

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

File No: X095505

Summary

This report seeks Council approval of the City's Access Strategy and Action Plan after exhibition in July and August 2023.

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.

At its June 2023 meeting, Council resolved to exhibit the Draft Access Strategy and Action Plan - Continuing the Vision. The Draft Strategy and Action Plan 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.

In response to the public exhibition, 107 people provided "free-form" comments on the Draft Access Strategy and Action Plan. The City also received seven submissions from individuals and nine submissions from community groups and public/private organisations.

The public consultation indicated overall support for the Draft Strategy and Action Plan and the City's approach and commitments to managing access and transport to support environmental, social and economic outcomes.

In response to submissions, the City is proposing a number of changes:

- clarifying where necessary the advocacy nature of the document and some of the actions and positions within it, while continuing to identify the strong alignment with NSW Government commitments, strategies or policy frameworks;
- clarifying the City's role in specific achievements since Sustainable Sydney 2030, such as successful advocacy for NSW Government Metro projects; and
- reflecting the positive input of the South-East light rail operator on extending the system.

Where appropriate, the revised document reflects recent NSW Government announcements, actions or inquiries. The external context may continue to change across the life of the Strategy and Action Plan, but the City's advocacy positions will always be determined by Council.

In terms of Action 8, a City for Walking, Council will soon consider an update of the Walking Strategy and Action Plan. The text in the Draft Strategy and Action Plan summarises the overall approach (as it does with the Strategies and Action Plans for Cycling and for Electrification of City Transport).

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council note the submissions and feedback received through the public exhibition period as shown at Attachment C to the subject report;
- (B) Council adopt the Access Strategy and Action Plan - Continuing the Vision incorporating amendments, as shown at Attachments A and B to the subject report; and
- (C) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to make amendments to the Access Strategy and Action Plan – Continuing the Vision in order to correct any minor drafting errors and finalise design, artwork and accessible formats for publication.

Attachments

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| Attachment A. | Proposed Changes to Exhibited Draft Access Strategy and Action Plan - Continuing the Vision |
| Attachment B. | Final Access Strategy and Action Plan - Continuing the Vision |
| Attachment C. | Engagement Report – 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 2030-2050 - 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 of 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. These technical studies 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, while maintaining access for people and for businesses to receive goods and services.
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) City of Sydney's City Plan 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's Draft Access Strategy and Action Plan supports and contextualises 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 part of the draft document 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 second part of the draft document is an action plan, comprising 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 (adopted in 2018). The City is updating the Walking Strategy and Action Plan. In June 2023, Council adopted the Electrification of Transport Strategy and Action Plan.
 13. For the other actions, the Strategy and Action Plan provides:
 - (a) a description of the action;
 - (b) the issues and opportunities that the action addresses; and
 - (c) the key enablers of the action and the next steps.
 14. The 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 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.
 16. The NSW Government announced a number of inquiries in 2023:
 - (a) Independent Metro Review;
 - (b) Bus Industry Reform Taskforce;
 - (c) Independent Road Tolling Review; and
 - (d) Sydney Trains Review.
 17. The NSW Government also released updated Speed Zoning Standards, which strengthen the case for 30km/h speed limits consistent with the Access Strategy and Action Plan.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision

18. 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

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

Risks

20. There is no direct significant risk arising from Council adopting the Access Strategy and Action Plan.
21. 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.
22. 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

23. The 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.
24. The 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 Access Strategy and Action Plan.

Environmental

25. 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.
26. A related issue is mitigating the impacts of heat. A key element of the 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

27. The 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

28. There are no direct financial implications arising from the 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

29. There is no legislation with direct impact on the Access Strategy and Action Plan, or which require it. The 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

30. 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 City Plan 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

31. On 19 June 2023, Council approved public exhibition of the draft Access Strategy and Action Plan to allow an opportunity for the community to provide feedback. Consultation was undertaken from 10 July to 7 August 2023.
32. During the consultation period the Sydney Your Say page was visited 1587 times. 107 people responded to the online consultation on the Access Strategy and Action Plan. The City also received seven submissions from individuals and nine submissions from community groups and public/private organisations.
33. The public consultation indicated support for the access strategy and action plan and the City's approach and commitments to managing access and transport to support environmental, social and economic outcomes.
34. Some submissions indicated a lack of support for elements of strategies and actions.
35. Attachment C is a detailed report on the engagement process.
36. There was strong support for the Broadway Green Avenue proposal, expressed in submissions from a number of major landholders fronting Broadway or Parramatta Road. Some submissions raised potential minor additions to the project, that the City would work with Transport for NSW to consider in final design; or aspects of consultation to support implementation that the City expects would form part of more detailed design and planning approval work undertaken by Transport for NSW.
37. The South East light rail operator made a submission, indicating their willingness to collaborate with the NSW Government to extend light rail along Broadway and to Green Square.
38. Transport for NSW provided a submission which recognised the high level of strategic alignment between the Strategy and Action Plan and the NSW Government's overall approach. Noting the advocacy nature of much of the Access Strategy and Action Plan, the submission did not indicate support for specific actions.
39. Active transport stakeholders made submissions supporting the rollout of lower speed limits, including 30km/h limits more widely applied. The City's position remains that the priority for implementation is the city centre and major areas of pedestrian activity. Some submissions did not support the implementation of 30km/h limits, due to potential impacts on private vehicle travel speeds or congestion. The City's proposed focus areas for implementation already have low traffic speeds or are places where general traffic should be given less priority over placemaking and other road users.
40. A number of submissions via the website facility indicated opposition for the NSW Government's cycleway project on Oxford Street (East of Taylor Square), especially through Paddington. The City notes that this is a NSW Government project on a state

road and that many of the issues raised in these submissions were raised and addressed in the NSW Government's consultation and design process for the project.

41. A number of submissions expressed support for the City's approaches to reducing transport sector emissions, which are outlined in the Electrification of City Transport Strategy and Action Plan.
42. Attachment A identifies the proposed changes to the exhibited draft, with major amendments including:
 - (a) reflecting the announcement of Gadigal Metro Station;
 - (b) at Section 1 and in Figure 1, clarifying the City's role in advocating for NSW Government public transport projects such as light rail and Metro;
 - (c) at Section 2, clarifying the strong alignment between the Access Strategy and Action Plan and NSW Government policy frameworks and approaches;
 - (d) at Section 3, removing reference to the community consultation for Sustainable Sydney 2030-50, given the Access Strategy and Action Plan has now had its own consultation;
 - (e) at Section 3, Strategy J, further recognising the support for buses, especially where they supplement rail services and with support for zero emissions vehicles;
 - (f) at Action 1, Broadway Green Avenue, updating on the City's advocacy to the NSW Government for approval and funding support of immediate and staged implementation, with tactical measures for walking and cycling in advance of permanent changes. Light rail to then follow (to be approved by the NSW Government, however with the light rail operator indicating its support);
 - (g) at Action 5, Planning Metro Precincts, changes to make it more consistent with Action 4, City Centre Place Improvements;
 - (h) at Action 6, Metro as Catalyst, referencing the NSW Government's Independent Review;
 - (i) at Action 7, Connecting Green Square, reflecting the light rail operator's willingness to collaborate with the NSW Government to extend light rail to Green Square;
 - (j) at Action 8, a City for Walking, better reflecting the City's advocacy role to the NSW Government on lower speed limits and reducing delays for people walking at traffic signals;
 - (k) at Action 9, a City for Cycling, clarifying that broader road safety education programs that encourage vehicle drivers to adopt safer behaviours towards people riding are the responsibility of the NSW Government;

- (l) at Action 10, Moving Kerbside Deliveries Off-street Over Time, confirming that the City recognises the importance of efficient and timely freight and deliveries in the City. Over time, it plans to increase off-street loading capacity to enable a progressive reduction of on-street loading in nearby streets, using the kerb space for other purposes while ensuring businesses retain access for their freight and servicing needs;
- (m) at Action 11, More Control For Local Government Over Local Streets, noting that Transport for NSW continues to work to reform the Traffic Delegations, and the City's response will be determined by the scope of any future changes;
- (n) at Action 13, Reducing the Impacts of Buses in the City Centre, noting the NSW Government's establishment of the Bus Industry Reform Taskforce;
- (o) at Action 15, Reducing Vehicle Speeds, noting the NSW Government's release of updated Speed Zoning Standards, including guidance for 30km/h speed limits;
- (p) At Action 16, Supporting Car Sharing, clarifying that it is the City of Sydney that conducts policy reviews; and
- (q) at Action 17, Pricing to Achieve More Equitable Access Outcomes, noting the NSW Government's establishment of the Independent Tolling Review, and providing a link to the City's submission (this includes some more detailed options for consideration in the context of the Review's Terms of Reference).

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