



Draft
February 2024

A City for Walking: Strategy and Action Plan – Continuing the Vision

We acknowledge the Gadigal of the Eora Nation
as the Traditional Custodians of our local area.

CITY OF SYDNEY 

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1. Introduction

A note on terminology

This strategy and action plan uses the term ‘walking’, which includes all people moving on the footpath; people using mobility devices, including wheelchairs, canes, walkers and motorised scooters; people pushing prams and other carrying devices including for deliveries; and people using unpowered scooters, skateboards and rollerblades.¹ ‘Walking’ does not include people on bikes, although it is noted that children and youths can legally ride on footpaths with their guardians.

A strategy and action plan to deliver a city for walking

Our communities want a city for walking.

When asked for words to describe Sydney in the future, ‘safe’, ‘sustainable’, ‘green’ and ‘walkable’ consistently came up as the most popular choices.

– *Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050
Continuing the Vision* consultation



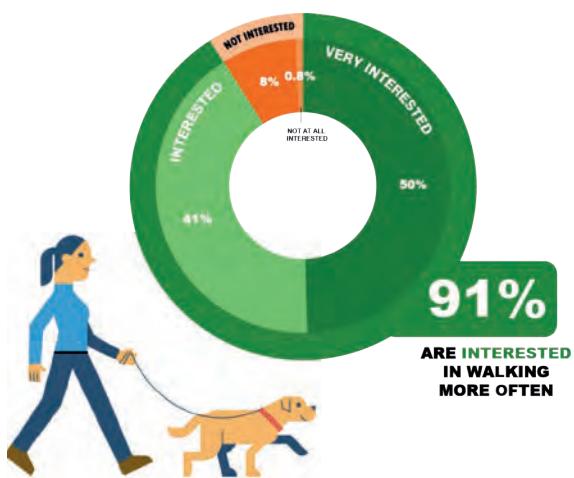
Photo: Chris Southwood / City of Sydney

The communities of the City of Sydney have told us they want a more walkable city, with fewer or no cars in the city centre: a city where there is “space to walk, bike, stroll, jog, chat, rest, relax and enjoy life.” They want streets with more trees, gardens and plants; more space for walking; and more space for children to play and for socialising. They want a city that is easy for all ages, all people and all mobility levels.

If a city like this can be provided, 91% of people in Sydney would be ‘interested’ in walking more, and 50% would be ‘very interested’ in walking more (Figure 1).

A City for Walking Strategy and Action Plan (the ‘Strategy and Action Plan’) responds directly to the voices of our community. We need a proactive strategy and action plan to guide decision-making and make progress to becoming a more walkable city. We have already accomplished significant strides in making the City of Sydney more walkable since the introduction of our first walking strategy in 2015. But there is still much to do.

Figure 1. Sydneysiders' interest in walking more often



Source: City of Sydney.
Active Transport Survey 2021.

This strategy and action plan outlines the approach of the City of Sydney (the 'City') to become a city for walking within our local government area (the 'local area', 'area' or 'our area'). The strategy and action plan identifies the focus of our activities for our area to become more walkable in the short-term. The actions identified are either within the City of Sydney's control or ability to influence.

This document was developed with input from a panel of experts in walking across Australia to ensure that we are keeping up with current best practice.

Continuing the vision

The City of Sydney's first walking strategy was published in 2015. Since then, much has been achieved (Pop out box 1). So, it is a good time to take stock and examine how to continue to improve walking in our area. The City of Sydney's flagship strategy, *Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision*, published in 2022 provides direction for continuing the vision. This Strategy and Action Plan takes the ideas and projects from the last walking strategy and renews them to align with *Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision* and new policies of the NSW state government.



Photo: Chris Southwood / City of Sydney

Achievements since our last walking strategy

We have made good progress towards making our city more walkable since our 2015 walking strategy. The City typically spends over \$28 million per year² on walking-related improvements, including footpath upgrades, new crossings, streetscape upgrades and traffic calming. Some notable achievements are below (image credits in endnotes).



We continually undertake streetscape upgrades such as Macleay Street, Potts Point, at a rate of 3 to 5 projects per year.



We have pedestrianised streets – notably George Street (pictured) and Devonshire Street.



We have improved wayfinding across the local area, including with 2,560 tactile signs and 145 pylon signs.



Speed limits have been reduced so that now over 75% of streets are 40 kilometres per hour (km/h) or under.



Over 700 trees are planted per year, including 150 in the road area.



Signal times have changed throughout the city centre from 120-second to 90-second cycles.



Successful events and programs have been held including outdoor dining, temporary dining areas, parklets and City Streets festivals.



We have increased lighting, seating and accessible public toilets.



We have added more pedestrian crossings, raised wombat crossings and continuous footpath treatments.

All of these achievements have led to significant improvements in the experience of walking. In 2007, a person walking along Park Street between College Street and Sussex Street would have spent 52% of their walking time waiting at intersections. Through working with Transport for NSW to reduce delays across the city centre, by 2020 only 20% of the same trip would be spent waiting.³

Walking improvements have also led to increased diversity in who uses the city centre. While the city centre was once mostly used by young adults, there has been a shift towards more diverse age groups, particularly in areas like Darling Harbour and Chinatown, where there has been more investment in public space.⁴

What is a ‘city for walking’?

What is a ‘city for walking’? A city for walking is easy, inviting and convenient. It is a city in which all people, regardless of age or ability can walk. It has infrastructure and public spaces that are accessible.

A city for walking has destinations and activities to walk to: parks, shops, schools, universities and workplaces. It is safe and it feels safe. It has space to move around, and also has space and places to stay and linger, with street furniture, art and greenery that make it comfortable and inviting.

A city for walking is welcoming, where public create social connections and where people feel included. A city for walking is fun and interesting.

These elements are often referred to as ‘walkability’. Many parts of Sydney have these elements and the basis for these elements, but there are areas we can improve (See *Challenges and Opportunities*).

The following sections explain some of the words and phrases used in the Strategy and Action Plan.

Walking: Walking includes all people moving on the footpath, from people using mobility devices or pushing prams to people using unpowered scooters, skateboards and rollerblades. Walking can be for transport (for example, walking to work or the shops) or for recreation (for example, walking the dog, sightseeing or taking a stroll in the park). People walking can easily switch to other activities, such as shopping or stopping to chat with a friend. In this sense, walking is a way of transport but it is also a form of public life, a way of moving in the community. All types of walking are important to this strategy and action plan.

Walking is so common and we do it so much as part of all our journeys that most people do not identify themselves as a ‘walker’ or even notice when they are walking for a period or distance. This means that walking sometimes does not get the attention it deserves. Whether people are walking for a minute or an hour, the experience is important.

Walking takes different forms. For example, for people with disability or limited mobility, using a wheelchair, cane, walker or motorised scooter may be how they get around the area. Accessibility, safety and inclusion needs to be carefully considered to achieve a walkable city for people with disability or limited mobility. Can they get to where they need to go? Do they feel safe while doing so? Do they feel part of the community and included? Cities can follow the 7 Principles of Universal Design⁵ to improve access and inclusion for all people, including people with disability – resulting in streets and neighbourhoods that can be used and enjoyed by everyone.⁶

Walkability is the sum of “factors within the built environment that make it convenient, comfortable and safe to walk.”⁷ Walkable places are compact, dense and mixed-use environments that allow people to meet their daily needs without needing to drive.

Walkability is about creating inclusive places. Many Australians do not have a driver licence, due to age, health conditions, disability or personal choice, and many more have their licence but do not feel comfortable driving. In the City of Sydney, more than a third of households do not own a car.⁸ Walkable places make sure that everyone is able to participate in society and go about their daily lives with independence and autonomy.

In particular, people using wheelchairs or mobility devices have a right to access places used by the public.⁹ The City of Sydney’s *Inclusive and Accessible Public Domain Policy and Guidelines*¹⁰ set out clear minimum standards to remove access barriers and provide best practice in access for people with disability. The principles of Universal Design are also important in considering how to create places that are accessible, usable, convenient and enjoyable for all. Walkable places that are accessible and inclusive are good for everyone – not only people with disability.¹¹

“Every investment in walkability is also an investment in rollability; wheelchair users are among those who benefit most when footpaths become safer.”

- Jeff Speck, Walkable City Rules

Figure 2. Hierarchy of walking needs



Source: Matan (2021), adapted from Pedestrians First¹² and Alfonzo¹³.

Walking needs

To create a city for walking that is inviting for everyone, some fundamental needs should be met. The hierarchy of walking needs (Figure 2) illustrates what some of these needs are, from basic infrastructure that makes it possible to walk safely to providing reasons to walk and making walking comfortable and inviting so that people want to walk.

All of the elements in the hierarchy work together, and all are important. Some elements will be more important to some people than others. For example, some people will find that having a park nearby increases their desire to walk; for others, a nearby train station is more important. Some people will want to walk on a concrete path that is uninterrupted and easy, while others may be happy to walk on a grassy hill. Whatever people prefer, it is important to provide the basic necessities so that walking is inviting for both an 8- and 80-year-old so that we are creating a city for walking for everyone.



Photo: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney

Benefits of a City for Walking

The social, economic, environmental and health benefits of walkability are established and are measurable.¹⁴ Walking is healthy and sustainable. It produces little to no carbon emissions. It improves physical and mental health. It is important for inclusion and equity. It is flexible and low cost. It provides independence and exercise. It contributes to sense of place and community and to social cohesion. It helps reduce the risk of loneliness and isolation.¹⁵ It reduces congestion and uses less space than other transport modes.

Walkable places have been found to also have economic benefits including increased productivity, improved property values and support for local business,¹⁶ along with the economic benefits that flow from improved health outcome. These benefits can be quantified.

- The Queensland Government estimated that a person walking 20 minutes to work and back provides \$8.48 to the economy from benefits and savings related to decongestion, health, vehicle operating costs, infrastructure savings and environmental benefits.¹⁷
- Studies in the United Kingdom found that the cost–benefit ratio of walking (and cycling) interventions is around 13:1.¹⁸

- The City of Melbourne, looking at the value of walking connections in the city centre, determined that making pedestrian connectivity 10% worse in the city centre would cost its economy \$2.1 billion.¹⁹

Moreover, the evidence showing the economic benefits of walking often does not account for the contribution to the economy from people walking in areas with shops and restaurants. A study of restaurants in Brisbane found that businesses overestimated how much people driving spent by three times while at the same time underestimating how much people walking spent.²⁰ In reality, people walking tend to be the biggest contributors to economic activity. A survey of businesses on Acland Street in Melbourne found that 57% of the expenditure on the street came from people who had walked to the street, with only 26% coming from people who drove there.²¹

Walkable places are also crucial in creating community and connection. Australia is experiencing a loneliness epidemic. One in four Australians are lonely,²² and loneliness is increasing, which has a significant impact on people's physical and mental health. Loneliness is more acute among people living alone, who make up 40% of households in the City of Sydney. Walkable environments help with loneliness by

creating informal opportunities for people to connect with each other. Whether it's bumping into a neighbour or an old colleague on the street, saying hi to your barista or nodding at the person who walks the dog at the same time as you, walking helps to create networks of loose connections that collectively form communities. These casual acquaintances are important. Not only are they what tie neighbourhoods together, but research shows that those with larger networks of these 'weak ties' tend to be happier overall and experience a greater sense of belonging.²³

Walkable environments are also a key ingredient of precincts, activity centres and innovation hubs since chance encounters help spark and spread ideas.²⁴ A strong focus on walking needs and creating space for interaction is critical to the success of these precincts, including Tech Central, touted by the state government as "Sydney's innovation heart".²⁵

Walking in the City of Sydney

Walking now and in the future

Walking and a good walking environment is important to the City of Sydney now and in the future with the population and employment projected to grow within the local government area. The number of the people in the our area daily – residents, workers and all visitors – will grow from the current 1.2 million to 1.7 million in 2036 and to 2 million in 2050. There are likely to be up to 100,000 extra jobs in the city centre.²⁶

The Sydney city centre contributes over \$90 billion in economic activity annually, and the City of Sydney local government area generates \$130 billion which is nearly 8% of the total national economy. The city centre has the highest concentration of top 500 companies in Australia and the largest retail centre.²⁷ It is, to a large degree, Australia's business brand with the headquarters of globally influential and innovative firms concentrated in the central business district (CBD). Walking and a good walking environment is very important to workers but also for continuing to attract businesses.

How we walk

- In our city centre, people make almost 1.3 million trips per day, of which 92% are walking trips.²⁸
- Within our area, people are making around 3.4 walking trips a day and have an average daily walking time of 32 minutes.²⁹
- In our area, 37% of our households do not own a car – much higher than the overall 11% across Greater Sydney.³⁰
- A total of 31% of residents walk to work, and 27% use public transport to get to work which usually includes at least one walking trip.³¹
- Some city centre streets carry 3 to 4 times more people walking per day than some motorways in the area. Parts of George Street, for example, had over 100,000 people walking on it per day in 2019.
- How we use the city centre has changed after the COVID-19 pandemic. Tuesday to Thursday have the highest activity levels during the day,³² reflecting the trend of working from home on Mondays and Fridays. However, in terms of spending, weekends are busier now than pre-pandemic, with weekend night-time spending up 15% compared to pre-2019.

Figure 3. Our busiest footpaths have comparable volumes of people to our motorways

Source: City of Sydney pedestrian counts (2019), TfNSW Traffic Volume Viewer (2019).



Challenges and opportunities

Geography: Sydney's geography is one of its greatest assets. Part of why people love Sydney is the beauty of the area, the hills, cliffs and harbour edges. The colours of green and blue in the land and sea are part of what makes walking enjoyable and restorative. Environments with nature – trees, grass and plants – have been shown to increase wellbeing and reduce stress and mental illness. This has been shown repeatedly in studies, both locally³³ and overseas. Having access to the ocean, lakes, fountains and other water features – easy enough in the City of Sydney – is also beneficial for health and wellbeing.

However, our geography also poses challenges. Sydney is a hilly place. Slopes and hills can be the cause of access issues, particularly for people with limited mobility. They can add significant distance, real and perceived, to travel. Research with the University of New South Wales (UNSW) found that in our area, a 1% increase in the maximum gradient along a route made the walking trip feel 21 meters longer.³⁴ If a walkway is too steep, without offering accessible alternatives, it can be a complete barrier to some people.

Number of people: The City of Sydney is visited by over 1.2 million people per day, which will grow to 2 million by 2050. This many people cannot all be accommodated in cars as there is simply not enough space for them, which means that walking will need to play a significant role in making this

growth possible. We need to take walking seriously, particularly in the city centre and places with high projected growth such as Green Square.

While almost all our streets have connected footpaths on both sides, there is room for improvement. Delays, disruptions and crowding all limit walking within our area. Transport for NSW looked at walking in strategic centres across New South Wales using mobile phone data; it found that while the Sydney CBD had the highest walkability score of all of the NSW strategic centres studied, it had about 6% less walking than would be expected given the level of connectivity. We can – and must – do better.

Delays and detours: Delays reduce the walkability of our area and add to the perceived cost of walking. Research in partnership with UNSW³⁵ within our area found that a single turn in a path is the equivalent of adding 18 meters to a walking trip. For short walking trips, this can add considerably to the perceived distance of a trip. Similarly, inconvenient intersections decrease how far people are willing to walk by some 10% to 20%.³⁶

These inconveniences have real-world costs; the City of Melbourne found that if they reduced delays for people walking by optimising traffic signals at four locations in their city centre, the economic benefit would be approximately \$6.3 million per year.³⁷



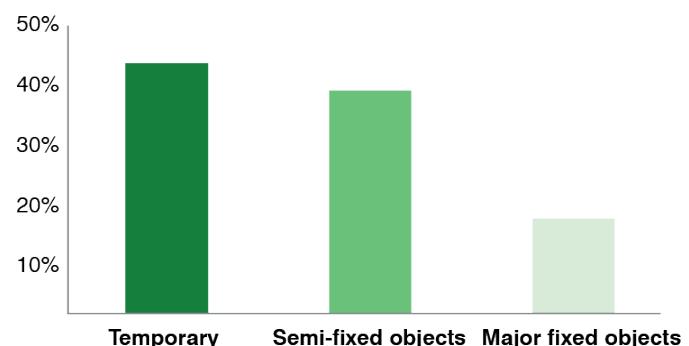
Photo: Chris Southwood / City of Sydney

Competition for space on footpaths: Footpaths are used for many other things than just space for walking. Some are beneficial to walking such as outdoor dining, lighting, trees and seating. Some are not, such as traffic signals and signs, electric boxes and electric poles. They are a mix of temporary, semi-fixed and fixed objects (see Figure 4), and have varying impacts on walking depending on the size, location and impact on site lines. How we address different the different competing uses for space depends on these factors.

Many footpaths are too congested or narrow for all the functions they need to perform. Crowding is particularly prominent at areas of waiting such as signalised intersections. Reducing wait times would help alleviate this.

Road space allocation: The allocation of space on many of our streets reflect transport planning decisions of the past, which prioritised space for vehicles over people walking. Overall, only 40% of street space in the city centre is allocated to footpaths, even though there are 5 times more people walking than driving on an average street.³⁸ The City of Sydney is seeking to redress this imbalance in our area through our local public domain plans and local improvement schemes to put people walking at the top of the priority list, in line with the recently adopted Transport for NSW *Road User Space Allocation Policy*. There have

Figure 4. Temporary objects are the most common footpath obstacles



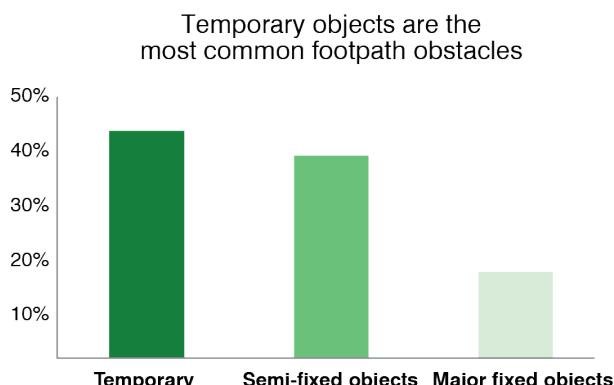
■ **Temporary:** Includes bins, outdoor dining, temporary signage and parked motorbikes.

■ **Semi-fixed objects:** Includes kiosks, wayfinding, bollards, street furniture and bicycle racks.

■ **Major fixed objects:** Includes trees, traffic signal boxes and construction hoarding.

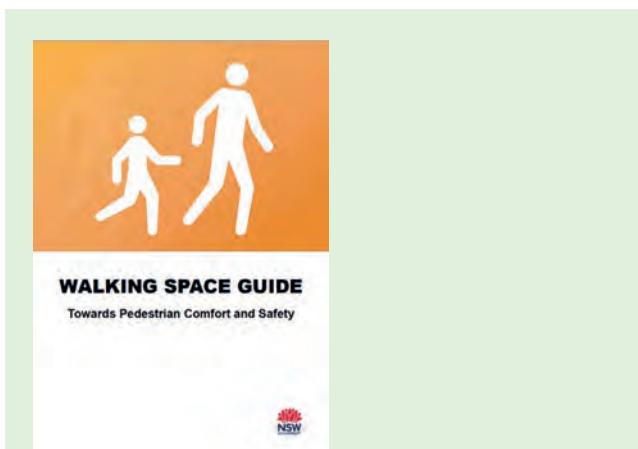
Source: Adapted from the City of Melbourne Transport Strategy.

Figure 5. Road space allocation is not fair



Source: Adapted from UNSW Walking Deep Dive³⁹

been some significant changes in the balance of street space allocation throughout our area, such as in George Street, Pitt Street and Crown Street with more projects in the pipeline for Oxford Street, Loftus Street and Castlereagh Street. But more needs to be done, faster.



Explainer: Walking Space Guide

The Transport for New South Wales (TfNSW) Walking Space Guide, published in 2020, provides a set of standards and tools for planners to ensure that sufficient space is provided for people to be able to walk comfortably and safely. Clear widths are recommended based on street classification and volume of people, and traffic buffers and other allowances are to be provided in addition to this. The Guide is to be used for all footpaths on streets, but not for walking space within transport interchanges (which the City defines as the ticketed area within a station).

According to Transport for NSW's Walking Space Guide (see left), many of the footpaths in our city centre provide adequate space for the number of people walking. However, many do not, and many will not in the future. Road space reallocation will be an important part of accommodating the future growth in walking.

Traffic volumes and speed: The amount of traffic and its speed are issues for people walking throughout our area. Traffic reduces safety and amenity and contributes to noise and air pollution. How people feel in their local area is shaped to a large degree by the speed and volume of traffic.

Through-traffic (people *driving through* rather than *to* an area) is also a problem, particularly in the city centre where traffic is funnelled onto the streets instead of through the underground Cross City Tunnel. This traffic creates an unpleasant environment and makes it challenging to reallocate space to people walking.

Severance: Severance refers to physical and psychological barriers that impact on the ability for people to walk where they want to go. It can refer to roads or public transport infrastructure that are difficult to cross, large city blocks, or parks without accessible paths which are hard to cross for people with limited mobility.

Major roads throughout our area present significant barriers to walking, particularly where the crossings are too far apart or have intersections that are missing pedestrian crossings. Some of our most important streets, including King Street in Newtown and Botany Road, have distances of 300 meters or more between crossings. This is a serious barrier for people walking and adds significant distance and time, particularly as the major roads such as these also often have more traffic travelling at higher speeds, all adding to the degree of severance.

Red tape: There are many opportunities throughout our area to add interest and encourage exploration through walking – such as the inclusion of public art, murals and water features – but these tend to be concentrated in major areas. If residents want to do a temporary activity, such as a street party or festival, the process to obtain permission can be involved and lengthy. For example, applying for a temporary road closure for a community event takes a minimum of seven weeks. This dampens the creativity of our community and reduces motivation to be more active.

The NSW government recently changed the law to expand what councils are able to do without state approval, including installing zebra crossings and planting trees in parking lanes. This is a step in the right direction to make it easier for councils to create liveable places and make our streets more walkable. We need to look for other ways to streamline improvements for walking.

Strategic Framework: Delivering Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision

This Strategy and Action Plan is embedded in the *Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision* suite of documents,⁴⁰ in order to deliver *Direction 5 A City for Walking, Cycling and Public Transport*.

Under this Direction, the *Community Strategic Plan Delivering Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050* includes five outcomes to be achieved by 2050.⁴¹ The Strategy and Action Plan also aims to deliver these outcomes.

Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision – Direction 5: A City for Walking, Cycling and Public Transport

Outcome 5.3: More people walk more, because walking is the most attractive and convenient choice for short trips in the local area.

Sydney by 2050:

- People are prioritised by increasing the capacity, quality and amenity of our streets.
- The experience for people walking will be enhanced for everyone by improving safety, quality, accessibility, and comfort including for children walking in their neighbourhoods and to school.
- The City is legible and intuitive to navigate, supported by a comprehensive wayfinding system.
- People are prioritised at key intersections, reducing wait times, and improving safety.

As walking is inextricably linked with place, the Strategy and Action Plan also helps to achieve the 2050 outcomes listed under *5.1 Street space is reallocated for people, places and planting*.

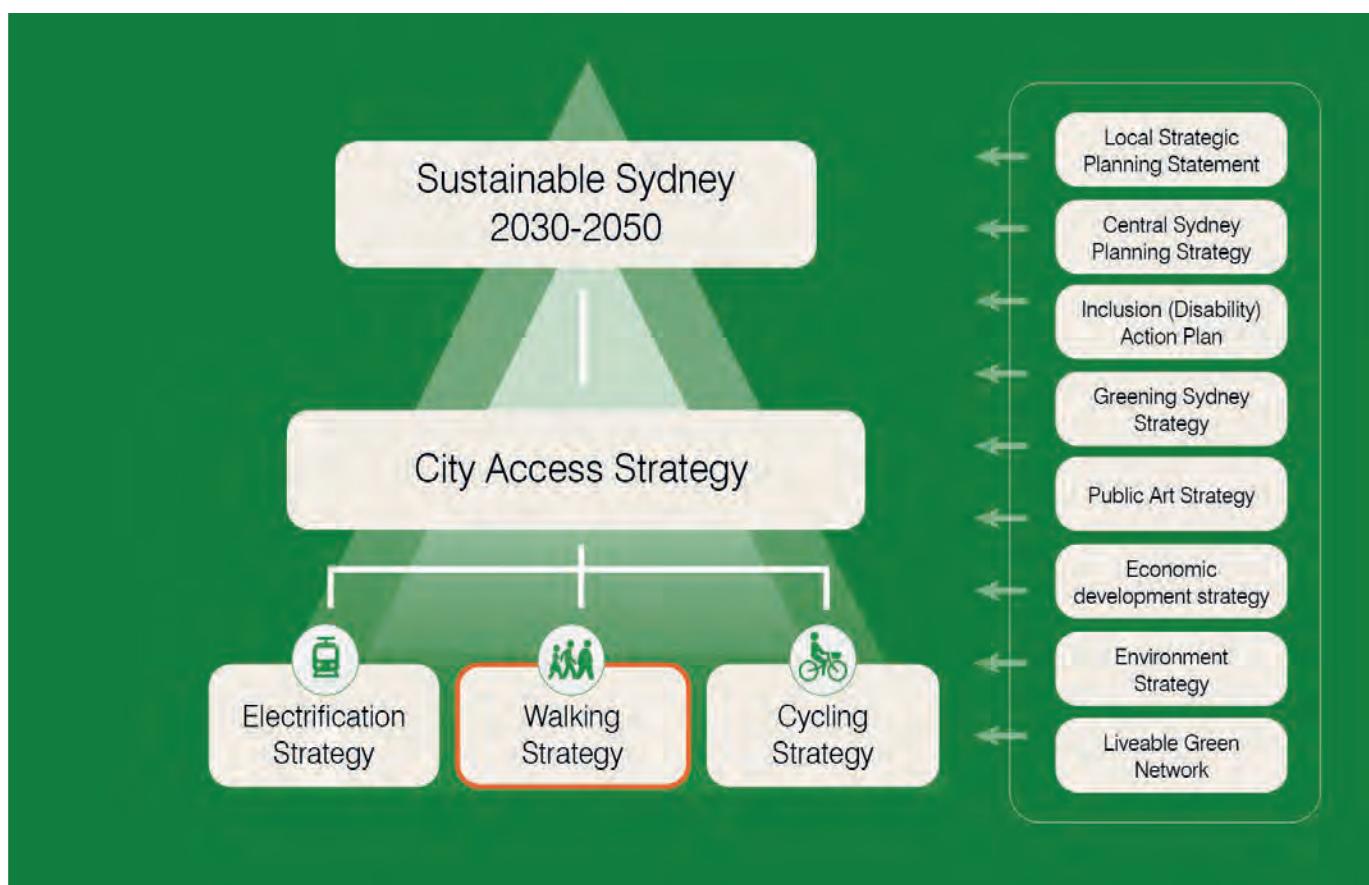
This strategy should also be read keeping in mind that our streets must meet a multitude of needs, notably loading and servicing. This is recognised in Outcome 5.1 which reads “Freight, servicing and parking will be managed to support the efficient functioning of the city while improving the amenity of city spaces”. It is important that we maintain access for freight, delivery and service vehicles as road space is reallocated.

The *City Access Strategy* (currently in draft form), which covers all modes of transport across the area, contains the explicit action to develop a walking strategy. Walking improvements take various forms from lighting and kerb ramps to public art and planning controls, so there is also a strong relationship between the Strategy and Action Plan and the City of Sydney’s other relevant strategies and action plans.



*Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050
Continuing the Vision*

Figure 6. Relationship between the Strategy and Action Plan, Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision, City Access Strategy and other strategies



Target and measures

Direction 5 in *Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision* provides the adopted targets and measures for the Strategy and Action Plan, which are listed below. The plan does not introduce additional targets or measures but instead identifies actions and areas of focus to help achieve them.

The targets are:

- **By 2050 people will use public transport, walk or cycle to travel to and from work.**
This includes 9 out of 10 people working in the city centre and 2 out of 3 people working in the rest of the local area.
- **By 2030 every resident will be around a 10-minute walk** to what they need for daily life.

In addition, this Strategy and Action Plan helps to deliver the following targets which relate to other Directions within *Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision*:

- **By 2035 we will achieve net zero emissions** in the City of Sydney local area.
- **By 2050 there will be a minimum overall green cover of 40%,** including 27% tree canopy cover.
- **By 2050 community cohesion and social interaction will have increased ...** at least 75% of the local resident population feeling part of the community, agreeing most people can be trusted and believing that when needed, they can get help from their neighbourhoods.

Achievements towards these targets will be measured through the increase of walking in the local area from walking counts which measure the average growth across sample locations.



Photo: Chris Southwood / City of Sydney

Figure 7. Responsibility and control in walking projects

City has responsibility/control	City has shared responsibility/control	City does not have responsibility/control
Footpaths (and accessibility infrastructure)	Space allocation of streets	Traffic signals and phasing
Trees and planting	Traffic control signage	State roads
Parking enforcement, policy	Parking controls and enforcement	Speed limits
Lighting (most)	Access around schools	Bus stop locations
Street furniture (most)	Through-site links	Telephone and electric boxes
Community engagement	Pedestrian crossings	Utility pits/service locations
Personal security	Road safety	State parks
Wayfinding, signage	Funding	Speeding enforcement
Public toilets, bubblers		Clearways
Parks		Public transport infrastructure
Footpath use policies (e.g. display of goods) and outdoor dining management		
Planning controls		

The City of Sydney's roles and responsibilities

Walking interventions and walking projects are often split between levels of government and between different departments and private developers. This is partly because of the diversity and breadth of walking projects, which could be a new footpath, lighting, a new park, street trees or activations such as street parties and outdoor dining, along with planning, land use and development decisions, including the location of public transport.

As a local government, we control many but not all of the elements that influence walking. Some, such as speed and street space allocation, need approval from, or collaboration with, the state government. Other elements are out of our control completely, but which we can seek to influence. Figure 7 gives examples of activities in each of these categories. It is not a complete list but is provided to improve understanding of the complex roles and responsibilities in delivering a city for walking.

Exclusions

The Strategy and Action Plan does not cover all of the actions that the City of Sydney undertakes in regard to walking. Actions that are covered in City strategies and adopted policies that influence the Strategy and Action Plan, such as the Inclusion (Accessibility) Strategy, are not covered. Adopted actions relating to walking are listed in Appendix F.

2. Strategy

Introduction

This section outlines our strategy for walking in the City of Sydney. The Strategy and Action Plan is structured around the hierarchy of walking needs introduced in Figure 2. Starting from the basic infrastructure that is needed and moving through safety, comfort and experience, the strategy sets out the approach and principles that the City of Sydney will take for each walking need, as well as why the principle is important, and the actions that will be taken to achieve the approach.



Photo: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney

Here is a summary of the principles underpinning each element of the strategy:

Strategy	Principles
Strategy A – A city where people can walk	
A1	We will ensure that there is sufficient space for people to walk.
A2	We will improve connectivity for people walking by ensuring there are frequent street crossings that give people priority and that align with people's walking routes. We will ensure that footpaths and crossings are accessible so that everyone can use them.
A3	We will plan our city based on 10-minute neighbourhoods so that people are able to meet their daily needs easily by walking.
Strategy B – A city where people can walk safely	
B1	We will make it safer for people to walk by reducing vehicle speeds.
B2	We will reduce traffic volumes on surface streets and manage through-traffic in residential neighbourhood streets to improve both safety and experience for people walking.
B3	We will work to make all people feel safer while walking around our city.
B4	We will work to improve compliance with road rules, especially the lesser-known rules that benefit people walking.
Strategy C – A city where walking is comfortable	
C1	We will make our streets and public spaces comfortable and inviting by ensuring that they are green and cool.
C2	We will make sure that there are frequent opportunities for people to stop and rest, use the toilet or have a drink of water.
C3	We will make our city more pleasant to walk in by reducing noise and air pollution from traffic.
Strategy D – A city where walking is fun	
D1	We will make all streets interesting to walk along by ensuring that built form has active, permeable frontages that invite engagement and curiosity.
D2	We will use design, activations and installations to create neighbourhood-based community and encourage people to interact with their streets.
D3	We will make it easier for the community to use their streets how they want to.
Strategy E – A city that is a leader in walking	
E1	We will lead the way in evidence-based planning for walking.
E2	We will continue to lead the way by sharing knowledge, skills, lessons learnt and data with other local governments and organisations.
E3	We ensure that how we talk about walking reflects the diversity and differing needs of people walking.
E4	We will encourage more walking through targeted behaviour-change programs and campaigns, and encourage people to tell us what would make walking better for them.

Strategy A

A city where people can walk

Principle

- A1** We will ensure that there is sufficient space for people to walk.

Approach

Wherever possible, we will increase the space available for people walking by:

- Decluttering footpaths by working with relevant stakeholders to determine more appropriate locations for their infrastructure or how more space could be provided for people walking at that location.
- Reallocating road space from vehicles to people.

Space for people walking and infrastructure that supports walking – such as benches, bins, bubblers and trees – will be the primary considerations on a footpath. Footpaths that have surplus space for people walking can then be considered for additional infrastructure and uses, such as outdoor dining and bicycle parking, including share bike parking. Where the footpath is not wide enough, these other uses should be placed within the carriageway.

Delivery of new shared paths will follow the same principle. Our preference is always for separated cycleways or quiet on-road cycling wherever possible to improve the experience for both people walking and cycling. However, in some locations this is not possible and shared paths are necessary. We will aim to only allow cycling on a footpath where the expected walking volumes and widths mean comfort can be maintained for people walking (noting that this of course includes people using wheelchairs).

Construction activities may require temporary closure or impacts to footpath widths but we will make every effort to ensure that direct, accessible and safe walking paths are maintained. We will develop guidance on planning construction activities to minimise the impacts on people walking.

Case study: George Street

The pedestrianisation of George Street is an example of the City and NSW governments working together to improve public space and walking outcomes. Where George Street was once a heavily congested, unpleasant street it is now the pedestrian spine of the city, providing space for people to enjoy. The initial project was so successful that it was extended south to Central station and a trial of a further closure between Hunter and Bridge Street started in late 2022.



Before



After

Justification

We know that the first step to being a city for walking is to make it possible for people to walk. We will provide space and infrastructure that enables people to walk. This starts with making sure footpaths are continuous and connected, accessible and wide enough for the number of people who use them. This is particularly important in the city centre, where there are more than 1.3 million trips made daily, most of them walking trips.⁴² We will address the problem of space by assessing people's current and future needs, addressing footpath clutter and actively reclaiming space for people.

Many footpaths in Sydney are crowded and uncomfortable for walking. Some level of crowding is good for a sense of activity and security, but on many footpaths, particularly at intersections, the crowding means that it is hard – and sometimes unsafe – to wait. Currently, footpaths have a lot of uses to fulfill but little space to do them. Reallocating street space is the main way we can create more space on footpaths for people walking.

Principle

A2 We will improve connectivity for people walking by ensuring there are frequent street crossings that give people priority and that align with people's walking routes. We will ensure that footpaths and crossings are accessible so that everyone can use them.

Approach

We will do this through our own programs (for example, installing zebra crossings and continuous footpath treatments on local roads) and advocating for improving pedestrian priority at signals with a maximum wait time of 45 seconds and a target of 30 seconds.

We will advocate for more pedestrian crossings on state-controlled roads and pedestrian priority signals where the default setting is a green light for people walking (see explainer).

We will create local guidance that support rolling out safer crossings in more locations with more certainty and at a lower cost.

All crossings will have kerb ramps and will provide a continuous, accessible path for people using wheelchairs or mobility devices.

Justification

Waiting at signals to cross can make up a significant proportion of time on a walking trip and can make major roads feel like both a physical and psychological barrier to walking. For someone walking along Park Street between College Street and Sussex Street, in 2007, 52% of their walking time would be spent waiting at lights. We have been working with Transport for NSW to reduce delays across the city centre and by 2020, only 20%⁴³ of the same trip was spent waiting. However, there is still much more to do – particularly across major roads.

Research has shown that 30 seconds is the longest people are willing to wait at traffic lights before getting impatient,⁴⁴ so getting this right also improves the safety of people walking by reducing the incentive for them to cross against the lights.

We also need frequent crossing opportunities so people don't need to walk far out of their way to cross the street. Some of our major roads such as King Street in Newtown and Botany Road have gaps of 300 metres and more between crossings; this could add up to 5 minutes to a walk.

Beyond signalised crossings, there are other ways to indicate that people have the right of way when crossing a street. Zebra crossings and the raised equivalent, wombat crossings, clearly give priority to people walking when they are crossing the street. Continuous footpath treatments, where the surface treatment of the footpath continues across a side street, are another way of reinforcing priority for people walking along a main street where they already legally have the right of way.

Explainer: Different types of crossings

There are different ways of giving people priority when crossing the road.



Continuous footpath treatments involve creating a visually distinct and continuous pathway for people walking that extends across the side road or driveway without interruptions. The treatment often includes raised pavement and different paving materials to indicate that people walking have right of way.



Pedestrian priority traffic lights are traffic lights where the default is a green light for people walking and cycling, until vehicles trigger the detector. The Rainbow Crossing at the corner of Bourke Street and Campbell Street (pictured) is a well-loved example.



Zebra crossings are pedestrian crossings marked with white stripes where drivers have to give way to people walking.



Wombat crossings are zebra crossings that are raised to increase visibility for approaching drivers and slow down traffic.

Principle

A3 We plan our city based on 10-minute neighbourhoods so that people are able to meet their daily needs easily by walking.

Approach

We do this through a planning framework that provides opportunities for local businesses and services close to where people live.

Justification

For walking to be a viable transport option we need sufficiently dense, mixed-use environments where daily needs are within easy walking distance. The need for a missing grocery item has motivated many walks to the store, as has the need to get a house-bound child to the playground. However, these require a city planned so that people have the option of doing these things on foot, through local centre and mixed-use zoning and creating fine-grain, human-scale development.

Case study: Pitt Street

The Pitt Street cycleway and street upgrade between King Street and Reiby Place was made permanent in 2022. The project upgraded the public domain and reallocated traffic lanes to both walking and cycling space, narrowing the street to one traffic lane. The project has calmed traffic and made the street more pleasant to walk along, as well as enabled people to cross informally along its length.



Photo: Abril Felman / City of Sydney

Through-site links – publicly accessible walkways through the middle of a privately owned site – and the creation of new streets in large developments are ways to increase the ability to walk. Both decrease the distance that people need to walk by providing alternatives to walking around very long blocks. When we masterplan urban renewal precincts or major development sites, we may require new streets or links in our development control plan, so people can move more easily and quickly.

Explainer: Countdown timers

Countdown timers, such as the ones installed at Martin Place, display the number of seconds people crossing the street have until the red walking signal displays. These popular crossings allow people to decide about whether there is time left for them to cross. They can be particularly helpful for people who may be less mobile or have hearing impairments. There are 18 countdown timers in the City and we continue to advocate for more.



Photo: Chris Southwood / City of Sydney

Strategy B

A city where people can walk safely

Principle

- B1 We will make it safer for people to walk by reducing vehicle speeds.

Approach

We will work to reduce vehicle speeds by:

- Advocating for and working with Transport for NSW to implement speed limits of 30 km/h in the city centre, high streets, residential streets and around childcare centres, schools, universities and health establishments. We will work towards a maximum of 40 km/h on all other streets within our local area. None of our residential streets should have a speed limit of 50 km/h.
- Creating streets so that people driving slow down by narrowing roadways, planting trees and installing raised crossings and other traffic calming measures and ensure we have design

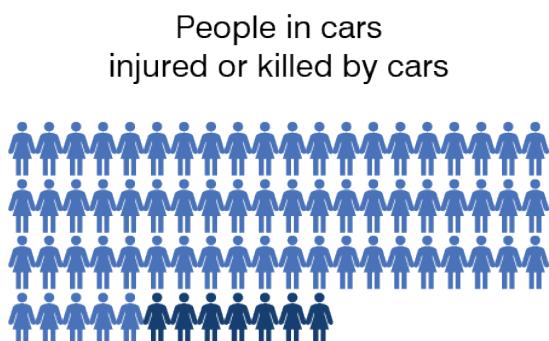
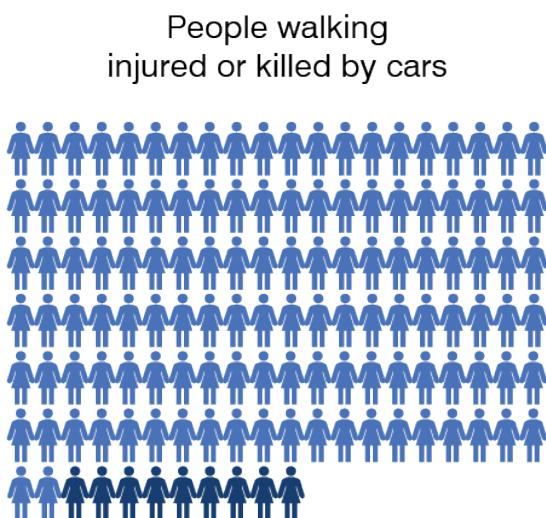
standards consistent with these outcomes. The provision in the Sydney Development Control Plan that applies to traffic speed is 40 km/h on collector streets, 30 km/h on local streets and 10 km/h laneways.⁴⁵



Photo: Chris Southwood / City of Sydney

Figure 8. Serious injuries and fatalities in City of Sydney, 2017–2021

Cars disproportionately injure and kill people walking



Serious injury

Fatality

Justification

Safety is paramount to a walking city. People need to be able to move around safely in order to walk. People walking are particularly vulnerable to conflicts with people driving, particularly when crossing the road.

Reducing vehicle speeds is the single most effective way of improving the walking environment, and lowering vehicle speeds reduces both the severity and number of crashes. At an impact speed of 40 km/h, pedestrians have a 40% risk of death. This falls to about a 10% risk of death if the impact speed is 30 km/h.⁴⁶ Equally important is that lower vehicle speeds reduce the chance of collision because they allow more time for all road users to react.

Of all the crashes that occurred across our area in the last five years, people walking accounted for twice as many serious injuries and deaths as people driving. In the city centre where there are the most people walking, the statistics were even worse – over 24% of crashes involved people walking, of which 74% were crashes that resulted in serious injury.⁴⁷

Case study: 30 km/h in Manly

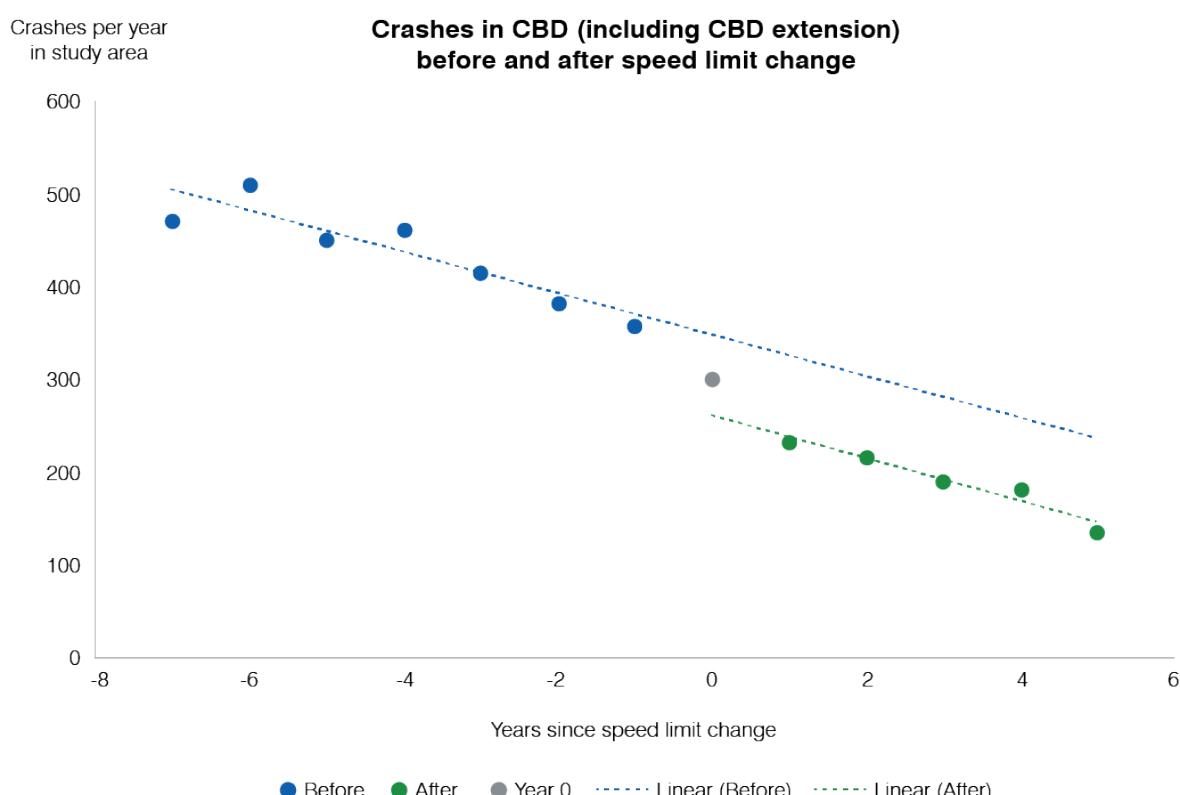
In partnership with Transport for NSW, the Northern Beaches Council reduced the speed limit in the town centre and along the waterfront to 30 km/h in 2020.



Member for Manly James Griffin said that the new speed limits will allow more people to enjoy the streets of Manly and move around safely. The City of Sydney is keen to work with Transport for NSW to implement the new speed limit in suitable areas once the trial has concluded.

The City of Sydney has been progressively reducing speed limits across our area which has resulted in a significant change in the number of crashes, despite the growing numbers of people walking. We want all our local streets to have a maximum speed limit of 40 km/h.

Figure 9. City centre crashes before and after speed limit change from 50 km/h to 40 km/h



Principle

- B2** We will reduce traffic volumes on surface streets and manage through-traffic in residential neighbourhood streets to improve both safety and the experience for people walking.

Approach

We will reduce traffic volumes on surface streets in our local area through local area traffic management plans and low speed treatments to reduce through-traffic while still enabling local vehicle access, i.e. access for people that are going to that destination. In the city centre, we can reduce through-traffic by reallocating road space from vehicles to people or pedestrianising streets (*Can I walk?*). Government investment in public transport, especially the Sydney Metro, is also making it easier to get around without a car.

The City of Sydney also has ambitious limits on parking spaces, discouraging vehicles from parking in the centre in the future.

We will create and/or review local area traffic management plans to avoid and reduce through-traffic on local residential streets.

Justification

Reducing traffic volume in local streets or places of high walking activity improves safety, simply by reducing the risk for people walking. Less traffic means less opportunity for cars to hit people. The stakes are high in the city centre because over 1.2 million people visit our local area every day. Higher traffic volumes expose all these people to a higher risk of injury or death.

Traffic reduction on local streets is equally important. In Australia, parents are very concerned about traffic safety and it is one of the main reasons⁴⁸ for the decline in children walking to school from 75% to 25% over 40 years.⁴⁹ Local streets should be quiet and safe for children to walk and play. This is just not possible with a high volume of traffic. Less busy streets also make it easier for people with a range of disabilities to walk, for example, those with sensory, physical and cognitive disabilities.

Reducing traffic volume also benefits other walking needs. For example, less traffic means streets form less of a barrier for people to cross (*A city where people can walk*) and has better health outcomes due to reduced noise and air pollution (*A city where*

people can walk comfortably). Traffic volume even has impacts on connection and social cohesion; one study found that in areas with 2,000 vehicles per day residents were more likely to have 3 times more friends as compared to an area with 16,000 vehicles per day (*A city where walking is fun*).⁵⁰

Case study: Traffic calming in Green Square

Our traffic calming plans manage and calm traffic on local roads, to improve safety, walking, cycling and public transport access for local residents. This intersection upgrade in Green Square has slowed average traffic speeds to below 40 km/h and made more space for people walking.



Before



After

Photos: Sydney Civil

Principle

- B3** We will work to make all people feel safer while walking around our city.

Approach

We will keep our area clean, well-lit and well-maintained, in order to make people feel safer in their environment. We will also work with community partners to understand and address issues of harassment and intolerance that make certain groups feel unsafe on our streets.

Justification

Beyond the safety of roads, people also need to feel safe in order to want to walk. The perception of streets or public spaces as being safe is very important to encourage walking, particularly for older people, women, children, and people with disability or limited mobility. Over 90% of women feel unsafe walking in Sydney at night, and 30% during the day.⁵¹ For the women surveyed, inadequate lighting was the number one reason for feeling unsafe. Maintenance and cleanliness also add to the feeling of safety.

Some groups, such as LGBTIQA+ people and some multicultural communities, can feel unsafe in certain spaces because of the behaviour and attitudes of others. It is important that the City work with these groups to understand the issues and develop strategies to address them, for example through the existing Hate Crime Awareness Campaign on which the City collaborates with the NSW government.

Principle

- B4** We will work to improve compliance with road rules, especially the lesser-known rules that benefit people walking.

Approach

We will actively raise awareness and work with Police and the NSW Government through the Local Government Road Safety Program to promote compliance of lesser-known road rules that prioritise the needs of people walking. We will increase clarity for all road users by not permitting things which create confusion over who has right of way, for example lights and audible sirens at driveways.



Photo: Chris Southwood / City of Sydney

Justification

Road safety also involves making sure drivers follow the road rules. There are some rules that drivers are often not aware of that, if followed, would make it easier and safer for people to walk. For example, drivers must give way to pedestrians when turning or driving into or out of driveways. However, in many locations, sirens have been installed which cause confusion, make people walking uncomfortable and perpetuate the attitude that “people need to get out of the way of cars”.

Other road rules that prioritise people which we will raise awareness of and advocate for their enforcement include:

- People walking have the same priority as cars in shared zones
- Cars must not stop or park in driveways if doing so blocks the footpath
- Cars must not stop.

Studies show that compliance with road rules relates to the perception of the chance of being caught and the severity of the penalty. Presently, the chance of being caught when road rules are not obeyed is very low. This aspect of compliance needs to be addressed to promote safe driver behaviour.

Strategy C

A city where walking is comfortable

Principle

- C1** We will make our streets and public spaces comfortable and inviting by ensuring that they are green and cool.

Approach

We will do this by delivering the major projects in *Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050* – such as our Green Avenue projects – and by progressing the actions set out in the supporting *Greening Sydney Strategy* and *Urban Forest Strategy* to ensure greening is distributed equitably across the local area. Wherever possible, we will prioritise the reallocation of road space to allow the planting of large trees within the carriageway to improve walking space on narrow footpaths, calm traffic, and shade and cool our streets.

Justification

Heatwaves are Australia's deadliest natural hazard. They now arrive earlier, are hotter and last longer. Urban temperature extremes can present us with life-or-death situations. The 2011 heatwave killed 96 people and hospitalised almost 600, while the 2009 heatwave during the Black Saturday bushfires killed 374 people in Melbourne alone.⁵² The health impacts of heat are also an equity issue; the impacts are not felt equally: the elderly and those from a lower socio-economic background are at the most risk of dying from heat exposure.⁵³

Planting more street trees is one of the most important things we can do to make it possible for people to walk comfortably on hot days. Canopy trees significantly reduce daytime air temperatures through a combination of shade and evapotranspiration, the combined processes by which water moves from the earth's surface into the atmosphere. Individual trees can make a valuable difference to air temperatures and the more the better: above 40% canopy cover increases the cooling effect sharply.⁵³



Photo: Mark Metcalfe / City of Sydney

Trees also have other benefits for walking needs. They make it safer (*A city where people can walk safely*) by calming traffic and reducing vehicle speeds.⁵⁴ Without the sense of enclosure that trees provide, streets feel wider, and this sends the message to people driving that they can drive faster.

We also know there are significant benefits for health and wellbeing when people walk on green streets, particularly when the canopy cover is over 30%. At this level, Australian research has shown that greening can reduce the odds of becoming lonely by a quarter (*A city where walking is fun*).⁵⁶

A study of how people chose their walking route showed that people often valued green views over directness. In fact, green views make the walk feel shorter than it is; the study found a 1% increase in greening reduced perceived distance by 0.3 metres.⁵⁷ This is in part because green streets make people feel connected to their environment and the people around them. Shade also protects people from dangerous UV light which causes skin cancer.

Principle

- C2** We will make sure that there are frequent opportunities for people to stop and rest, use the toilet or have a drink of water.

Approach

We will provide regular seating and other amenities such as public toilets and water fountains through our street furniture program. We will use the Liveable Green Network to prioritise the location of new street furniture (see Appendix E).

Justification

Regular opportunities to stop and rest are essential for some people to be able to use streets on foot because they find walking for longer distances a challenge. According to the 2021 Census, about 5,800 people, or close to 3% have a severe or profound disability that affects their ability to communicate, get around and care for themselves.⁵⁸ There are also many people with disability who visit and work in the City of Sydney. Seating is therefore essential for creating environments that are inclusive, as well as being important for making streets comfortable places to spend time for everyone, regardless of ability.

Older people can also be significantly impacted by a lack of seating. A British study, Standing Up for Sitting Down, noted that a lack of seating in public spaces limits the ability of older people to engage in public life and makes even simple chores like shopping stressful.⁵⁹ We want to create an inclusive and accessible city for everyone, and seating is a fundamental part of the puzzle.

In a similar vein, accessible public toilets are very important for small children, pregnant women, older people and people with some health conditions or disability to feel comfortable and confident while out and about. A lack of facilities can shape where people go or even how much food or water they take in, a phenomenon sometimes referred to as a 'loo leash'.⁶⁰

Regardless of mobility level, street furniture and seating make walking more comfortable and pleasant. The Healthy Streets framework, a human-centred approach to embedding public health in transport, public health and the public realm, out opportunities to stop and rest as 1 of the 10 pillars of creating streets that work for people. To get a top score on this indicator, seating should be provided at least every 50 metres.⁶¹

Case study: the City's wayfinding program

The City's wayfinding program has delivered clear and consistent wayfinding information including signage, clear mapping graphics, and web-based information to encourage people to walk more, and confidently find their way around the city.

The wayfinding system includes a network of tactile street signs at every signalised pedestrian crossing throughout our area, making it safer and easier for people of all abilities to navigate our streets.

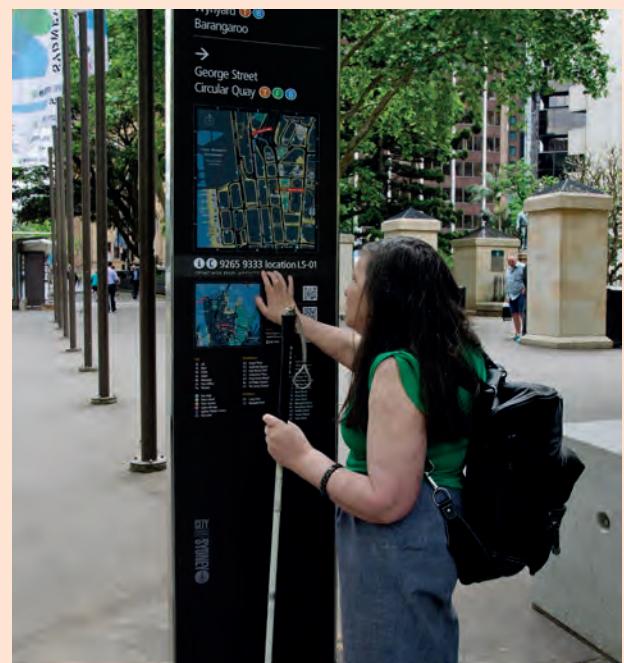


Photo: Paul Patterson / City of Sydney



Photo: Chris Southwood / City of Sydney

Principle

C3 We will make our city more pleasant to walk in by reducing noise and air pollution from traffic.

Approach

The most effective way to reduce air and noise pollution from traffic is to reduce the volume of traffic on streets. We will do this by making it easier for people to move around without a vehicle, specifically by:

- Supporting car share programs
- Advocating for better public transport
- Building a safe, separated bike network
- Managing traffic in local areas (see Principle B2)

In addition, through our *Electrification of Transport in the City Strategy and Action Plan*, we are encouraging the transition to electric vehicles which have less pollution and create less noise.⁶² Actions from the Electrification Strategy are found in Appendix F.

Justification

Noise and pollution from road traffic impacts on our health and wellbeing in many ways. It also makes streets stressful for people living and working on them as well as people walking on them. People walking are exposed to noise and fumes from people driving, particularly on major roads and when waiting to cross.

Reducing the noise from road traffic creates an environment in which people are willing to spend time and interact. We can reduce noise and air pollution by reducing traffic volume (*A city where people can walk safely*) as well as by transitioning to electric vehicles.

Strategy D

A city where walking is fun

Principle

D1 We will make streets interesting to walk along through good building design and interesting uses in appropriate locations.

Approach

We use planning controls to create interest in the street, either through building and landscape design or the visible uses of a building. This includes identifying where the buildings and the uses within the buildings can contribute to the activity in the street and providing design guidance for making buildings that are interesting to look at. Where we can't avoid blank facades or where we have old or historical buildings that can't be changed, we can use public art and plantings to make our streets more enjoyable.

Justification

Beyond making sure the city's physical characteristics are safe and comfortable, we can encourage walking by making it fun and interesting. This is important for creating a sense of fascination, vibrancy and community as well as attracting visitors, businesses and residents.

Streets and public places need to be comfortable, inviting and interesting for people to want to walk.⁶³ The more inviting and interesting the street, the longer people are willing to walk. In our local area, a place of interest along a route reduces the perceived distance of the route by three metres, meaning that people who are enjoying their walking experience believe the walk is shorter.

Unique buildings, small shops and businesses and buildings that open directly onto the street all help people to engage with their environment while blank facades and long, unbroken blocks do not.

An interesting and activated ground floor also contributes to perceptions of safety by putting more 'eyes on the street' (*A city where people can walk safely*). Shops and businesses create a network of people who casually observe one another and can raise the alarm if anything happens. In a survey of 6,000 women about their experience of city streets, 'nobody around' and 'isolate/unsurveyed' were both in the top 10 factors that contributed to feeling unsafe.⁶⁴ This also impacts children; if caregivers

feel unsafe while using streets, they are less likely to let children move independently or to venture out with them.⁶⁵ Shops and buildings that open directly onto the street help create bustle and life, which make people feel safe.

Case study: Laneways Revitalisation Program

Laneways can be vibrant, walkable spaces that invite exploration. The Laneways Revitalisation Program aims to transform city centre lanes and underused spaces to improve pedestrian connectivity and the quality of the public domain. These upgrades have helped local businesses and led to a revitalised small bar and dining culture, with over 90 small bars now operating in our area.

To date, a total of 25 lanes in the city centre have been upgraded, including much loved spaces such as Angel Place, Ash Street, Tank Stream Way and Penfold Lane.



Photo: Tyrone Branigan / City of Sydney

Principle

D2 We will use design, activations and installations to create neighbourhood-based community and encourage people to interact with their streets.

Approach

We will encourage walking by introducing opportunities for play in the design of our footpaths and streets. The focus is on playful design that encourages imagination and spontaneous interaction with our environment; this is separate from and in addition to our program of formal play spaces for children and youth.



Photo: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney

In the same way, events and temporary activations also make for enjoyable walking. We will continue our existing programs – such as Chairs in Squares, Sydney Streets, greening laneways, and outdoor dining – as well as look for other ways to attract people to spend time in the public realm and explore our city. We aim to create unexpected moments, giving people a sense of discovery as they walk our streets.

We will use public art to add surprise and delight but also to tell the story of our First Nations people. We will work in partnership to complete *Yananurala*, the nine-kilometre public art walk that highlights Aboriginal history and culture at places along the Sydney harbour foreshore.

Justification

Design should enable and encourage access by our residents, workers and visitors across all ages and interests. We want people to enjoy spending time in our City and we have heard from our community that events, activations and public art programs play an important role in this.

Part of the reason that these elements make walking around fun is a sense of exploration and novelty. When you don't know what you'll find around the corner, you're tempted to keep wandering to find out. Tracy Emin's artwork, the *Distance of Your Heart*, which features 60 delicate handmade bronze sculptures of birds hidden between Bridge Street and Macquarie Street, is a great example of this. Like a treasure hunt comprised of scattered elements, the installation encourages exploration and curiosity – a new way of looking at a familiar place.

Elements of fun also create opportunities for casual encounters with others and help to build a sense of community. Neighbourhood street closures, interactive artworks, places to sit and community events such as painting murals are all important ways to help people feel connected to their communities.

Playful design that encourages interaction is particularly important for children and adolescents. Play is essential for children's wellbeing and happiness, which the United Nations recognises through the Right to Play, enshrined in the 1989 Rights of the Child convention. Opportunities for playful engagement with their environment help build physical, emotional and social resilience.⁶⁶

Case study: Alfresco dining program

During the pandemic, we launched a free, fast-tracked application process for outdoor dining permits. This made it easier for restaurants, cafes and bars to reallocate parking space for outdoor dining. So far, more than 400 permits have been granted across inner Sydney, creating vibrant places that encourage walking and public life and supporting local artists. Feedback from our community and businesses has been overwhelmingly positive.



Photo: Mark Metcalfe / City of Sydney

Principle

- D3** We will make it easier for the community to use their streets how they want to.

Approach

We will empower the community to be innovative in how they use their street by simplifying the process for our residents to obtain approval for street murals, planting and temporary road closures.

Justification

Personalisation is an important part of facilitating connection. People feel more connected to places that they have the ability to change.⁶⁷ Making it easier for the community to hold the sort of events they want to and make changes to their streets helps to bring people together and develop a sense of community in local neighbourhoods, which is an important part of making walking fun and enjoyable and embedding it into everyday life.

Strategy E

A city that is a leader in walking

Principle

- E1** We will lead the way in evidence-based planning for walking.

Approach

We are committed to the principles of open data and will continue to collect and publish data on walking in the local area.

We will continue to investigate ways of improving our knowledge of walking and use our data and evidence to inform the selection and design of projects and undertake evaluation to measure whether they have had the intended impact.

We will continue to respect people's right to privacy. We will never collect walking data in a way that records personal or identifiable information.

Justification

It is often said that you can't improve what you don't measure. This is particularly true of walking – it is such an underappreciated, ubiquitous part of daily life that if we don't measure it, it goes unseen. We need to know how many people are walking,

at what times of the day and what factors affect their experience of walking so that we can tailor our streets for better walking.

Using data to inform planning decisions is called evidence-based planning. This approach helps us make better decisions and to learn from experience. The City of Sydney has a limited budget and the more we make decisions informed by evidence, the more effective we will be in using our finite resources to do more of what works and less of what doesn't.

Case study: Tracking changing attitudes

We have begun a program of longitudinal studies to understand shifting attitudes to walking and cycling projects over time. Often residents often express opposition during the planning stages of cycleways but become increasingly supportive once the projects are completed. By conducting comprehensive studies that track attitudes over time, we gain valuable insights into the factors driving this shift in public opinion and use it to help shape future projects. We are currently conducting such a study on the planned Oxford Street cycleway.

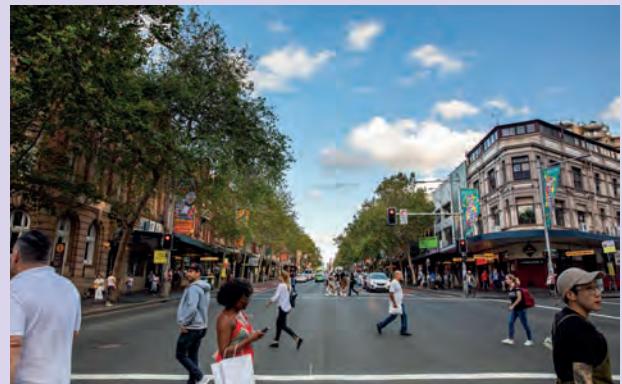


Photo: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney

Principle

- E2** We will continue to lead the way by sharing knowledge, skills, lessons learned and data with other local governments and organisations.

Approach

We can learn from others by developing deep and extensive networks with professionals working to improve walkability. We will continue working with other councils and organisations through both formal and informal channels to make it easier for others to make positive changes for walking. We will also work with academics and research institutions to contribute to the overall body of expertise.

Justification

Given its location and intense level of development, the City of Sydney often experiences challenges relating to people walking (and access and transport more broadly). This means that we have the experiences and resources to share with other Councils and have embedded this sharing in our mission.

Principle

- E3** We will ensure that how we talk about walking reflects the diversity and differing needs of people walking.

Approach

We will use inclusive, human-centred language in all our communications.

Justification

Streets are for everybody, regardless of ability, age or gender. When we talk about walking, we are including all people moving on footpaths – those on foot, using mobility aids such as wheelchairs, mobility scooters and walking frames, as well as those with prams, rollerblades, unpowered scooters and skateboards. This is a diverse set of people with differing needs and preferences when it comes to interacting with our city's streets, and we need to acknowledge this in the language we use.

Principle

- E4** We will encourage more walking through targeted behaviour-change programs and campaigns and encourage people to tell us what would make walking better for them.

Approach

We will develop and implement a range of behaviour-change programs to encourage the community to walk more. In particular, we will develop measures to encourage school students to walk to and from school by working in partnership with schools and parent committees.

We will also encourage people to tell the City of Sydney and Transport for NSW about the particular barriers to walking they face.

Justification

Sometimes, particular groups of people have specific needs when it comes to walking that require a thoughtful and targeted approach to removing barriers. Walking to school is a good example. While 40 years ago, 75% of kids walked to school, today only 25% do.⁶⁸ Not only is infrastructure required to make sure children can safely make the trip, but there is also an educational component of teaching kids about how to use crossings and signals, how to check for traffic and how to be alert in a road environment. Parents may also need support, information and tools to feel comfortable letting their child walk to school.

Walking is often an overlooked mode of transport, and while we hear a lot from people using other modes about the challenges they face (traffic, late buses, connectivity of cycleways), we hear very little about the barriers to people walking. This may be because walking is so common that people don't often identify themselves as 'walkers'. But we need to know more about the specific problems that walkers face, for example, intersections with long delays, so that we can target our efforts to create the most and most effective behaviour change.

3. Action Plan

Action
1 We will implement a program of the highest priority walking improvements. These are actions that have already been committed in the next three years and will include programs and projects related to crossings, street upgrades, road space reallocation, planting and public domain improvements focused on key walking routes. See Appendix A for Tranche 1 walking improvements.
2 We will investigate ways of increasing our commitment to delivering walking improvements. See Appendix B for proposals for new or accelerated walking-related programs.
3 We will work with Transport for NSW to implement 30 km/hr speed limits in the city centre, high streets, residential streets and around childcare centres, schools and universities, and health establishments, and progress a maximum of 40 km/hr speed limits elsewhere.
4 We will work with Transport for NSW to ensure that signal phasing prioritises people walking. The City will advocate for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Automated pedestrian phases• A maximum wait time at intersections of 45 seconds for people walking with a target of 30 seconds• More pedestrian priority signalised intersections (like Bourke Street at Taylor Square)
5 We will implement local area traffic management (LATM) plans to reduce vehicle volumes and speed to make it safer for people walking. We will focus these LATM plans on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Areas around schools and childcare centres• Residential areas between state and regional roads• Areas of high walking activity
6 We will develop a code of practice for construction activities in public places that provides guidance on how to maintain safety, connectivity and place amenity for people walking. This will inform the basis of permitting and managing construction activities in a way that minimises impact on people walking.
7 We will actively work to improve how road rules relate to people walking by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Raising awareness and understanding of existing road rules related to walking• Working with the NSW government to promote driver and cyclist compliance with road rules relevant to people walking• Advocating for legislative reform to improve road rules related to people walking• Clarifying the right of way for people walking across driveways by banning any devices that falsely imply vehicle priority (flashing lights, audible sirens) and encouraging the removal of existing devices (through compliance action where applicable). Any safety issues at the interface of a driveway and a footpath are to be resolved by warning drivers of their responsibility to drive safely around people, for example, by using speed bumps.

Action

- 8 We will **review the guidance in our Sydney Streets Code** with a focus on:
- Providing guidance on location, selection and design of **crossings and intersections**
 - Providing guidance on how to create **child-friendly streets**. This could be done via adopting existing guidance developed by a third party as an addendum to the Street Design Guide
 - Defining **traffic lane width standards** applicable to our local area that support space reallocation and safe speeds
 - Reviewing how our guidance relates to **designing for people with cognitive, sensory and physical disabilities** – for example, including charging stations for mobility devices in the standard set of street furniture the City uses
- We will also develop local design standards related to walking (for example, speed management, tree planting near traffic and tactical urbanism) where State or national standards result in suboptimal walking outcomes.
- 9 We will work with Transport for NSW to **reduce red tape** and make it easier for our community to activate their streets via temporary or permanent closures, street painting and plantings.
- 10 We will **promote walking as a form of exploration** and curiosity through our Culture Walks, guided tours and self-guided walks.
- 11 We will continue to **be a leader in walking and evidence-based planning** by:
- Increasing our network of permanent pedestrian counters
 - Investigating new forms of people movement data
 - Sharing knowledge and expertise with other councils, cities, agencies and the community
 - Undertaking research on behaviour change and attitudes to walking and cycling
- 12 We will **use proactive language and remove unconscious bias** in City publications to highlight the human element of walking and advocate for others to do the same.

4. Appendices

Appendix A – Tranche 1 Walking Improvements

This appendix sets out the highest-priority walking-related programs and projects that the City will deliver over the next three years (July 2023 – June 2026). These projects and programs are continuing the vision set out in the last walking strategy and now form part of the City's business-as-usual approach to improving walking. They all have committed funding and delivery pathways and will be subject to consultation and approval.

Programs

Road closures and shared zones

We will close four streets to traffic and upgrade them with full landscaping. We will also implement three new shared zones and upgrade the streetscape in line with the City's shared zone design palette to indicate to drivers to drive at 10 km/h.

Crossings

We will install approximately 30 continuous footpath treatments, 12 raised crossings (wombat crossings), four at-grade crossings (zebra crossings) and one pedestrian refuge crossing. We will also upgrade three new signalised pedestrian crossings and upgrade two intersections that are missing pedestrian crossings.

Kerb ramps

We will install approximately 110 new kerb ramps. This includes replacing around 20 kerb ramps that are currently not compliant with accessibility standards.

Footpath widening

We will widen footpaths or build kerb extensions to narrow crossing distance in approximately 20 locations.

Footpath renewal

We have allocated \$15 million towards upgrading and renewing our footpaths and a further \$17 million for upgrading asphalt footpaths to granite pavers. This is being done in line with the Liveable Green Network initiative from *Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision*.

Clutter

We will remove or relocate utilities such as redundant Ausgrid poles in approximately 50 locations to reduce footpath clutter. In addition to this, we will look at opportunities to consolidate or remove redundant signage.

Pedestrian safety improvements

We have committed to three programs delivering pedestrian safety improvements to specific problem areas.

Tree planting

Through our tree planting program, we will plant at least 700 trees per year over the next 3 years, totalling 2,100 trees. This includes a minimum of 50 in-road trees in the parking lane per year, or 150 trees over the 3-year period. After 2026, a greater proportion of the trees planted will be in-road.

Furniture

We have allocated around \$450,000 towards new street furniture, including seating, toilets and water fountains and a further \$400,000 for furniture upgrade and renewal.

Raised intersections

We will convert one roundabout to a raised crossing to calm traffic and improve amenity for people walking.

Lighting

We will install new street lighting in six locations specifically to improve the walking experience.

Projects

We will deliver the Crown Street streetscape upgrade and public domain works.

We will finalise the George Street South pedestrianisation and upgrade.

We will undertake the permanent pedestrianisation of George Street North.

We will continue the rollout of new wayfinding signage (\$200,000 allocated).

We will finish delivering the set of traffic-calming initiatives identified in the Alexandria Local Access Traffic Management Plan.

We will complete streetscape and laneway projects that are committed or already under construction including Zetland Avenue west, Green Square to Ashmore Connector, Castlereagh Street, Loftus Street and the Primrose Avenue quiet way.

We will continue to facilitate the delivery of developer-delivered works to support development growth, in particular in the urban renewal precincts of Green Square and Ashmore.

Appendix B – Tranche 2 Walking Improvements

This appendix sets out ways in which the City could increase the commitment to walking improvements over the next 10 years, either through accelerating existing programs or creating new programs.

Items in this appendix will require approval of additional funding. Each program is listed below along with the additional resources required for its implementation.

Programs	Resources required
Crossings Following the recent delegation of power to Council regarding installing crossings on local streets, the City has identified additional priority locations for installing pedestrian crossings. We propose to double the rollout of both zebra and wombat crossings compared to the current plan (Appendix A – Tranche 1 Walking Improvements) to address these priority areas.	Existing program funded. Seeking additional funding for acceleration.
Walking and Place We will continue to undertake Walking and Place studies of precincts that have particular walking significance and are not picked up through other processes. We will undertake three studies per year. We will continue to seek grant funding from Transport for NSW and others to fund the delivery of these projects.	Seeking NSW Government funding.
Walking counter automation We will increase the network of automated pedestrian counters from 4 locations to 15 with a view to ultimately replace the current twice yearly manual counts.	Capital funding required.

Appendix C – Liveable Green Network

All of our streets and footpaths support walking. Developed in 2011, our Liveable Green Network (Figure 10) shows streets that have been identified

for different purposes. This classification helps us to prioritise some types of projects, particularly greening, street furniture and footpath maintenance along key walking routes. The Liveable Green Network aims to create a pedestrian and cycling network that connects people with the city and village centres as well as major transport and entertainment hubs, cultural precincts, parks and open spaces.

Figure 10. Liveable Green Network



Appendix D – Strategic alignment of actions

The actions from this strategy support the outcome statements of Direction 5 in *Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision - A city for walking, cycling and public transport*

5.1 Street space is reallocated for people, places and planting

Actions	The City is shaded and cooler, quieter and calmer, air cleaner and more space available for people to use the streets	Vehicle speeds and volumes are reduced, making the city centre and local neighbourhoods safer, healthier and quieter	Avenues that lead into Central Sydney have been transformed to be greener, with more space for walking and cycling
1. Implement tranche of highest priority improvements	●	●	●
2. Increase our commitment to walking improvements	●	●	●
3. Work towards 30 km/h		●	
4. Prioritise people walking at signals			
5. Implement local area traffic management plans	●	●	
6. Develop a code of practice for construction activities		●	
7. Improve how road rules relate to people walking			
8. Review guidance related to walking in Sydney Streets Code	●		
9. Reduce red tape	●		
10. Promote walking as a form of exploration			
11. Continue to be a leader in walking			
12. Use proactive and human-centric language around walking			

Note: Many actions also support outcomes under other Directions in *Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050*

The actions from this strategy support the outcome statements of Direction 5 in *Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision* - A city for walking, cycling and public transport

5.3 More people walk more, because walking is the most attractive and convenient choice for short trips

Actions	People are prioritised by increasing the capacity, quality and amenity of our streets	The experience of people walking will be enhanced for everyone by improving safety, quality, accessibility and comfort, including for children	The city is legible and intuitive to navigate, supported by a comprehensive wayfinding scheme	People are prioritised at key intersections, reducing wait times, and improving safety
1. Implement tranche of highest priority improvements	●	●		●
2. Increase our commitment to walking improvements	●	●		●
3. Work towards 30 km/h		●		●
4. Prioritise people walking at signals		●		●
5. Implement local area traffic management plans		●		●
6. Develop a code of practice for construction activities		●	●	●
7. Improve how road rules relate to people walking	●	●		●
8. Review guidance related to walking in Sydney Streets Code	●	●		●
9. Reduce red tape		●		
10. Promote walking as a form of exploration		●	●	
11. Continue to be a leader in walking		●		
12. Use proactive and human-centric language around walking		●		

Note: Many actions also support outcomes under other Directions in *Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050*

Appendix E – Key terms

Key term	Definition
Accessibility	The ability for everyone, regardless of mobility, age, where they live and disability or special mobility needs to be able to easily use the transport system, including walking infrastructure.
Active frontage	Ground floors with windows and doors onto the street which create interest and activity.
Active transport	Transport that is ‘human powered’ such as walking and cycling. This includes electric bikes and scooters.
Amenity	Something that makes your surroundings pleasant and agreeable.
Clear width	The width on a footpath available for walking that is unobstructed by obstacles.
Continuous footpath treatment	Where the surface treatment of the footpath continues across a side street. It is a way of reinforcing priority for people walking along a main street where they legally already have the right of way.
Cycle time (signals)	The time taken by a traffic light to go through all its phases. Longer cycle times mean people walking have to wait longer to cross.
Development control plan (DCP)	Detailed planning and design guidelines by the local government to support the planning controls. DCPs are a key feature of the NSW planning system.
Interchange	The ticketed area within the gate line of a station. The City’s public footpaths should never be considered as interchanges for the purposes of assessing walking space.
Kerb ramp	Otherwise known as a kerb cut, dropped kerb or pram ramp, this is a ramp graded down from the top of the footpath to the surface of the street. They provide access for people using wheelchairs, pushing prams or with limited mobility.
Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS)	A document that the NSW government requires all local governments to develop that sets out the 20-year vision for land use and how growth will be managed in the future.
Local traffic	Vehicles that either originate or stop in the area in question. The opposite of through-traffic.
Parklet	A kerbside parking space that has been repurposed into a public space ‘pocket’ to provide seating, greenery and other amenities.
Planning controls	The set of regulations that control development in terms of density, height, external design, open space provisions and maximum parking provision, among other things.
Road space allocation	How the space between buildings is allocated between uses, particularly footpath space and road space. Often, the allocation of space does not reflect the number of people using each part, in which case the reallocation of road space is needed.

Key term	Definition
Severance	Physical and psychological barriers that impact on the ability for people to walk where they want to go. It can include roads or public transport infrastructure that are difficult to cross, large blocks, or parks without accessible paths which are hard to cross for people with limited mobility.
Shared path	A path shared by people walking and cycling.
Shared zone	A road shared by people walking, cycling and driving. The maximum speed limit is 10 km/h. Shared zones must have different surfaces to normal roads to help people identify them.
Street furniture	All furniture in the public domain, including seating, bins, drinking fountains and toilets.
Through-traffic	Vehicles which are passing through an area without originating or stopping there.
Through-site links	Publicly accessible connections through sites on private land.
Walkability	The sum of “factors within the built environment that make it convenient, comfortable and safe to walk.” ⁶⁹
Walking	People moving about on the footpath, including those using mobility aids (for example, wheelchairs, electric wheelchairs, mobility scooters and prams among other devices). It does not include people using a bicycle.
Wombat crossing	A raised zebra crossing that gives people walking priority to cross.
Zebra crossing	A pedestrian crossing marked by white parallel stripes.
10-minute neighbourhood	A concept by which cities are planned so that people are able to meet their daily needs within a 10-minute walk.

Appendix F – Actions related to walking in other strategies and plans

Improving walking in our city requires a multifaceted approach that touches on many aspects of what we do at the City from planting trees to planning approvals. Many of these aspects already have adopted strategies and policies with actions that relate, directly or indirectly, to walking. Rather than replicate these actions in the Walking Strategy and Action Plan here, a selection of actions related to walking in other plans is listed below.

Plan	Reference	Action
Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision	Transformative project	Three linked city squares: Three city squares will be linked by the new pedestrian boulevard on George Street to provide more space for public life in the heart of our city.
Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision	Transformative project	<p>The green city</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Green avenues: Transforming Broadway, Oxford Street and Park Street by reallocating road space to people, businesses and planting.• The laneway commons: The laneway commons reimagines our neighbourhood service lanes as soft, permeable, green commons that better serve community needs. The initiative transforms land that is now used for private vehicle access and waste collection.
Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision	Transformative project	<p>City space improvement program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lunch Club: This program reimagines our city centre road space with temporary lunchtime closures with simple elements (fixed and fleeting) – the first step towards more permanent change.• Roads to spaces: This program could convert more roads into spaces for people to walk, linger and enjoy.

Plan	Reference	Action
City Access Strategy	Action 5	<p>Plan Sydney Metro precincts to improve the public domain and increase space for people. It will result in modifications to streets including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Footpath widening – localised in places of high activity such as busy intersections and crossing points • Footpath widening – along whole blocks or streets to encourage more street activation and economic activity • Adding street trees and appropriate street furniture.
City Access Strategy	Action 8	<p>A city for walking. We will update the Walking Strategy and Action Plan as appropriate. We will deliver priority programs of localised interventions to make walking safer, easier and more convenient. This builds on the City's Walking Strategy and Action Plan and will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased crossing opportunities • Space for walking and public life • Lighting • Increased number of trees and planting • Reduced vehicle speeds and reduced through-traffic along main streets and in local neighbourhoods • Reduced waiting times for people walking at traffic signals.
City Access Strategy	Action 13	<p>Reducing the impacts of buses in the city centre. The City will advocate to the NSW Government to reduce the number of bus layovers in the city centre. This street space can then be reallocated to uses such as outdoor dining, plantings or footpath widening.</p>
Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS)	I1.1	<p>Continue to encourage walking and cycling in the city by implementing the City's walking, cycling and Liveable Green Network strategies, and applying the NSW Government's Movement and Place framework.</p>
Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS)	I1.2	<p>Work with the NSW Government to plan for the transition of streets to 'people first' places, applying the NSW Government's Movement and Place framework so streets are healthier, quieter, cleaner and greener with increased footpath capacity throughout the city.</p>
Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS)	I1.9	<p>Continue to implement, review and update the car parking policies and controls to support the transition to a net-zero carbon and energy-efficient transport system by 2030, continue promoting more efficient modes of transport including walking, cycling and public transport and manage congestion.</p> <p>This includes working with the NSW Government to review and update the Central Sydney Parking Space Levy.</p>

Plan	Reference	Action
Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS)	I1.10	Work with landowners, institutions and government to increase public walking, cycling and transport connections across the city and district, including infrastructure, busy roads, railway lands, institutional lands and golf courses and the like.
Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS)	L1.1	Provide public and publicly accessible spaces that are inclusive, good quality, accessible and activated for diverse people and communities and contribute to the social life of the city.
Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS)	L1.3	Improve the accessibility of the public domain for people of all ages and abilities – with a focus on children and young people, older people, and people with disability – including through the delivery and improvement of inclusive and accessible public spaces, amenities and facilities.
Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS)	L2.1	Plan for local communities to be able to access daily needs and essential services, including fresh food and health and personal services, within walking distance by providing an appropriate mix of uses, including local retail, services, infrastructure and recreation, in local and neighbourhood centres and mixed-use zones supported by adequate floor space on the ground floor (and adjacent floors where appropriate).
Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS)	L2.2	Undertake a review of active frontage and built form controls to connect and create a network of activity in appropriate places.
Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS)	L2.3	Work with others to create and maintain a continuous publicly accessible harbour foreshore edge that is wide enough to support a range of recreational activities, except in areas required for productive working harbour functions.
Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS)	L2.4	Plan and deliver walkable local streets or shared zones with wider footpaths, gardens, street trees, pedestrian priority at crossings and safe traffic speeds.
Greening Sydney Strategy	Action 1	<p>Achieve the green and canopy cover targets</p> <p>The minimum overall green target for the city is 40%, including an overall canopy target of 27%. This is based on the provision of greening and canopy cover being shared between all our streets, our parks and all property.</p> <p>To achieve the target, we will ensure that across their portfolio:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • streets provide 39% green cover with a minimum 34% canopy cover • parks provide 86% green cover with a minimum of 46% canopy cover • property areas provide 28% green cover with a minimum of 20% canopy cover. <p>Importantly, each portfolio needs to provide their share, as there is limited capacity for others to make up any difference. It is vital that ... everyone works together to provide the targets.</p>

Plan	Reference	Action
Urban Forest Strategy	Action 4	<p>Achieving the canopy cover targets will take a sustained and coordinated effort, with all owners and managers of land in our area required to play their part to provide new tree canopy. To ensure our canopy targets are achieved, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify streets where tree planting and providing canopy cover should be prioritised over other uses of public space, such as on-street car parking and other street space that is underused. Develop a program to prioritise planting based on need and opportunity • continue to identify opportunities for new and replacement tree planting in streets and parks and deliver best-practice tree planting and establishment programs. Ensure trees are planted in the best locations to optimise canopy cover • ensure the mature size of trees planted in streets and parks is the most appropriate for the space available. Park planting plans will be developed and the street tree master plan will be comprehensively reviewed to ensure tree species selection is optimised • improve soil and tree pit growing conditions in streets to ensure the trees planted thrive to mature size
Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan	Direction 2	<p>The creation of more liveable communities for people with disability.</p> <p>Streets, parks, footpaths and open spaces in the City of Sydney area are accessible. The design, maintenance and management of infrastructure and places enables people with disability to travel through the City with dignity and independence.</p>
Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan	Action 4	<p>Continue to improve the accessibility of streets, footpaths, parks and open places through renewal programs, upgrades and new capital</p>
Electrification of transport in the city strategy and action plan	Action 1	<p>Work with the NSW Government to reduce vehicle kilometres travelled (VKT) by all vehicle fleets by creating a city for walking, cycling and public transport to reduce transport-related emissions.</p>

5. Endnotes

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Page 6. Row 1, left to right: Sydney Civil; Paul Patterson / City of Sydney; Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney. Row 2, left to right: Chris Southwood / City of Sydney; Renee Nowytarger / City of Sydney; Chris Southwood / City of Sydney. Row 3, left to right: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney; Jamie Williams / City of Sydney; Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney.

Page 20. Top to bottom: Paul Patterson / City of Sydney; Chris Southwood / City of Sydney.

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