

Summary of Speaker Presentation

Bridget Smyth, Design Director, City of Sydney CBD and South East Light Rail (CSELR) Project

- Light rail projects won't come to fruition without incredible collaboration between all levels of government.
- CSELR is being delivered by Transport for NSW for the state government and City of Sydney is an investor partner
- Sydney Light Rail project is designed to cater for a growing population over the next 20 years, where we will see up to 1.6 million trips into the city each day
- So how did we get there? In 2006 City of Sydney's started with the crafting of a new strategic vision for the city – recognised that re-visioning of the City was needed. We started with a 'health check' of the city – including involving experts looking at the city and its public space. Including Gehl Architects Public Space and Public Life study
- We knew there were issues with the public amenity of our city and with 75% of people arriving in the city arriving by public transport and all of us eventually being pedestrians it was time to rethink the city.
- The Gehl study recommended implementing a 21st century transport system, which was proposed at that time as Light Rail. The idea of reshaping the heart of our city and creating a new pedestrian hierarchy to the city, where George Street, the main spine in the city, is re-fashioned as the new spine of our city hosting surface public transport in Light Rail.
- The Public Spaces Public Life study created a new master plan of sorts for our city with the George St Light Rail as the core and it catalysing three major new public squares – a Circular Quay, a new square at Town Hall, and connecting to Central the major public transport interchange in the city
- Following the Public Spaces Public Life study in 2006 the Lord Mayor Clover Moore and her team instigated the process for a new Strategic Plan for the city – “Sustainable Sydney 2030”. It developed an action plan to deal with climate change, housing affordability, traffic congestion and generally the liveability of our city. Sustainable Sydney 2030's mission is to make the city green, global and connected. Included
- Multiple components of Sustainable Sydney 2030 all recommended Light Rail as the key catalyst for change.
- Congestion in the city has really started to cripple the heart of the city. Every day 6,000 buses enter the city, with 1,000 on George Street in peak hour period alone.
- Congestion costs in 2015 were estimated to be \$2.5B in Sydney and this is forecast to be up to \$8 billion by 2030, so something needed to be done.
- The situation in George Street made it clear things needed to change, and the impact of buses on Sydney streets is very evident – particularly noise and air quality. The replacement of buses on George Street has been immediately understood as having numerous benefits.
- Enormous planning and consultation was undertaken to deliver an advocacy document, “Connecting Sydney” to present City of Sydney case to state government and generate support for light rail.
- We then went on to craft the overall city transform plan and went through a lengthy process to develop strategies, policies, and project plans to develop an overarching city regeneration plan for Sydney
- We have been gradually improving the city, whether through public space upgrades, bringing public art into the city. The plan for light rail is critical to the fruition to public space improvement and projects.



Lord Mayor's Light Rail Summit

- Reinforcing that it is really critical that you have the tools at our disposal as local government - series of the right strategic framework, policies and technical codes to guide private sector contribution and investment to provide the “glue” to get the connected and coherent public spaces outcomes
- We spent time and money developing new public domain furniture suite, wayfinding suite and bringing artists into the city to make unique spaces and stories
- After a business case study state government announced in 2012 that light rail would run down George Street
- Council entered into negotiations with the state government regarding our investment in the light rail project– Council contributed \$220 million to the project for an ‘extra over’ layer of quality public domain improvements to the project.
- This investment allowed the Council to define what benefits it wanted for George Street. We needed to define the not negotiables and the character of George Street. For example, Council wanted a central 1km pedestrian zone creates another 25,000 square metres of public space for business activity.
- The reference design tested options and allowed us to be clear about your vision for light rail and what benefits it can bring.
- Council set design specifications for lighting, paving, greening, etc – set the agenda for the “look and feel” of the street.
- Did a lot of work to support state government to articulate the benefits to communities impacted by the line and get people “on board”
- Entered into a development agreement with the state government – the “home work” done so far was critical to Council getting what they wanted.
- Retail rents have grown already – even prior to building the light rail. Also processing record levels of DAs on the back of this plan
- “George Street 2020 Public Domain Activation Strategy” is important to realising the benefits of light rail.
- Public consultation was critical – “1000s” of meetings, exhibitions, etc. – the aim with state government was to “over communicate”
- 4 lessons for Adelaide:
 1. This is a city building project that needs support from all levels of government and highly skilled staff that integrate this with a city building agenda
 2. A robust vision is needed upfront
 3. Contract environment: full reference design should be done prior to awarding the contract and should be part of the contract
 4. The underground world – make sure you engage with utilities upfront to understand what’s underground. This is “once in a lifetime” opportunity to make improvement in this area.