an historic Chinatown street;
 - (i) Goulburn Street - rollout city palette granite paving and smart poles;
 - (j) Ultimo Road - create an historic, green, calm street that provides a regional cycling connection and includes the opportunity to upgrade Thomas Lane; and
 - (k) Quay Street - create a continuous, high-quality streetscape that connects Central and Darling Harbour, and includes public art to draw people into Chinatown.

Belmore Park - Safer Cities Her Way

24. The City has recently received a grant application from Transport for NSW for the Safer Cities Her Way program to engage women, girls and gender diverse people on place perception and safety in Belmore Park.
25. The grant project will allow pilot testing of temporary measures and evaluation of ideas to improve safety perception such as park activation and lighting overlays. These outcomes will inform final design and capital works improvements in Belmore Park.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision

26. 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 draft plan is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
- (a) Direction 1 - Responsible governance and stewardship - the draft Plan guides long term public domain investment and improvements to the City's public domain assets and services, as well as guiding investment by others through development.
 - (b) Direction 2 - A leading environmental performer - the draft Plan will implement the Greening Sydney Strategy and significantly increase tree canopy throughout the precinct. It helps to deliver planned regional cycling connections to support active transport.
 - (c) Direction 3 - Public places for all - the draft Plan will balance all public space uses and identify opportunities to reallocate road space in response to an increased demand for more space for pedestrian movement and street life.
 - (d) Direction 4 - Design excellence and sustainable development - the Plan responds to the distinct character, topography and history of the precinct, opening up opportunities to celebrate water and heritage through project development.
 - (e) Direction 5 - A city for walking, cycling and public transport - the Plan will improve pedestrian amenity by creating an attractive, comfortable, and safe environment with improved connections to a busy public transport interchange.
 - (f) Direction 6 - An equitable and inclusive city - the Plan outlines projects which will make space for all city users, including improving access and amenity for people of all abilities and cultures.
 - (g) Direction 7 - Resilient and diverse communities - the Plan aims to increase the amount of flexible public space that can be activated by different uses to attract foot traffic and improve business continuity through various shocks and stresses.
 - (h) Direction 8 - A thriving cultural and creative life - the Plan integrates community feedback to identify new opportunities for public art and to provide event infrastructure to support cultural programming by the city and others.
 - (i) Direction 9 - A transformed and innovative economy - the Plan supports businesses to activate the public domain, encouraging people to stay and enjoy the City, and supporting a diverse 24-hour precinct.
 - (j) Direction 10 - Housing for all - the Plan proposes transformative projects to create a welcoming public domain that supports affordable uses.

Risks

27. All project priorities recommended will require a project scoping and feasibility assessment process that will identify risks and mitigation measures prior to any implementation stage proceeding.

28. Many of the recommendations require Transport for NSW approval and ongoing collaboration for a successful outcome.

Social / Cultural / Community

29. The draft Plan recognises the importance of the public domain to bring people together, to express cultural identity, and to support collaboration between the community, businesses and government to activate the city. Together with the draft Haymarket and Chinatown Revitalisation Strategy, the draft Plan seeks a partnership between the City, other levels of government, community and private property owners in a co-ordinated response to revitalisation.

Environmental

30. The Plan is aligned with the City's environmental actions, in particular the need for more space to increase tree canopy and greening and improving pedestrian amenity across our city.

Economic

31. The Plan focuses on delivering public domain quality and liveability which has been proven to be a key contributor to the competitiveness of cities to do business and attract investment.

Financial Implications

32. The City's current long term financial plan has capital works budget allocations for Dixon Street, Sussex Street, Belmore Park, Harbour Street, Quay Street, and Goulburn Street.
33. The public exhibition of the draft Plan will provide further clarity on project directions and priorities to inform future long term financial plans.
34. The Plan also presents a series of recommendations many of which are already business as usual actions incorporated in the City's long term financial plan. This includes granite paving, public domain furniture, wayfinding, and greening.
35. The Plan's other project opportunities and proposals will require further advocacy, consultation, feasibility assessment and design development in collaboration with stakeholders and state agencies such as Transport NSW to inform future capital works budgets to be adopted by Council.

Relevant Legislation

36. Project delivery will be in accordance to relevant planning and approval legislation and regulations including Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 and Roads Act 1993.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

37. It is proposed to exhibit the draft Plan for a period of four weeks and report a final plan back to Council in late 2023.

Options

38. Not proceeding with the draft Plan will mean that Haymarket is not well supported in its recovery from Covid-19 and will miss the opportunity to build on the transformation of George Street South and provide meaningful improvements to Haymarket. This is not recommended.

Public Consultation

39. The following public consultation has been undertaken:
- (a) Early Engagement - February to April 2022. This included:
 - (i) Engagement with key stakeholders (February 2022) to inform engagement activities;
 - (ii) Doorknock of Chinatown businesses (March 2022) in Dixon Street, Little Hay Street, and Thomas Street, to seek their feedback on the markets and how Dixon Street could be improved; and
 - (iii) A consultation stall at the Dixon Street night markets (April 2022).
 - (b) Community Engagement, 'Have your Say on Future of Haymarket', from 10 August to 21 September 2022. This included:
 - (i) An online survey (in English, Traditional Chinese, Simplified Chinese, Thai, Korean, Indonesian), completed by more than 950 people;
 - (ii) A Lord Mayor community forum at Lower Town Hall House on the 24 August 2022, attended by about 110 people; and
 - (iii) Pop-up consultation stands in five Haymarket locations, being:
 - a. Dixon Street on 6 September and 16 September 2022;
 - b. Thomas Street near Ultimo Road on 6 September 2022;
 - c. Campbell Street at George Street near Light Rail stop on 8 September and 16 September 2022;
 - d. George Street at Goulburn Street near World Square on 13 September 2022; and
 - e. Pitt Street near Goulburn Street on 15 September 2022.
 - (c) Key themes arising from public consultation undertaken to date have been described in the Engagement Outcomes Report, summarised in the Community Vision for Haymarket, and included in the draft Plan to guide public domain outcomes.
40. Engagement with key stakeholders has continued throughout this year, including briefings with key stakeholders on the Chinatown Historic Thematic Study and draft Haymarket and Chinatown Revitalisation Strategy.
41. It is proposed that the draft Haymarket Public Domain Plan and draft Haymarket and Chinatown Revitalisation Strategy be placed on public exhibition concurrently for four weeks.

42. Suggested consultation activities will include:
 - (a) Multi-lingual advertising;
 - (b) 'Have your say' page on the City's website;
 - (c) Survey of views on projects and priorities;
 - (d) Lord Mayor forum on 5 September 2023; and
 - (e) Other activities to respond to engage with the community and key stakeholder groups.
43. During the consultation phase, the City will engage directly with key stakeholders including developers and government to share the proposed updated plan and gather further feedback.
44. Individual projects will be subject to separate consultation and stakeholder engagement process which will be reported to Council with recommended project scope for Council approval.

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