

OUR WOLLONGONG

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Piccadilly Centre Frontage – Footpath Upgrade

Engagement Report

April 2023



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The information in this report is based on data collected from community members who chose to be involved in engagement activities and therefore should not be considered representative.

This report is intended to provide a high-level analysis of the most prominent themes and issues. While it's not possible to include all the details of feedback we received, feedback that was relevant to the project has been provided to technical experts for review and consideration.

Executive Summary

The proposed footpath upgrade on the Piccadilly Centre frontage covers the area from Gladstone Avenue to the east end of the Jubilee Bridge in Crown Street Wollongong. The notification/engagement period running from 10 March until 31 March 2023. Letters containing the plans were sent 98 residents and businesses in the area.

A [Piccadilly Centre Frontage – Footpath Upgrade](#) webpage was created with an online survey and a copy of the consultation plan. The project webpage had 232 visits and we received 10 online surveys and 3 email submissions. A brief summary of the findings follows. Full details appear in the body of this report.

Summary of results

The online survey question was general in nature asking if residents had any comments on the proposed footpath upgrade.

Results were mixed with some support for the footpath upgrade, but some opposed to the moving of the bus bay. There were requests for improvements in bike infrastructure, for additional pedestrian lighting, to make the Crown and Denison and Gladstone pedestrian crossing a scramble crossing, more street trees or planter boxes and the creation of a Wollongong map that shows the active transport connections for pedestrians and cyclists.

Improvements in bike infrastructure was mentioned in three online and the three email submissions. All advocated for the inclusion of bike infrastructure in the Piccadilly footpath upgrade and for a comprehensive approach to promoting active transport in Wollongong.

Of the submissions that mentioned the bus bay, only one supported it being moved saying it was a very good idea to get buses to stop in lane as they currently struggle to get back in traffic from existing bay. Others said the bus stopping in the lane was a terrible idea, as this is already a very busy street and moving the bus lane will make it worse. One resident said the idea “seems more like another attempt by stealth to restrict car movement in town, just like bike lanes that no one uses. It was felt that the negatives of moving the bus bay outweigh the potential benefits and the proposal should be reconsidered.

Next steps

The information from this engagement will be reviewed by the Project Team prior to a Councillor briefing before making a final decision on the Piccadilly Centre Frontage Footpath Upgrade.

Background

Council is looking into upgrades to improve pedestrian access outside Wollongong's Piccadilly Centre at the top end of Crown Street. This bus stop and footpath area is one of the busiest in the city, but the existing bus bay makes it feel very narrow and crowded.

The proposed works, scheduled to begin later this year, would see the bus bay removed and replaced and the full width pedestrian footpath reinstated, an extended lefthand turning lane for southbound traffic, new footpath paving to match the rest of the Crown St upgrades, and seating and planter boxes to lift the aesthetics of this city gateway. Council is also working with Australia Post to relocate the post box around the corner and onto Gladstone Avenue.

Stakeholders

Stakeholders identified prior to the start of the engagement period included:

- Local residents
- Transport for NSW
- Local businesses
- Chamber of Commerce
- Neighbourhood Forum 5
- Cycling and active transport groups

Method

The methods used to communicate the engagement to stakeholders and invite their participation are listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Details of Communication and Engagement Methods

Methods	Details
Communication Methods	
Email to key stakeholders	An email was sent to key stakeholders.
Letters sent to residents	A letter about the engagement was delivered to 98 local residents, businesses, and property owners in the Piccadilly Centre area of Crown Street. The letter included a link to the online survey and a copy of the Consultation Plan.
On-site signage	The Project Team did not recommend on-site signage for this engagement/notification.
Our Wollongong website	The project webpage hosted background information and supporting documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online survey for community feedback • Copy of the consultation plan.
Community Update	The engagement period fell outside the timing for the monthly Community Update column in the Illawarra Mercury.
Media release	Media release about the engagement was 24 March 2023. Have your say on upgrade works at Piccadilly Centre Wollongong City Council (nsw.gov.au)
Engagement Methods	
Our Wollongong website	An online survey, consultation plans, appeared on the project page.

Results

This section of the report provides details on the engagement participation results (Table 2), the online participation summary (Table 3), and survey results (Tables 4- 5).

Engagement Participation Results

There were no engagement activities for these projects. The community had the opportunity to make comments via the online survey or via email. The table below shows how people provided feedback.

Table 2: Summary of engagement participation

Type of Submission	No. of submissions
Online surveys completed	10
Email submissions	3

Online Engagement Results

A total of 10 online submissions were received. Table 3 presents the usage statistics for the project page on Council's website.

Table 3: Summary of online participation

Measure and Explanation	Usage
Aware – Total number of users who viewed the project page	205
Informed – Total number of users who opened a hyperlink or read a document	120
Engaged – Total number of users who have actively contributed to the project via the project page	10

Online survey results

The online survey asked the community to share their thoughts on footpath upgrade on the Piccadilly Centre Frontage in Crown Street Wollongong. The following provided details of the results for each of the 10 legend items on the consultation plan.

Table 4: Legend items comments

Legend items on the consultation plan	No. of responses
Property boundary line	0
Existing street tree in permeable paving	0
Proposed stone pavers (<i>please don't use dark pavers – too hot in summer</i>)	1
Proposed kerb ramp	0
Relocated Australia Post box	0
Relocated bin enclosure	0
Relocated seats position (<i>like additional seats</i>)	1
Existing guard rail to be retained	0

Tactile pavers to meet Australian Standards	0
Works on private land	0

Table 5: Feedback Themes excluding Legend items

Feedback themes (excl. legend item)	No. of online comments	No. of email comments
Support for the footpath upgrade	5 (4 of these with additional out-of-scope requests)	0
Against the footpath upgrade	3	0
Bike infrastructure missing from the plan	3	3
Bus bay comments	3	0
Street trees/planter box	3	0
Pedestrian lighting	1	0
Pedestrian crossing upgrades	1	0
Out of scope comment		1

Support for the upgrade

Five people said they supported the footpath upgrade. Of these, four made additional requests (see below) and one stated dark pavers are not a great idea as they feel “super-hot in summer”.

Against the upgrade (including bus bay comments*)

There were a variety of reasons given for opposing the upgrade plan. One was strongly opposed to the proposed plan to remove the dedicated bus bay on Crown Street. They argued it will cause significant traffic delays and negatively impact the street. They added that the proposal lacks evidence of any traffic modelling to show how the change will affect traffic flow. From experience they stated, even temporary lane blockages result in significant traffic congestion on Crown Street. The removal of the bus bay will force buses to stop in a traffic lane, further adding to the congestion.

Another reason given included questioning the necessity of the proposed upgrades to street furniture, pavers, and bus boarding, as these can be done in conjunction with maintaining the existing bus bay. They thought the foot traffic in the area is not significant enough to justify the removal of the bus bay.

One resident suggested that this is another attempt to restrict car movements in the town, similar to the unused bike lanes. Some residents argue the negatives of removing the bus bay outweigh any potential benefits and that the proposal should be reconsidered.

Bike infrastructure missing from the plan

One cyclist was concerned about that the proposed footpath widening project on Crown Street would potentially make it difficult to turn left onto Gladstone Avenue. They say the current situation, where buses stick out slightly, is safer for cyclists because cars cannot pass them, meaning they can cycle through while remaining vigilant. It has been suggested the proposed changes mean that the cyclist will have to merge with vehicle flow and then merge left again to turn left. The cyclist believes that a solution for bikes and e-scooters could be a separated cycle lane or a 30km/hour zone. A request was made to include a ramp for bikes to access the Gladstone Avenue shared path from Crown Street.

There are questions about how the proposed design improves access or safety for cyclists heading west on Crown Street. It was suggested that adding a cycle lane or green paint and road markings to indicate cyclists' right of way would help. These submissions suggest Council should consider the needs and safety of cyclists in urban infrastructure design.

Bus bay comments

One resident thought it was a great idea to remove the bus bay, while others provided reasons why this would not be a good idea. (*See details in the Against the proposal comments above).

Pedestrian lighting

One request was made for better pedestrian level lighting as they felt the area feels very unsafe at night.

Pedestrian crossing upgrades

It was suggested the pedestrian crossing at Crown and Denison Streets and Gladstone Avenue be changed to one similar to the one at Crown Street and Keira Street. This would allow for pedestrians to cross in multiple directions at the same time, with a longer period to cross. In addition, the resident thought the crossing at Crown Street and Railway Parade should be the same.

Email submissions

The three email submissions made comments on biking infrastructure. A summary of the comments appear below:

There is concern about the lack of bike infrastructure included in the proposed plans for the Piccadilly footpath upgrade in Wollongong. It has been suggested that Gladstone Avenue is an important connection for riders traveling between the south and north of Wollongong and including bike infrastructure in the upgrade would make sense. One resident urges the inclusion of a bike connection from the mall to Gladstone Avenue along the Piccadilly Centre pathway to demonstrate a commitment to Wollongong being a bike city and to encourage low-emission transport.

The increasing interest in active transport options, including combining cycling with rail transport in Wollongong was noted by one submission. While there are existing shared paths for cyclists on Denison Street and Gladstone Avenue, the intersection at Crown Street is dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists, and improvements should be considered as part of the proposed upgrade.

One cyclist supports the creation of an up-to-date map of active transport connections for pedestrians and cyclists.

Out of scope comment

One submission suggested reducing the through traffic along the Princes Highway (Crown Street Keira Street) between Throsby Drive and Denison Street. A simple solution would be to make Throsby Drive, Denison Street and Mercury Street the preferred route, consideration should be given to making Denison Street and Mercury Street one-way streets to reduce traffic congestion. Reducing the speed limit on the Princes Highway (Crown Street Keira Street) would further improve active transport safety and discourage people from using this route as a through route.

Summary

We received 13 submissions for the Piccadilly Centre Frontage Footpath Upgrade. There was mixed responses to the plan. Some agreed with the footpath upgrade and others were opposed to the movement of the bus bay saying it would have a negative impact on traffic congestion. There were requests for Council to include more bike infrastructure, trees, pedestrian lighting and adding scramble lights at the Denison, Crown, and Gladstone Avenue intersection.

Next steps

The information from this engagement will be reviewed by the Project Team prior to a Councillor briefing before making a final decision on the Piccadilly Centre Frontage Footpath Upgrade.