

## **Public Exhibition - A City for Walking: Strategy and Action Plan – Continuing the Vision**

**File No: X092554**

### **Summary**

The draft City for Walking: Strategy and Action Plan – Continuing the Vision ("draft Strategy and Action Plan") is an update to the City's first walking strategy which was published in 2015.

The draft Strategy and Action Plan documents the achievements since the release of the 2015 Walking Strategy. It shows how the City's existing programs already contribute to the city for walking and seeks funding for programs that accelerate the delivery of walking improvement projects in the City.

Much of the actions the 2015 strategy contained have been achieved, such as George Street pedestrianisation and lower speed limits. This draft Strategy and Action Plan takes the ideas from the last walking strategy and sets out a new set of actions that aligns with Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision and the Community Strategic Plan ("SS2030-2050").

Specifically, Strategic Direction 5 in Sustainable Sydney is that Sydney should be A City for Walking, Cycling and Public Transport. This draft Strategy and Action Plan aims to provide greater clarity of how to achieve the first part of that direction.

This strategy sits below the draft Access Strategy and Action Plan which has recently been endorsed by Council. The Access Strategy and Action Plan will guide all the transport work undertaken by the City over the coming years. Action 8 in the Access Strategy and Action Plan relates to this item.

The draft City for Walking: Strategy and Action Plan considers the whole walking experience, from a physically connected network to needs such as safety, comfort and enjoyment. It comprises 12 actions, including advocacy, working with partners and City-controlled actions and shows how the City will meet the walking-related targets contained in Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision.

The City developed the draft Strategy and Action Plan with input from a panel of experts in walking from across Australia. The draft Strategy and Action Plan aligns with best practice and NSW government policies.

This report is seeking Council approval to exhibit the draft Strategy and Action Plan for consultation with the community.

Note that throughout this item and the draft Strategy and Action Plan, the term 'walking' refers to all people moving on the footpath. This includes people using mobility devices, people pushing prams and people using unpowered scooters, skateboards or rollerblades.

## **Recommendation**

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council approve for public exhibition the draft A City for Walking: Strategy and Action Plan – Continuing the Vision, as shown at Attachment A to the subject report;
- (B) Council note that A City for Walking: Strategy and Action Plan – Continuing the Vision, 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 A City for Walking: Strategy and Action Plan – Continuing the Vision.

## **Attachments**

- Attachment A.** Draft A City for Walking: Strategy and Action Plan – Continuing the Vision

## Background

1. The City of Sydney's first walking strategy was published in 2015. Since then, much has been achieved such as lower speed limits and pedestrianisation of streets and lanes, including George Street pedestrianisation and lower speed limits.
2. The City's overarching strategy, Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision published in 2022 provides direction for continuing the vision. This draft Strategy and Action Plan takes the ideas from the last walking strategy and sets out a new set of actions that aligns with Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision.
3. Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision Strategic Direction 5 states that Sydney should be A City for Walking, Cycling and Public Transport. This strategy aims to provide greater clarity of how the first part of that direction will be achieved.
4. Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision and the community strategic plan contain measures and targets which will track how well we are achieving Direction 5. As such this strategy doesn't contain any new targets or measures and instead reinforces existing measures and targets
5. This strategy sits below the Access Strategy and Action Plan which has recently been adopted by Council. It is similar in scope and function to the Cycling Strategy and the Electrification of Transport Strategy, which also sit below the Access Strategy and Action Plan. The Access Strategy and Action Plan will guide all the transport work undertaken by the City over the coming years. Action 8 in the Access Strategy and Action Plan relates to this item.
6. The City Access and Transport unit developed the draft Strategy and Action Plan in close collaboration with an internal project control group (PCG). Work related to walking touches on almost every area of the City's work so the PCG included representation from across most divisions. The PCG met at key points during the development and refinement of the content. The PCG provided input and review into the final draft document.
7. The 'Strategy' portion of the document is structured around a hierarchy of walking needs. These walking needs are:
  - (a) A city where people can walk – this strategy provides the infrastructure requirements to make walking possible;
  - (b) A city where people can walk safely – this strategy looks at both road safety and personal safety for people walking;
  - (c) A city where walking is comfortable – this strategy focuses on providing a high quality public domain environment to improve the walking experience, including tree planting and street furniture;
  - (d) A city where walking is fun – this strategy is about encouraging people to walk more or further through providing unexpected surprise and delight along a walking journey through street activity and public art;
  - (e) A city that is a leader in walking – ensuring the City can use an evidence based approach to walking planning and share our knowledge with other local governments and organisations.

8. The 'Action Plan' portion of the document contains 12 actions which are a combination of capital works, behaviour change, data collection, leadership and advocacy. These are:
  - 1) We will implement a program of highest priority walking improvements. (This includes crossings, greening, street upgrades and public domain improvements that are already committed and funded over the next 3 years.)
  - 2) We will investigate ways of increasing our commitment to delivering walking improvements. (This action includes a list of proposed programs including doubling the rollout of pedestrian crossings, expanding the network of automated pedestrian counters and creating a dedicated funding pathway for walking improvements.)
  - 3) We will work with Transport for NSW to implement 30 and 40 km/hr speed limits, consistent with the Access Strategy and Action Plan.
  - 4) We will work with Transport for NSW to ensure that signal phasing prioritises people walking.
  - 5) We will implement local area traffic management (LATM) plans to reduce vehicle volumes and speed to make it safer for people walking.
  - 6) We will develop a code of practice for construction activities in public places that provides guidance on how to maintain safety, connectivity and place amenity for people walking.
  - 7) We will advocate for Transport for NSW to improve how NSW road rules relate to people walking.
  - 8) We will review the guidance in our Sydney Streets Code related to walking (including crossings, intersections, child friendly streets, lane widths and designing for people with disability).
  - 9) We will work with Transport for NSW to reduce red tape and make it easier for our community to activate their streets via temporary or permanent closures, street painting and plantings.
  - 10) We will promote walking as a form of exploration and curiosity through our Culture Walks, guided tours and self-guided walks.
  - 11) We will continue be a leader in walking and evidence-based planning.
  - 12) We will use language that highlights the human element of walking and advocate for others to do the same. For example, using "people walking" instead of "pedestrians".
9. The actions are planned over a 10-year time frame.

## Key Implications

### Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision

10. 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 - by reducing emissions through supporting walking, the most sustainable mode of transport.
  - (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 - by setting out in detail the approach and actions the City will undertake to achieve the first part of the direction. This is the key focus of the draft Strategy and Action Plan.
  - (d) Direction 6 - An equitable and inclusive city - by identifying and responding to the varied walking needs across the community.
  - (e) Direction 9 - A transformed and innovative economy - by creating high-quality, walkable places that support businesses and communities.

### Organisational Impact

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

### Risks

12. The draft Strategy and Action Plan includes actions impacted by external factors beyond the City's direct control, such as NSW Government approvals, agreement, policy and funding which require the support of external stakeholders in order to be implemented.

### Social / Cultural / Community

13. 93 per cent of all trips made in the City of Sydney LGA are walking trips, and every trip starts and ends with a walk, so improvements in walking benefit the whole community.
14. 37 per cent of households in the LGA do not own a car which is much higher than the 11 per cent across Greater Sydney. In this context the ability to access public transport by walking is critical.
15. A walkable city supports diversity and inclusion by providing the infrastructure and environment that makes walking available to everyone. This could be providing street furniture to provide opportunities for rest for those unable to walk long distances, or making streets quieter through traffic calming to improve the experience for people with sensory disabilities.

16. The actions proposed will result in reduced congestion, quieter, less polluted streets, calmed traffic, reduced crashes of all types, crossings, plantings, street furniture, trees, rain gardens and improved lighting. These improvements all have benefits beyond improving walking experience.

### Environmental

17. The key environmental challenge for the transport sector is Net Zero emissions by 2035. The City's overall approach is to reduce emissions by reducing the amount people need to travel by private motor vehicle by encouraging walking, cycling and public transport.

### Economic

18. 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.
19. The overall approach to improve walking in precincts such as the city centre, Tech Central and Pyrmont is 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.
20. A good walking environment is very important to continuing to attract businesses, workers and visitors.

### Financial Implications

21. Many of the actions can be completed without additional funding.
22. The proposed items with financial implications are all part of Action 2 and are as follows:
  - (a) an additional \$9 million of capital funding over the next 10 years to double the rollout of pedestrian crossings from Year 4 to Year 10, from four per year to eight per year;
  - (b) for some years an operating budget to undertake specific Walking and Place Improvement Studies will be required for some specific initiatives, noting that the City would seek grant funding under available NSW Government programs at the time; and
23. capital funding of around \$250,000 to expand automated counter network from four locations to 15. The automated counter network refers to the set of cameras we have installed on smart poles that automatically count the number of pedestrians 24 hours per day. The data is publicly accessible [here](#). Note that once all 15 are installed, we would stop the twice-yearly manual counting, and operational funding currently used for the manual counting would be reallocated towards maintenance of automated counters.
24. The City will seek Council's consideration and approval for any additional funding through the normal yearly budgeting processes if the draft Strategy and Action Plan is endorsed following public consultation.

## Relevant Legislation

25. The draft Strategy and Action Plan relates 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

26. Many of the actions in the draft Strategy and Action Plan are already part of the normal activities of other business units. However, bringing these actions together improves the collective understanding of why walking is important, and the actions required to improve uptake.
27. The draft Strategy and Action Plan will also provide the mandate for several new programs that increase the City's commitment to walking improvements.

## Public Consultation

28. The starting point for the draft 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 walkable streets is the cornerstone of the draft Strategy and Action Plan.
29. We also engaged with the Inclusion (Disability) Advisory Panel, presenting the draft Strategy and Action Plan in June 2023 and then reporting on how their comments have been addressed at the August panel meeting.
30. One outstanding issue that arose from the Inclusion (Disability) Advisory Panel is whether the term 'walking' is inclusive and appropriate for use in the title of the draft Strategy and Action Plan. We reached the agreement internally with advice from the Physical Disability Council of NSW that we would continue to use the term 'walking' but would run targeted focus groups with people with physical disabilities during exhibition.
31. To ensure we were up to date with the latest best practice we arranged a session with an external working group. The group included experts in various aspects of walking from across Australia.
32. Following endorsement by Council, the draft Strategy and Action Plan will be placed on public exhibition for six weeks.

## KIM WOODBURY

Chief Operating Officer

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