

ITEM 4. BROADWAY ROAD WIDENING AND CLOSURE OF JONES STREET ULTIMO**FILE NO: S057942-01****SUMMARY**

This report recommends the permanent closure of Jones Street, and advises Council on work undertaken with the Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) to remove a traffic lane of Broadway instead of narrowing the footway of Broadway.

The redevelopment of the Central Park (former CUB) site was granted by the Minister for Planning. The Development Approval includes the permanent road closure of Jones Street to traffic between Broadway and Thomas Street, Ultimo.

A new signalised intersection is to be constructed at the intersection of Broadway and Balfour Street as the primary vehicle access to the Central Park site. The RTA requires the closure of Jones Street to enable the signalised intersection to be constructed.

The Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) has jurisdiction for Broadway and requires the road to be widened for the new signalised intersection at Balfour Street, together with the closure of nearby Jones Street and the provision of a right-turn bay for buses and taxis on Broadway at Wattle Street.

In December 2007, Council endorsed the long term vision to close Jones Street to traffic, between Broadway and Thomas Street, Ultimo. This would link Mary Ann Street Park in the north to the existing pedestrian mall in Jones Street.

Council resolved on 7 December 2009 to support the new signalised intersection at Balfour Street and associated traffic changes provided there is no reduction in the Broadway footway or removal of Plane trees on the northern side. The City was advised that construction of the signalised intersection any later than mid 2010 would hold up construction of their Jean Nouvel building.

In February 2010, the Sydney Traffic Committee endorsed the closure of Jones Street to traffic between Broadway and Thomas Street following public consultation. No objections were received to the proposed road closure, which is supported by the University of Technology Sydney (UTS), and this report recommends the closure of Jones Street.

In January 2010, the City engaged the RTA to undertake traffic modelling to test the impact of all feasible options to remove a traffic lane on Broadway instead of narrowing the footway. All the modelling reports concluded that removal of a traffic lane would result in longer travel times, more congestion and increased intersection delays during the morning peak and afternoon traffic peaks. The RTA advised that, because of the unacceptable congestion and delays outlined in the traffic modelling, it does not agree to the removal of a Broadway traffic lane. The RTA advises that the Broadway footway will need to be narrowed instead of Council's preference to remove a traffic lane.

RECOMMENDATION

It is resolved that Council:

- (A) endorse the road closure of Jones Street between Broadway and Thomas Street Ultimo, subject to the following conditions:
 - (i) a right-turn bay being provided for buses and taxis to turn from Broadway into Wattle Street;
 - (ii) the central median island in Thomas Street being adjusted to allow buses to make a right-hand turn from Wattle Street into Thomas Street;
 - (iii) a new bus stop being provided in Thomas Street for the 501 and University Special bus routes, which would be diverted along Thomas Street when Jones Street is closed;
 - (iv) a Traffic Management Plan being submitted to the Roads and Traffic Authority for approval;
- (B) maintain support for the signalised intersection of Broadway and Balfour Street and associated traffic changes to be funded by Frasers, provided there is no reduction to the width of the Broadway footway, or removal of Plane trees; and
- (C) note the Roads and Traffic Authority's (RTA) advice that because of the unacceptable congestion and delays outlined in the traffic modelling, the Broadway footway would need to be narrowed instead of Council's preference to remove a traffic lane and, under the *Roads Act 1993*, the RTA can override Council's decision.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Resolution of Council of 10 December 2007

Attachment B: Resolution of Council of 7 December 2009

Attachment C: Jones Street Proposed Road Closure Sketch

BACKGROUND

1. The redevelopment of the Central Park (former CUB) site was granted by the Minister for Planning as part of a Voluntary Planning Agreement. The Development Approval includes the permanent road closure of Jones Street to traffic between Broadway and Thomas Street, Ultimo.
2. A new signalised intersection is to be constructed at the intersection of Broadway and Balfour Street as the primary vehicle access to the Central Park site. The RTA requires the closure of Jones Street to enable the signalised intersection to be constructed.
3. In December 2007, Council endorsed the long term vision to close Jones Street to traffic, between Broadway and Thomas Street, Ultimo (Attachment A). This would link Mary Ann Street Park in the north to the existing pedestrian mall in Jones Street.
4. Closing Jones Street requires relocation of the right turn bay on Broadway from Jones Street to Wattle Street for westbound buses and taxis to access Thomas Street via Wattle Street. This new turn bay and the new signalised intersection at Broadway will require either removal of a lane of traffic on Broadway, or reduction of the Broadway footway.
5. Frasers Property is required to fund the road closure of Jones Street. This includes the necessary traffic light changes and road realignment works at the intersection of Broadway and Balfour Street and any other traffic adjustments required on Broadway.
6. Additional works to be funded by Frasers Property include traffic light changes at Broadway and Wattle Street, including a right-turn bay for buses and taxis, adjusting the median in Thomas Street, east of Wattle Street, and providing a bus stop in Thomas Street.
7. The new traffic lights at Balfour Street and Broadway will be used for residential access when construction at the Central Park site is complete.
8. The proposed redevelopment by the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) will be enhanced by the road closure of Jones Street. The benefits will include a pedestrian link between the various buildings on the campus, improved pedestrian safety, creating a large open space and improved student amenity.
9. The UTS has agreed to fund the upgrade of Jones Street as a pedestrian space when Jones Street is closed to traffic.
10. Council resolved on 7 December 2009 to support the signalised intersection of Broadway and Balfour Street and associated traffic changes provided there was no reduction to the width of the Broadway footway or removal of Plane trees on the northern side (Attachment B). The new signalised intersection requires the closure of Jones Street and Council noted that the closure would be subject to a separate report to Council in 2010 following public consultation, which has now been completed.

11. Between January 2010 and June 2010 the City engaged the RTA to traffic model numerous options involving the removal of a traffic lane on Broadway, rather than narrowing the footway. The RTA subsequently commissioned Halcrow to undertake the technical modelling and prepare the report. The City is currently not permitted to engage consultants directly to undertake such modelling, nor was it given the opportunity to liaise during the course of each modelling scenario. Whilst the RTA has been responsive to City requests on completion of reports, the two step engagement process has complicated the process and slowed down delivery of desired reports.

KEY IMPLICATIONS

Broadway - Traffic access to the Central Park site

12. The RTA modelled options to remove either an eastbound or a westbound traffic lane in Broadway between Wattle and Balfour Streets. The scenarios modelled included the closure of Jones Street, changes to the Broadway and Balfour Street intersection and removal of the slip lane at Wattle Street.
13. The modelling reports for all the options tested concluded that removal of a traffic lane would result in longer travel times, more congestion and increased intersection delays during the morning peak and afternoon traffic peaks, particularly in Broadway, Harris, George and Pitt Streets and City Road.
14. The RTA advised that, because of the unacceptable congestion and delays outlined in the traffic modelling, the Broadway footway would need to be narrowed instead of Council's preference to remove a traffic lane.
15. Ahead of the broader traffic modelling required for the closure of George Street and CBD light rail, City officers proposed to the RTA the trial removal of a lane on Broadway. However, the RTA would not accept the proposal. In response, the Lord Mayor wrote to the Minister for Roads to request a trial lane closure. No response has been received to date.
16. Closure of George Street, CBD light rail and the desired reduction of traffic in the CBD will have an impact on the section of Broadway that is the subject of this report. Until adequate studies and modelling has been completed, the exact impact will not be known.

Jones Street – Proposed Road Closure

17. The UTS proposes to redevelop its campus facilities along Jones Street. The development includes a permanent road closure of Jones Street to improve student safety and the pedestrian environment adjacent to the University's main building entrance (Attachment C).
18. The UTS Master Plan identifies the need to close Jones Street, as it forms a barrier dividing the campus. The closure of Jones Street would enable the two sides of the campus to be linked to form one integrated educational facility.
19. The RTA also requires Jones Street to be closed as part of the Balfour Street intersection works and the UTS has agreed to fund the upgrade of Jones Street as a pedestrian space after Jones Street is closed to traffic.

20. The Jones Street closure requires traffic management changes, including a new right-turn bay for buses and taxis at Broadway and Wattle Street, adjusting the median in Thomas Street east of Wattle Street, and relocating a bus stop in Thomas Street.
21. Closing Jones Street to traffic would provide an integrated pedestrian and cycling link through the UTS campus to the Central Park site, which aligns with the City's *Sustainable Sydney 2030 plan*.
22. The proposed redevelopment by the UTS will be enhanced by the road closure of Jones Street. The benefits will include a pedestrian link between the various buildings on the campus, improved pedestrian safety, creating a large open space and improved student amenity.

Strategic Alignment

23. The Jones Street closure and associated traffic changes are consistent with Sustainable Sydney 2030 objective 4, "A City for Pedestrians and Cyclists."

Social / Cultural / Community

24. The Broadway footway is an important pedestrian route to the UTS campus which caters for substantial pedestrian activity in the peak hours, especially between the campus and Railway Square bus stops and Central Station.
25. Jones Street is a key pedestrian and bicycle link where student safety and amenity is currently compromised. Removing traffic and improving facilities for pedestrians and cyclists would improve student amenity and outdoor activity.

Environmental

26. Council's preference of removing a traffic lane in Broadway would retain the current footway width for the safety and amenity of pedestrians and also retain the Plane trees on the northern side of Broadway.
27. The RTA has advised that it does not agree to the removal of a Broadway traffic lane. As a consequence, the RTA advises that the Broadway footway will need to be narrowed on the northern side of Broadway and five Plane trees removed.
28. Direct and convenient access to the arterial network via Broadway is important for access to the Central Park site and also to protect the residential amenity of nearby Chippendale so that traffic does not rat-run through local streets.
29. Jones Street is used by buses, taxis and a low volume of local traffic, and its closure is expected to divert only a small amount of traffic into the adjacent main roads of Broadway and Wattle Street.
30. The closure of Jones Street will significantly improve the urban environment, reduce traffic conflicts, and improve safety for cyclists and the 2,000 pedestrians per hour that cross Jones Street at Broadway.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

31. The Broadway traffic management facilities, Jones Street road closure and associated works do not involve expenditure by the City.

32. All costs associated with the road closure of Jones Street and associated traffic management changes are funded by Frasers Property.
33. The UTS has agreed to fund the upgrade of the pedestrian space after Jones Street is closed to traffic.
34. Removal of the parking meters from Jones Street will result in a revenue loss of approximately \$109,000 per annum.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

35. The RTA is legislatively responsible for the regulation and control of traffic on all roads in New South Wales, but has delegated to Council certain functions to regulate traffic on local roads. The delegation stipulates that Council must not exercise a function on a road classified as a Freeway, Controlled Access Road, Tollway, Transitway or those roads classified under the Roads Act 1993 which are indicated as State Roads.
36. Broadway and Wattle Street are both Classified State Roads under the jurisdiction of the RTA. The traffic management arrangements proposed for access to the Central Park site and associated traffic changes at Jones and Wattle Streets require the RTA's approval.
37. The RTA has delegated authority to Council to close public roads under Division 2 of Part 8 of the *Roads Act 1993*. The RTA's delegation to Council is subject to a number of conditions and limitations, including the need to obtain advice from the local Traffic Committee and Council approval before Jones Street can be closed to traffic.
38. If Council decides to close Jones Street, a Traffic Management Plan must be submitted to the RTA for approval.
39. The RTA can override Council's decision under the *Roads Act 1993*.

CRITICAL DATES / TIME FRAMES

40. Frasers Property and the Department of Planning advised that the construction of the Broadway and Balfour Street signalised intersection any later than mid 2010 will hold up construction of the Jean Nouvel building.
41. The concurrent closure of Jones Street is required so traffic lights can be installed at the intersection of Broadway and Balfour Street to enable heavy construction vehicle access to the site from Broadway. This will limit the amount of heavy construction vehicles passing through Chippendale.
42. A new right-turn bay for taxis and buses must be provided at the intersection of Wattle Street and Broadway before Jones Street is closed. These facilities are required when Jones Street is closed, as buses and taxis will then not be able to access Thomas Street via Jones Street.
43. Additional bus stop changes are to be made in Thomas Street for the 501 and University Special bus routes that currently use Jones Street. The central median in Thomas Street east of Wattle Street will need to be adjusted to allow buses to turn into Thomas Street.

OPTIONS

44. Council has the option of maintaining support for the signalised intersection and associated traffic changes provided there is no reduction in the footway or removal of Plane trees on the northern side. However, this will not enable the construction of the intersection to RTA requirements because the RTA does not agree to the removal of a traffic lane of Broadway to the east of Wattle Street.
45. Council could decide to keep Jones Street open to traffic. This is not recommended as it does not align with the long term vision for Jones Street.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

46. Based on the results of the traffic modelling undertaken in April, May and June, the RTA advised that they would not support removal of a traffic lane in Broadway.
47. The UTS supports the proposed road closure of Jones Street, as this will achieve greater unity of its campus and enhance pedestrian safety and student amenity.
48. The City advertised the proposed closure of Jones Street in The Sydney Morning Herald on 25 November 2009 for 28 days, seeking public comment until 23 December 2009.
49. A total of 12 letters were sent to properties within a 25 metre radius of Jones Street, in accordance with Council's Development Application consultation policy. The three submissions received raised no objections to the proposed road closure of Jones Street, but instead sought further information on the proposal as follows:
 - (a) Two submissions requested that the design and construction of the road closure of Jones Street allow for easy access for cyclists to Broadway.

Response: The request is supported. Cyclists will be able to access Broadway by using the traffic lights at Balfour Street.

- (b) A request for information about access to a UTS building car park on Jones Street when Jones Street is closed.

Response: The UTS intends to redevelop the building and car park access will then be from Thomas Street.

50. On 17 February 2010, the Sydney Traffic Committee meeting raised no objection to the proposed road closure of Jones Street to traffic subject to:
 - (a) the installation of traffic lights and road realignment works at the intersection of Broadway and Balfour Street, which will proceed only when the new right turn bay for buses and taxis is available to turn into Wattle Street, together with adjustment to the Wattle Street median and provision of a bus stop in Thomas Street;

- (b) the physical road closure of Jones Street should not proceed until Council's concerns over the road widening of Broadway, which narrows the footway, are resolved; and
- (c) a Traffic Management Plan for the road closure of Jones Street is to be submitted to the RTA for approval.

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