

Project Scope - Surry Hills to Central Quietway

File No: X102084

Summary

This report describes the proposed scope for a "quietway" along a route identified in the planned bike network included in the adopted Cycling Strategy and Action Plan 2018-2030. Cooper and Arthur Streets in Surry Hills form a key east-west route, connecting Elizabeth Street at Central Station in the west to Moore Park in the east. Light rail makes it illegal for people to ride westbound along Devonshire Street, meaning that an alternative safe, direct, two-way cycling route is required. The changes will make the area an improved, safer place to walk and ride and reduce the volume and speed of traffic.

The quietway proposal includes treatments for traffic calming and improved street crossings along the route. This includes separated contraflow cycleways flowing one-way eastbound on sections of Cooper and Arthur Streets and conversion to one-way traffic westbound.

The proposal includes widening footpaths for shorter crossing distances in key locations for people walking and improving pram ramps. New garden beds and trees are proposed. Minor lighting and storm water drainage works are also required. The proposal does not substantially change the existing road geometry.

An estimated 12 parking spaces require removal for the proposed improvements. To offset the spaces removed, 12 potential new parking spaces have been identified nearby. The project will not remove any trees and all property access will be retained.

The City undertook community consultation between May and June 2024. 272 submissions were received. The majority of submissions were supportive of the Quietway proposal, with several suggestions made to improve the design.

In response to consultation, the City undertook additional traffic analysis that confirmed that the proposed one-way design and direction outlined in the Concept Design is the optimal option. A number of refinements have been captured in the Revised Concept Design.

This report seeks Council's approval of the revised concept design for the Surry Hills to Central Quietway project.

Recommendation

It is resolved that Council:

- (A) approve the revised concept design for the Surry Hills to Central Quietway project, as described in the subject report, and shown in Attachment D to the subject report for proceeding to design development, documentation and construction tender;
- (B) note the estimated project costs as detailed in Confidential Attachment F to the subject report; and
- (C) note that the City has design stage funding from the NSW Government and that the City will apply for construction stage funding.

Attachments

- Attachment A.** Sydney Bike Network Map
- Attachment B.** Community Consultation Plans
- Attachment C.** Engagement Report
- Attachment D.** Revised Concept Design
- Attachment E.** Additional Analysis
- Attachment F.** Financial Implications (Confidential)

Background

1. In November 2018, Council endorsed the Cycling Strategy and Action Plan 2018-2030, for incorporation into the City's community strategic plan Sustainable Sydney 2030. The Strategy includes an overall proposed Bike Network.
2. Priority 1 of the Strategy and Action Plan is to connect the bike network, as there is strong evidence that safe connected cycling infrastructure is essential to making bike riding a viable transport option for the majority of the population.
3. The Strategy and Action Plan target is to complete 100% of the regional route network and 60% of the local route network by 2030.
4. Direction 5 in the City's Community Strategic Plan, Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision, is to make Sydney a city for walking, cycling and public transport. Its targets include a minimum of 10% of City trips to be made by bicycle and 50% by walking by 2030.
5. Transport for NSW research has found that 70% of Greater Sydney residents would ride, or ride more, if there were safe and convenient cycleways that are separated from traffic. Recent surveys of residents in the City of Sydney and neighbouring council areas have consistently found over 70% support for building a bike network and separated cycleways.
6. The Cycling Strategy and Action Plan 2018-2030 includes an east-west link between Central Station and Surry Hills. This key link in the southern part of the City Centre serves the residents and businesses of Surry Hills and the wider community by connecting it to regional bike network, heavy and light rail networks and the Moore Park recreation, entertainment and sporting facilities.
7. The Transport for NSW CBD and South East Light Rail project promised to implement an alternative cycling route to replace Devonshire Street, along Arthur and Cooper Streets. (Refer CBD and South East Light Rail Project - Pedestrian and Cyclist Network Facilities Strategy 15 September 2016). However, ultimately the project did not deliver the route.
8. About one quarter of students at Crown Street and Bourke Street Public Schools ride to school, with many using the Bourke Street Cycleway. When students move to Inner Sydney High School on Chalmers Street, with its catchment largely to the east and north, they require a safe link between Bourke Street cycleway and Prince Alfred Park. The high school has 114 bicycle parking spaces to accommodate the 20% of students and 7.5% of teachers who ride to school.
9. The design approach is consistent with the NSW Government's Movement and Place Framework, its Road User Space Allocation Policy and its hierarchy of road users, which prioritises people walking.
10. Transport for NSW has provided Agreement in Principle for the traffic management plan. There are no proposed traffic signal changes.
11. The proposal will be reported to a future meeting of the Local Pedestrian, Cycling and Traffic Calming Committee for endorsement of changes to traffic-related matters, (kerbside uses, regulatory signs and line markings) once the detailed design has been completed.

12. The NSW Government is providing funding for the design of the Surry Hills to Central Quietway.

Concept Design and Scope of Work

13. In Cooper Street, the proposal comprises:
 - (a) A separated one-way contraflow cycleway on the northside flowing eastbound between Elizabeth and Holt Streets.
 - (b) Conversion to one-way traffic westbound between Elizabeth and Holt Streets.
 - (c) Kerb extensions and footpath widenings at Elizabeth and Holt Streets.
 - (d) A continuous footpath treatment at Elizabeth Street.
 - (e) New garden beds with a tree at Holt Street.
 - (f) A single-lane slow point with planting and trees on the west side of the intersection with Hercules and Hart Streets.
 - (g) A new raised zebra crossing with planting across Cooper Street on the west side of the intersection of Waterloo Street.
 - (h) Minor lighting and storm water drainage works.
 - (i) Improvements to the existing Shared Path through Cooper Street Reserve will be implemented later in 2025 as part of that park's upgrade.
14. In Arthur Street, the proposal comprises:
 - (a) A separated one-way contraflow cycleway on the northside flowing eastbound between Riley and Crown Streets.
 - (b) Conversion to one-way traffic westbound between Riley and Crown Streets.
 - (c) Shared Path and kerb extensions with planting at the intersection of Riley Street.
 - (d) Continuous footpath treatment at Arthur Street.
 - (e) A two-way priority bike crossing at Crown Street.
 - (f) Minor make-good works in Arthur Street Garden (e.g. kerb ramp improvements).
 - (g) A continuous footpath treatment with planting on the east side of the Bourke Street intersection.
 - (h) Minor make-good works in Arthur Street pocket park at South Dowling (e.g. kerb ramp improvements).
15. The proposal will extend kerbs at some intersections for shorter crossing distances, widen footpaths in key locations and improve pram ramps.

16. An estimated 12 parking spaces require removal for the proposed improvements. To offset the removed spaces, 12 potential new parking spaces in nearby in the surrounding streets have been identified for further investigation (refer Attachment E). The resulting parking changes will be subject to separate community notification and Local Pedestrian, Cycling and Traffic Calming Committee approval.
17. No trees require removal for the project, however, localised pruning may be required to improve the lighting from existing streetlights.
18. At least 5 new trees are proposed in the revised concept plan. Final tree numbers and locations are subject to detailed design process. The new trees are proposed in the existing roadway in conjunction with traffic calming measures. Tree planting and garden beds will provide shade and amenity for people on bikes and for residents adjacent the quietway. Tree species will be consistent with the updated Street Tree Master Plan.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision

19. 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 to measure progress. This report is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
 - (a) Direction 5 - A city for walking, cycling and public transport.
 - (i) The objectives related to this proposal are:
 - a. street space is reallocated for people, places and planting
 - b. more people ride more because it is an attractive, convenient and safe option for everyday transport
 - c. freight, servicing and parking will be managed to support the efficient functioning of the city while improving the amenity of city spaces
 - (ii) The 2050 outcome is the city is greener and calmer, with more space for people on the streets – including footpaths and cycleways. More people choose to walk, ride and use public transport.
 - (b) The quietway proposed will improve an important east-west link in the bike network, which will make the area a better, safer place to walk and ride while reducing the volume and speed of traffic.

Organisational Impact

20. The project will create additional assets, such as new civil infrastructure and pavement markings, signs, trees and garden beds, which will require ongoing maintenance and funding in the Long-Term Financial Plan.

Risks

21. Risks associated with the proposal have been considered through the concept design and consultation phases. These include safety for people walking, riding and driving, environmental and economic impacts, and community concerns. The risks will be further addressed in the forthcoming design development and documentation phases.

22. A Road Safety Audit (RSA) was carried out on the concept design to identify risks associated with the proposal, and the design has been amended to improve on road safety aspects. Further RSAs will be carried out at the completion of the design and at the completion of construction to further identify risks associated with the project and develop mitigation measures.
23. This approach is within the City's risk appetite, which states:
 - (a) We acknowledge that some financial risks may be necessary to achieve our goals, particularly when investing in new initiatives that align with our strategic objectives. We carefully evaluate financial options and risks and consider the potential impact on our financial position, cash flow, and overall stability.
 - (b) We acknowledge our responsibility to protect and enhance the social and environmental wellbeing of our community. Our risk appetite emphasises the integration of sustainable practices into infrastructure asset management, considering environmental impacts, climate change resilience and community engagement.
 - (c) We recognise the intrinsic value of culture and heritage assets and the importance of their preservation. We adopt a cautious approach to risk taking, focusing on the protection, conservation and restoration of significant cultural and heritage resources to ensure their long-term viability and integrity.

Social / Cultural / Community

24. People will have improved access to safe walking and cycling infrastructure to enjoy a healthy lifestyle with an increased level of physical activity. As part of the City's bike network, this project will contribute to better connected neighbourhoods, increased transport choice and a more socially connected, active and healthier community. Cycling provides a sustainable, low-cost private transport option for people.
25. This cycleway is part of a soon-to-be continuous route that will supplement public transport and provide an alternative (more sustainable) mode of private transport. This will reduce demand for driving and reduce pressure on parking. It will create a safe option for travelling between destinations in and near the city centre. It will play an important role in allowing people to safely get to work and local businesses, helping support economic vitality.

Environmental

26. This project aligns with the City of Sydney's environment performance objectives and targets. Key initiatives include:
 - (a) Greening - more canopy cover increases shade and moderates urban heat.
 - (b) Cycling and walking are integral to our transport future because they are the most accessible, equitable, sustainable and reliable forms of transport.
 - (c) Construction Waste - all recyclable construction waste will be diverted from landfill in line with the City's Recycling and Waste Policies.
 - (d) Materials - materials adopted for this project are in line with standard City of Sydney approved products, which are selected from responsible manufacturers and sourced within Australia.

Economic

27. Connecting the bike network has a significantly positive benefit to cost ratio as outlined in the Cycling Strategy and Action Plan 2018-2030.

Financial Implications

28. The total forecast project construction cost is based on the revised concept design. A summary of the financial implications is included in confidential Attachment F.
29. The upgrade of assets owned by third parties, such as Ausgrid lighting, will be recognised as expenditure within the City's operating budget for the relevant financial year in which they occur.
30. Based on the current costs estimates, there are sufficient funds allocated for the project in the 2024/25 Capital Works budget and future year forward estimates. The project team will continue to review the costs of the project in consultation with an independent Quantity Surveyor and track against current market rates response.
31. The NSW Government is fully funding the design phase of the project. The City will apply for NSW Government funding for construction. Should Transport for NSW not approve the funding application, the timing of project delivery may need to be reconsidered.

Relevant Legislation

32. Local Government Act 1993 - Section 10A provides that a council may close to the public so much of its meeting as comprises the discussion of information that would, if disclosed, confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom the council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business.
33. Attachment F contains confidential information which, if disclosed, would confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business.
34. Discussion of the matter in an open meeting would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest because it would compromise Council's ability to negotiate fairly and commercially to achieve the best outcome for its ratepayers.
35. Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act) (Part 5). The scope of works will be reviewed by a planner to assess consent requirements for the project under the EP&A Act. A Review of Environmental factors (REF) will be completed.
36. Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

37. The key dates for the project are as follows:

(a)	Local Pedestrian, Cycling and Traffic Calming Committee	Mid-Late 2025
(b)	Design completion	Late 2025
(c)	Construction tender advertised	Early 2026
(d)	Construction	Mid 2026 to Mid 2027

Options

38. Not building the proposed quietway would prevent the City achieving its strategic objectives. The consequence of not building this bike network connection will result in a delay to safe access for people riding between existing cycleways and decrease the uptake on linked cycleways.

Public Consultation

39. The City exhibited the concept design for the proposed quietway (refer Attachment B) and consulted with the community over 4 weeks in May and June 2024. For a detailed description of the consultation process and findings, refer to the Engagement Report (Attachment C).
40. 1,452 people visited the 'Sydney Your Say' page during the consultation period. 244 people downloaded the concept design plans. 172 comments were made through the online virtual map and 54 people responded to the online survey on Social Pinpoint.
41. 31 email submissions were received during the consultation period. 15 late submissions were received via email which raised concerns about the proposed one-way westbound traffic direction on Arthur Street (between Crown and Riley) and proposed parking loss along Riley Street.
42. 7 people provided feedback during the separate consultation for the Cooper and Adelaide Street Reserves project.
43. The majority of the submissions were supportive of the proposed Concept Design, with several suggestions made to improve the design which will be considered in Detailed Design phase.
44. The key issues raised by the community and the City's responses are summarised in the attached consultation summary Engagement Report. They include topics such as the one-way sections on Cooper and Arthur Streets, parking changes, connections to other cycleways, traffic calming measures, walking improvements and opportunities for additional greening.
45. Following community feedback, the City deferred this scope report to undertake further analysis and design development which has allowed for a more thorough response to community feedback.

46. In response to community feedback, the City undertook a Traffic Impact Assessment on the proposed one-way traffic and contraflow cycleway on Cooper and Arthur Streets. The assessment found that westbound traffic with an eastbound contraflow cycleway would be safer and more accessible with fewer conflict points between people driving, riding and walking.
47. Further, westbound one-way in Cooper Street will prevent traffic entering at the intersection of Elizabeth Street. This reduces traffic volumes which supports the 'Quietway' approach and will allow for a better connection across Elizabeth Street in the future. Entering Cooper Street from the east also increases driver awareness of the Quietway which further improves safety.
48. The proposed changes require vehicles to use alternative routes. However, travel times and distances are similar to the existing conditions and the impact is considered manageable.
49. Following Community Consultation, the Concept Design was revised to include:
 - (a) additional traffic calming measures,
 - (b) Continuous Footpath Treatments at 2 additional locations,
 - (c) revised parking arrangements to improve sight lines and maintain property access including near Elizabeth Street,
 - (d) additional garden beds and street trees,
 - (e) safer Shared Path access through Arthur Street Gardens.
50. An estimated 12 parking spaces require removal for the proposed improvements. To offset the removed spaces, 12 potential new parking spaces have been identified nearby in the surrounding streets for further investigation (refer Attachment E). The resulting parking changes will be subject to separate community notification and Local Pedestrian, Cycling and Traffic Calming Committee approval.

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