

Darby Street – Streets as Shared Spaces (SaSS) Trial

Frequently Asked Questions

Background

Between 29 September 2022 and 28 February 2023, City of Newcastle used Streets as Shared Spaces (SaSS) grant funding to trial traffic calming and streetscape activations on Darby Street. The trial received positive feedback from the community, and 69% of respondents to our consultation survey said they wanted the trial infrastructure to be retained.

On 28 March 2023 City of Newcastle's elected Council approved the retention of the SaSS infrastructure, including the large dining deck and speed control devices for the 30km/h traffic calming scheme.

Key issues emerging from community feedback about the Darby Street trial were related to overall parking availability and to safety and noise associated with the northern and southern entries to the 30km/h zone. We are now taking steps to address these issues.

How will parking availability be addressed?

We are continuing to provide free 2-hour parking in Queen Street car park to compensate for on-street parking impacted by the retained infrastructure.

From 27 March – 12 April 2023 we consulted with local businesses and business improvement associations, to ascertain support for the installation of parking sensors, which will help promote parking turnover. Parking sensors are set to be installed in Darby Street in May 2023.

There will be future consultation with businesses on preferences for timed parking restrictions in Queen Street car park when the Newcastle Art Gallery reopens.

How will safety and noise at the 30km/h zone entries be addressed?

On 20 February 2023 Newcastle City Traffic Committee gave in principle support for the revised concept plans for traffic calming infrastructure at the northern and southern entries to the 30km/h zone. These proposals will be placed on public exhibition from Friday 5 May to Friday 2 June 2023.

Northern Entry

During the trial we heard there were concerns about cyclist safety at the northern entry to the 30km/h zone, located on Darby Street between Laman Street and Queen Street. This section of Darby Street will also be affected by future road works associated with the redevelopment of Newcastle Art Gallery. To resolve these safety concerns, we propose redesigning the entry and moving it south of the traffic lights at the intersection of Queen and Darby Streets.

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This change will help cyclists to move to a 'command the lane' position in a slower speed environment - after the traffic lights which slow traffic.

As part of this proposal, there is also an option to include a timed loading zone outside 61 Darby Street (Winning Appliances). The potential installation of the loading zone and hours of operation will be determined by feedback from local businesses.

Excluding the proposed timed loading zone this proposal results in a net zero loss of parking (2 parking spaces are removed and 2 are created).

If installed, the proposed timed loading zone will use 2 parking spaces at times of the day to be determined by feedback from local businesses.

Why do we need concrete entry islands?

A narrowing of the roadway is necessary to define the entry to the 30km/h traffic calmed zone. The narrowing of the roadway signals the need for drivers to slow down and is required under NSW State Government guidelines.

Why does the entry need to move?

During the trial we heard it was challenging for southbound cyclists to merge with vehicular traffic to take-up a command the lane position ahead of the northern entry to the 30km/h zone, due to the speed of vehicles. We also heard the design of the entry needed to change to give cyclists options if they were unable to merge safely.

The section of Darby Street between Laman Street and Queen Street will also be impacted by ongoing upgrade works for the Newcastle Art Gallery which means the northern entry cannot be upgraded in its current location.

How does moving the entry south of the traffic lights improve safety?

The existing traffic lights will function as a speed control device allowing cyclists to take-up a command the lane position in a slower speed environment. Locating the entry next to a driveway also offers southbound cyclists an off ramp if they are unable to merge safely.

Why has a timed loading zone been proposed?

There is currently no loading zone on the eastern side of Darby Street and we are seeking feedback from businesses on their needs.

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What will happen to the existing entry infrastructure on Darby Street and Queen Street?

Four concrete islands forming the existing entries to the 30km/h zone on Queen Street and on Darby Street (between Laman Street and Queen Street) will be removed. This will create a total of 2 parking spaces with 1 parking space on Queen Street and 1 parking space on Darby Street (between Laman Street and Queen Street). See the Draft Concept Plan – Northern Entry for details.

What impact does the relocated northern entry infrastructure have on parking?

Excluding the proposed timed loading zone, this proposal results in a net zero loss of parking (2 parking spaces are removed and 2 are created).

This includes:

- 2 new parking spaces created when the existing concrete entry islands on Darby Street and Queen Street are removed, (1 additional parking space on Queen Street and 1 additional parking space on Darby Street).
- 2 parking spaces removed to provide entry islands outside 76 Darby Street (Steel and Anchor) and 67/79 Darby Street (Darby Street Automotive).

The proposed timed loading zone will use 2 parking spaces at times of the day to be determined by feedback from local businesses.

Southern Entry

During the trial we also heard that there were concerns about excess vehicle speed and noise from the speed cushions at the southern entry to the 30km/h zone.

To reduce the speed of cars entering the 30km/h zone and the noise being generated by impacts to the speed cushions, we propose redesigning the entry as a more prominent road narrowing and replacing the existing speed cushions outside 185 Darby Street with a raised threshold.

Proposed upgrades to the southern entry on Darby Street and the entry on Bull Street result in a net gain of 1 parking space (1 parking space is removed and 2 are created).

See the Draft Concept Plan – Southern Entry for details.

Why do we need entry devices?

A narrowing of the roadway is necessary to define the entry to the 30km/h traffic calmed zone. The roadway narrowing signals the need for drivers to slow down and is required under NSW State Government guidelines.

Why does the entry device need to be upgraded?

During the trial we heard there were concerns about noise from the speed cushions near to the southern entry to the 30km/h zone. Measurements taken during the trial indicate that vehicle speeds remained high at this location and were not effectively slowed by the infrastructure – contributing to excess noise. The infrastructure needs to be upgraded to reduce vehicle speed and noise.

How will the proposal reduce speed and noise?

We will upgrade the southern entry near to 192 Darby Street (Nesbitt Hair) with a more prominent road narrowing and more visible textured road markings as well as replacing the existing speed cushions outside 185 Darby Street with a raised threshold. Slower vehicle speeds on the approach to the raised threshold and a smoother transition for vehicles driving over the raised threshold (compared to the speed cushions) will reduce noise.

What impact does the upgraded southern entry infrastructure have on parking?

Proposed upgrades to the southern entry on Darby Street and the entry on Bull Street result in a net gain of 1 parking space (1 parking space is removed and 2 are created).

This includes the removal of 1 parking space outside 185 Darby Street (Pure Performance Sporting Goods) and the creation of 2 parking spaces on Bull Street.