

Traffic Treatment - Proposed Closure to Vehicular Traffic – Grafton Lane, Chippendale

File No: X039457.178

Summary

This report recommends that Council approve the use of traffic treatments to close the dead-end section of Grafton Lane, Chippendale east of City Road to vehicular traffic to allow for outdoor dining.

In October 2020, the NSW Government partnered with the City to revitalise the city centre, establishing a \$20 million CBD Revitalisation Fund to boost the local economy and invite the public back to the City. Since November 2020, the City has installed 164 on-street outdoor dining areas in various streets across the local government area.

In March 2023, Council approved an extension of the Alfresco Dining Program to December 2024 and requested staff investigate sites that may be suitable to be made permanent. This work is currently underway with staff expected to report back to Council in mid 2024.

In August 2023, a food and beverage business located at 202-206 Broadway, Chippendale expressed its interest in applying for outdoor dining on Grafton Lane as part of the Alfresco Dining Program. Grafton Lane is a dead-end lane with no footpaths and provides only pedestrian access to two commercial properties, one of which is the outdoor dining applicant. The business operator of the other commercial property has confirmed its support for the closure of Grafton Lane to traffic.

The proposed installation of traffic treatments using bollards to close Grafton Lane to traffic will continue to provide access to both pedestrians and bike riders. When the outdoor dining area is installed, adequate space will be provided to accommodate people in wheelchairs, prams and bicycle riders.

Transport for NSW (TfNSW) is responsible for the control of traffic on all NSW state and local roads and has delegated to councils certain functions to regulate traffic on local roads. This delegation grants a council authority to approve traffic treatments to close roads to vehicular traffic under Part 8 Division A of the Roads Act 1993.

This delegation can only be exercised by Council and is subject to several conditions including the need to obtain the advice of the Local Pedestrian, Cycling and Traffic Calming Committee and the approval of Transport for NSW .

Transport for NSW supports the installation of traffic treatments at Grafton Lane to close the road to vehicular traffic. The proposal was endorsed by the Local Pedestrian, Cycling and Traffic Calming Committee on 7 December 2023.

Recommendation

It is resolved that Council approve the installation of traffic treatments to close the dead-end section of Grafton Lane, Chippendale at its intersection with City Road to vehicular traffic.

Attachments

- Attachment A.** Concept Plan - Grafton Lane, Chippendale
- Attachment B.** Traffic Management Plan - Grafton Lane, Chippendale
- Attachment C.** Local Pedestrian, Cycling and Traffic Calming Committee Endorsement
- 7 December 2023

Background

1. In August 2023, a food and beverage business located at 202-206 Broadway, Chippendale expressed its interest in applying for an outdoor dining area on Grafton Lane as part of the Alfresco Dining Program.
2. The business fronts Broadway and City Road which are state roads and are impacted by clearways, making them unsuitable for road reallocation. The business is proposing to utilise Grafton Lane for the purpose of outdoor dining on the roadway. This closure is supported by the other commercial property adjacent to the laneway.
3. Grafton Lane, Chippendale is a local road with entry and egress on the eastern side of City Road and is under the control of the City in its capacity as a roads authority. It is a dead-end lane, with two-way traffic that runs in a west-east direction. The lane is approximately 2.2 metres wide with no footpaths and provides pedestrian access to two commercial properties located on the northern and eastern side of the lane. There is no kerb side parking, no "No Parking" or "No Stopping" restrictions and no access to driveways.
4. Traffic surveys undertaken in Grafton Lane from Friday 11 August to Thursday 17 August 2023 showed low vehicle volumes and speeds. The lane is mainly used by local traffic accessing the adjacent commercial properties and other businesses in the area.
5. Following the installation of traffic treatments to close Grafton Lane to vehicles and the commencement of outdoor dining, pedestrian volume in the area is expected to increase.
6. The closure of Grafton Lane to vehicle traffic will be implemented using bollards at its intersection with City Road. Subject to future priorities and available project funding within the Capital Works Program, future traffic treatment capital works would include streetscape treatment measures. .
7. Transport for NSW supports the installation of traffic treatments to close Grafton Lane to vehicular traffic. The proposal was endorsed by the Local Pedestrian, Cycling and Traffic Calming Committee on 7 December 2023.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision

8. 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 3 - Public places for all - The proposed road closure of Grafton Lane would create an open, safe, inclusive, and accessible traffic free space for residents and visitors.
 - (b) Direction 5 - A city for walking, cycling and public transport - The proposal will improve safety and accessibility for residents and visitors to the area.

- (c) Direction 8 - A thriving cultural and creative life - The proposed closure of Grafton Lane provides an opportunity to activate the closed section of the street to promote outdoor dining, cultural and creative performances.
- (d) Direction 9 - A transformed and innovative economy - The proposal would enhance the streetscape environment of Grafton Lane by promoting outdoor dining, cultural and creative opportunities. It would attract visitors to the area enriching the local economy.

Organisational Impact

- 9. The installation of traffic treatments at Grafton Lane will be implemented initially using bollards to prevent vehicle access. There will be no impact to cleansing or maintenance of Grafton Lane.
- 10. Subject to future priorities and available project funding within the Capital Works Program, future traffic treatment capital works would include streetscape treatment measures.

Risks

- 11. A desktop risk assessment of the proposal was undertaken to gauge the impact to road users in the area resulting from the closure to vehicle traffic in Grafton Lane.
- 12. Per the traffic survey, Grafton Lane has an Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) of two vehicles per day. With the proposed permanent road closure of Grafton Lane, there will be no vehicular traffic in the lane but pedestrian movement only, serving the commercial buildings and outdoor dining patrons. Given the low Average Annual Daily Traffic on Grafton Lane, the closure to vehicular traffic is not expected to create traffic impacts on City Road. Grafton Lane experiences low pedestrian volumes and with the provision of proper signage there will be no impact on pedestrian safety and amenity.
- 13. Grafton Lane is used as a fire escape for 202-206 Broadway, Chippendale. The proposal has been reviewed by the City's Fire Safety team and is supported subject to any approval for outdoor dining in the lane being conditioned to ensure a 1 metre clear path of travel is kept at all times for the fire egress. Applicants must address how this clear path of travel will be maintained in their plan of management.
- 14. Should Grafton Lane be approved as a construction zone after the implementation of the closure to vehicles, any approvals for outdoor dining may be suspended to allow for use of the construction zone.

Social / Cultural / Community

- 15. The installation of traffic treatments to close Grafton Lane would create a traffic free community space for residents. The closure to vehicle traffic will create opportunities for outdoor dining attracting visitors to the area that would enhance the social and cultural vibrancy of the local area.

Environmental

- 16. The proposal would remove vehicular traffic from Grafton Lane, improving the local amenity of the area.

Economic

- 17. The closure to vehicle traffic will create opportunities for outdoor dining attracting visitors to the area that will enhance vibrancy and the local economy.

Financial Implications

18. The closure to vehicular traffic in Grafton Lane will be implemented initially using bollards at an estimated cost under \$10,000. Funds are available within the City Business and Safety budget in 2023/24 financial year.
19. The area could be treated with streetscape treatments in the longer term, subject to priorities and budget availability in the City's Capital Works Program.

Relevant Legislation

20. Transport for NSW is responsible for the control of traffic on all NSW state and local roads. By delegation dated 31 October 2011 Transport for NSW has delegated to Council certain functions to regulate traffic on local roads.
21. This delegation gives Council authority to approve traffic treatments to close roads to traffic under Part 8, Division 2, of the Roads Act 1993 (NSW).
22. This delegation to Council is subject to several conditions and limitations, including the need to obtain the advice of Council's Local Pedestrian, Cycling and Traffic Calming Committee and approval by Transport for NSW.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

23. To allow businesses in the area to utilise Grafton Lane for outdoor dining, the City intends to implement traffic treatments to close the road to vehicular traffic immediately following endorsement by Council.

Options

24. Council can decide not to proceed with the proposal. Not proceeding with the proposal will represent a missed opportunity to reallocate underutilised road space for community use and support local business in their recovery from the economic impacts of the pandemic.

Public Consultation

25. In compliance with Section 116 of the Roads Act 1993, a public notice for the installation of traffic treatments at Grafton Lane, Chippendale was published in the Sydney Morning Herald and Wentworth Courier on 4 October 2023 allowing 28 days for the community to provide written submissions on the proposal to either the City or Transport for NSW.
26. The City consulted local residents and businesses in the area. There were 719 letters sent out with two responses supporting the proposal and no responses opposing the proposal.

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