

ITEM 6. JOHNSTONS CANAL – SHARED PATH CONCEPT PLAN**FILE NO: S066610****SUMMARY**

This report provides an overview of the design process and consultation undertaken for the Johnstons Canal shared path from Blackwattle Bay to Wigram Road, Glebe.

The Johnstons Canal bicycle link has been identified in the City of Sydney Cycle Strategy and Action Plan 2007-2017 as a key recreational route linking the Harbour to the inner suburbs.

Preliminary route designs were prepared and consultation undertaken in conjunction with Leichhardt Council, key stakeholders and the local community.

This report provides a summary of the consultation responses received, route studies undertaken and recommends a concept plan for endorsement.

RECOMMENDATION

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council endorse the concept plan for the Johnstons Canal shared path for design development and documentation, as described in the subject report and in Attachment A to the subject report;
- (B) Council endorse Option One, a shared pedestrian and bicycle path on the eastern side of Johnstons Canal, as described in the subject report;
- (C) Council note that a grant has been received from the NSW Department of Planning, as part of the Sharing Sydney Harbour Access Program, for the shared path from Orphan School Creek to Blackwattle Bay; and
- (D) the Budget Implications, being Attachment F to the subject report, remain confidential in accordance with Section 10(A)(2)(c) of the Local Government Act 1993.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Concept Plan

Attachment B: Consultation Summary

Attachment C: Main Route Options: Eastern Side of Canal, Western Side of Canal and Booth Lane Route Option

Attachment D: Shared Path Stage One Option

Attachment E: Route Option Studies Summary

Attachment F: Budget Implications (Confidential)

BACKGROUND

1. The Johnstons Canal bicycle link has been identified in the City of Sydney Cycle Strategy and Action Plan 2007-2017 (the Cycling Strategy) as one of the key recreation routes linking Blackwattle Bay to Forest Lodge and the suburbs beyond. It has also been identified, since 1999, in the Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) Action for Bikes plan and by the Leichhardt Municipal Council Cycle Strategy.
2. The Cycling Strategy outlines transport, health and environmental benefits which align with the Sustainable Sydney 2030 vision for a more liveable city. Direction 4 of the 2030 Strategy: a City for Walking and Cycling, identifies Johnstons Canal as part of the liveable (Green) network. The strategy aims are to:
 - (a) provide a physical cycling environment in which people feel confident to ride in safety and comfort;
 - (b) establish coherent networks and priority for implementation;
 - (c) promote an environment of mutual awareness and respect between bicycle riders, pedestrians and other path users; and
 - (d) continue to ensure walking and cycling facilities and networks are designed so that they are safe enough for children to use and meet the need of people with disabilities.
3. The City of Sydney and Leichhardt Municipal Council are developing and implementing the shared path facility in partnership. In addition, the City received a grant of \$162,000 in 2008 from the NSW Department of Planning, as part of the Sharing Sydney Harbour Access Program, for this project.
4. The site consists of three areas:
 - (a) **Bicentennial & Federal Parks to The Crescent – City of Sydney Local Government Area (LGA)**
An existing access road is located on the eastern side of the canal adjacent to Jubilee Oval. From the Heritage Tram Shed entry road, an existing path is located on the western side of the canal. Native habitat planting has been established between the existing path and the canal.
 - (b) **The Crescent to Hogan Park – Leichhardt Municipal Council LGA**
An existing open space network characterised by open grass areas, mature fig and native tree plantings, park lighting and asphalt shared path. The path is in poor condition.
 - (c) **Hogan Park to Wigram Road – City of Sydney LGA**
Located on the eastern side of the canal, the reserve area includes an existing 'goat track' path, mature native tree plantings and new native shrub planting adjacent to the canal.
5. The recently completed Orphan School Creek shared path is located on the southern side of Wigram Road.

The Concept Proposal

6. The purpose of the concept plan (refer Attachment A) is to set the overall layout and form of the shared path and open space improvements. Detailed resolution, material and finishes will be undertaken during design development.
7. The project aims are to:
 - (a) provide a safe recreational bicycle route which caters for children and new bicycle riders;
 - (b) use high quality, robust and sustainable materials which are consistent with the park setting;
 - (c) improve connections to the existing network and create a new road crossing across The Crescent that enhances the safety for pedestrians and bicycle riders;
 - (d) upgrade the existing lighting to improve night time safety and energy efficiency;
 - (e) upgrade the Minogue Crescent pedestrian bridge to improve pedestrian and cyclist accessibility and safety;
 - (f) include a range of surface treatments to maintain slow bicycle speeds at possible conflict areas;
 - (g) include a bicycle education campaign program;
 - (h) investigate interpretation opportunities and signage to highlight the area's rich history and natural setting; and
 - (i) provide additional park and habitat planting areas.

The Proposed Route

8. The proposed route involves the upgrade of an existing disjointed path system from Bicentennial Park to Wigram Road, Forest Lodge. The proposal will upgrade an existing two metre wide path to improve accessibility and the amenity for pedestrians and bicycle riders. The route comprises of three sections (from north to south):

Section A – Bicentennial & Federal Parks to The Crescent – City of Sydney LGA

- (a) The shared path route follows the existing access road on the eastern side of the canal at Jubilee Oval until it reaches the entrance to the Harold Park Tram Sheds. The shared path crosses to the western side of the canal and continues along an existing shared path, adjacent Federal Park (south). It is proposed the existing path will be widened to reduce the likelihood of pedestrian and bicycle conflict.
- (b) A pedestrian only path is proposed from Bicentennial Park to Federal Park (south) on the western side of the canal, near the hockey field, to improve the existing 'goat track' and accessibility.

Section B – The Crescent to Hogan Park – Leichhardt Municipal Council LGA

- (c) The shared path runs through the City of Sydney LGA and crosses into the Leichhardt Municipal Council LGA at The Crescent. Two crossing points are proposed at The Crescent:
 - (i) upgrade the existing bridge underpass. The underpass is subject to periodic flooding due to stormwater and tidal movements.
 - (ii) A new island refuge and traffic calming on The Crescent. The RTA has been consulted during the feasibility investigation and advised its formal approval will be subject to a future assessment of the design.
- (d) The connection from The Crescent to Hogan Park requires an upgrade of the existing park lighting and asphalt path. The path is presently in poor condition. The proposal will widen and improve the path material.

Section C – Hogan Park to Wigram Road – City of Sydney LGA

- (e) The consultation feedback showed a mixed response to the proposed route on the eastern side of the Canal from Hogan Park to Wigram Road. A number of route options were suggested during the consultation process. A summary of the community comments is attached (Attachment B).
- (f) In response to community feedback, three main routes were investigated (Attachment C). The three options are:
 - (i) **Option One – a shared path on the eastern side of canal** (McMahon Reserve to Wigram Road)
 - a. The shared path route has been identified in the City of Sydney and Leichhardt Municipal Council Cycle Strategies and the RTA Action for Bikes plan.
 - b. The proposed path is located within the City of Sydney LGA and is the intuitive route for users. The path will provide a safe and coherent link to the new Orphan School Creek shared path. Additional traffic calming devices have been included on Wigram Road as part of the works.
 - c. The proposed path will formalise an existing ‘goat track’, improve accessibility and provide a positive through park connection. A path will assist reducing erosion and compaction to the existing tree root zones.
 - d. The path alignment and surface treatments will be designed to maintain slow bicycle speeds.
 - e. Additional native habitat planting and native screen tree planting to adjoining buildings will be implemented.
 - f. This option may require the replacement of two small trees.

- (ii) **Option Two – a shared path on the western side of canal** (Hogan Park to Wigram Road)
- a. An existing one metre wide pedestrian footpath is located in the reserve.
 - b. The route is located on Department of Housing land in the Leichhardt Municipal Council LGA. The proposal will require a land dedication and approval by Department of Housing and Leichhardt Municipal Council. Leichhardt Municipal Council will be responsible for the project cost and ongoing maintenance.
 - c. The route does not directly link to the Orphan School Creek open space network. Bicycle riders will be required to use the Wigram Road footpath. The Wigram Road bridge footpath will need to be widened to 3.5 metres to minimise conflicts and improve pedestrian and cyclist safety adjacent Wigram Road.
 - d. Potential privacy issues will need to be addressed due to the close proximity of the path to adjacent residents.
 - e. Option Two requires the removal of six medium sized trees and will impact on tree root zones.
- (iii) **Option Three – Booth Lane route shared zone** (a connection from Hogan Park to Wigram Road via Booth Lane and Taylor Street).
- a. The project aim is to provide an off-road, shared pedestrian and recreational bicycle route, which caters for children and new bicycle riders.
 - b. The route is located within Leichhardt Municipal Council Local Government Area and is an indirect route from Hogan Park to the Orphan School Creek open space network.
 - c. Booth Lane is a two way traffic road, five metres wide with 400mm wide footpaths on each side. Car parking is permissible on the northern side. Leichhardt Municipal Council has indicated that loosing car parking spaces may be problematic.
 - d. Five driveway entry/ exits and garages provide access onto Booth Lane from multi-unit residential buildings. Due to blind corners and limited visibility, the likelihood of pedestrian, bicycle and vehicle collisions may increase.
 - e. Booth Lane currently has less than 300 vehicle movements a day, which will allow a mixed pedestrian, bicycle and vehicle shared zone. This will require Leichhardt Municipal Council Traffic Committee Approval.
 - f. A shared zone treatment will require additional regulatory signage and a paved road surface treatment.
 - g. Taylor Street currently exceeds 300 vehicle movements a day. The cycleway would be a mixed on-road bicycle and vehicle treatment.

14. The proposal aligns with the recommendations of the City of Sydney Recreational Needs Study 2006 and the City of Sydney Cycle Strategy and Action Plan 2007-2017.

Social / Cultural / Community

15. The proposal creates an important recreational link, providing access for pedestrians, cyclists and the disabled to local parks and the Harbour.

Environmental

16. The project will incorporate environmental sustainable initiatives in the areas of material and plant selection, habitat planting, stormwater treatment design (bio-swales) and energy efficiency.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

17. Funds have been allocated in the 2009/10 capital works budget for the project. Additional funds are available in the 2010/11 Forward Estimate (refer to Confidential Attachment F for more detailed information).
18. The City received a grant of \$162,000 in 2008 from the NSW Department of Planning, as part of the Sharing Sydney Harbour Access Program, for this project.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

19. Local Government Act 1993.
20. Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.
21. Leichhardt Council Local Environment Plan 2000.

CRITICAL DATES / TIME FRAMES

22. The program for the project is:

(a) Design Development and Documentation	March –July 2010
(b) Tender Phase	August 2010
(c) Tender Approval	September 2010
(d) Commence Construction	November 2010
(e) Complete Construction	April 2011

OPTIONS

Staged Implementation

23. There is an option to proceed with the route from Bicentennial Park to Hogan Park as a first stage (refer Attachment D), and continue discussions with Leichhardt Municipal Council on Section C (Hogan Park to Wigram Road) as a second stage (refer Attachment C).

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

24. The following community consultation for the concept plan and options was undertaken:
- (a) a community workshop was held at Harold Park Raceway in March 2009. Letters advertising the workshop were distributed to surrounding residents in both Leichhardt Municipal and City of Sydney Council areas. Staff and consultants were available to explain the proposal and answer questions; and
 - (b) the local community, Leichhardt Councillors and stakeholder groups such as Spindlers and National Trust, Rozelle Bay Community Native Nursery, Leichhardt BUG, Bike Sydney, Coalition of Glebe Groups (COGG), were invited to attend a site walk-through to seek input on the proposal.
25. Feedback back from the consultation provided a mixed response for the proposal. A summary of the community consultation response is attached (refer Attachment B). The following suggestions will be incorporated during the design development and documentation project stage:
- (a) a pedestrian only path will be provided in Federal Park near the hockey field to improve the existing 'goat track' and accessibility;
 - (b) additional park and native habitat plantings. The aim is to increase habitat areas and facilitate the movement of fauna;
 - (c) investigate an additional link to Nelson Lane to improve accessibility;
 - (d) include a bicycle channel ramp adjacent to the existing stairs between Orphan School Creek and Sterling Crescent to facilitate the connection to Parramatta Road;
 - (e) include a range of interpretative opportunities and signage to highlight the area's rich history, natural setting and habitat improvements; and
 - (f) upgrade the existing bridge between Hogan Park and Minogue Crescent to improve accessibility.
26. An update letter will be distributed to all surrounding residents to provide information on investigations and the project proposal.
27. Further consultation will be organised to inform the local community and stakeholders during the detailed design stage.

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