

Item 29.

Traffic Treatment - New Footpath and Raised Pedestrian Crossing - Sydney Observatory Access Road, Millers Point

TRIM Container No.: 2025/676706

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Forum review the installation of the following traffic treatments along the Sydney Observatory Access Road:

- (A) New footpath along the southern side of the Sydney Observatory Access Road west of Upper Fort Street.
- (B) New raised pedestrian crossing on the Sydney Observatory Access Road at its access to the Sydney Observatory National Trust Centre.

Forum Members for this Item

City of Sydney
Transport for NSW
NSW Police – Sydney City PAC
Representative for the Member for Sydney

Advice

Advice will be updated after the meeting.

Background

The Sydney Observatory Access Road (Access Road) is a key walking route for people walking to popular destinations such as the Sydney Observatory National Trust Centre, Fort Street Public School (FSPS), Sydney Harbour Bridge, and nearby parks. Many pedestrians

especially young students from FSPS use Kent Street, Agar Steps, and Access Road to reach their destination.

The footpath from the top of Agar Steps currently ends halfway along the Access Road, forcing pedestrians to walk on the road. Visitors have raised safety concerns, as walking along the road puts them at risk from passing vehicles. The FSPS community has highlighted that school children, often become confused when the footpath ends leading them to either walk on the grass verge which can be a trip hazard or along the road, which increases the risk of conflicts with passing vehicles.

In response to concerns from the community, the City is proposing pedestrian safety improvements along the Access Road to enhance pedestrian safety.

Comments

Site inspections have identified the need to extend the existing footpath along the Sydney Observatory Access Road from its current termination point to improve pedestrian connectivity and mitigate safety risks associated with pedestrian-vehicle interaction.

To ensure a safer walking route, the following traffic treatments are proposed - Refer to Plans 1 and 2:

- A new footpath along the southern side of the Access Road.
- A raised pedestrian crossing mid-block along the Access Road.

These improvements would allow pedestrians, including FSPS students, to walk safely between Agar Steps and Upper Fort Street without needing to walk along road. The raised crossing will also help slow down traffic and improve accessibility.

The proposed footpath will be constructed along the green space on the southern side of the Access Road. The design proposes a footpath width of approximately 1.2 meters to accommodate pedestrian movements. Landscape treatments, including suitable planting, will be incorporated along the footpath edge to provide a physical and visual buffer between the pedestrian zone and the adjacent fence line, enhancing safety and amenity.

There would be no changes to the road layout or the roundabout near the Sydney Observatory, as such traffic flow would not be affected.

Consultation

There are no residential properties impacted by the proposal. The primary stakeholders identified include the Sydney Observatory (National Trust), Fort Street Public School, the National Trust Centre, and the Millers Point Community Resident Action Group. Consultation was undertaken with the identified primary stakeholders regarding the proposed pedestrian safety treatments along the Access Road.

Three submissions were received providing feedback on the proposed treatments. The summary of the submissions received on the proposals, and the City's response are provided in the following table.

No.	Support/Objection/ Feedback	Summary of submission	COS Response
1.	Feedback	- The submission requests options to improve safety for visitors at the National Trust entry along the shared path. - There is an increased risk of crashes involving visitors entering and existing the trust and bicycle riders. - Improved signs on Upper Fort Street to highlight to drivers and bike riders that they need to give way to oncoming traffic due to the narrow travel lanes.	- The City can work with TfNSW to improve the signage and lighting along the shared cycle path adjacent to the National Trust access. - The City can conduct a site inspection and if required consider installing respective signs on Upper Fort Street to highlight to drivers and biker rider of the narrow travel lanes.
2.	Feedback	- The submission proposes a revised design that removes the existing roundabout and introduces a new roundabout positioned in front of the proposed raised pedestrian crossing. - Additionally, it recommends creating a pedestrianised entrance adjacent to the Sydney Observatory access. These changes aim to deliver a safer, more pedestrian-friendly environment. - The submissions also requests that any new lighting proposed should be discussed with the Observatory to ensure there are no negative impacts from	- The recommendation was considered and decided to be not feasible due to site constraints. - To accommodate the proposed new roundabout in front of the raised pedestrian crossing, a portion of existing green space would need to be removed to allow for the required road alignment. The City is committed to preserving trees and green space wherever possible and therefore seeks to minimise any adverse impacts on these assets. Given these considerations, the proposal outlined in the submission is not supported.

		light pollution affecting the Observatory.	• The design team would discuss new lighting proposal with the Observatory during the design stage to gather the Observatory's support prior to construction.
3.			

Financial

Appropriate funding for the proposal will be secured once greater certainty on the construction timeline is reached.

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