

8 CONCLUSION

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8.1 OVERVIEW

This chapter contains an outline of the next steps in the project, a conclusion and a section which discusses a number of opportunities which could be considered for further investigation and design, subject to consultation with Hawkesbury City Council, relevant State government agencies and the community.

8.2 NEXT STEPS

Following approval of this concept for the Windsor bridge replacement, a process of detail design would commence which would test and develop and refine all of the elements, to ensure that the project meets all of the objectives of the project as well as the all relevant standards. This design process would confirm the constructibility of the proposed concept and consider in greater detail each element of the project to ensure that it meets the relevant standards required for this project.

In parallel with this design and documentation process, RMS will undertake further consultation with the key stakeholders including State government agencies, Hawkesbury City Council and the community regarding the detailed design of Thompson Square and the river foreshores.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

The concept design and EIS for the Windsor bridge replacement project focuses on the primary area for the proposed works, however there are a range of opportunities which could enhance the integration of the project into the wider area. These opportunities are outlined in Table 8.1 and identified on the adjoining plan in Figure 8.1.

While most of these opportunities are beyond the scope of this project, it is recognised that the project could become a catalyst for these wider area improvements subject to the direct involvement of a range of stakeholders including Hawkesbury City Council, relevant State government agencies and the community.

One of the objectives of identifying this preliminary selection of opportunities is to ensure that the potential for coordinating these works with the bridge replacement project so that they can occur within similar timeframes and that the project works would not preclude the potential implementation of any of these opportunities in the future.

The replacement bridge project and the opportunities listed in the table have the combined potential to also facilitate future connections for pedestrians and cyclists along the river foreshore such as to Governor Phillip Park. Future foreshore connections further downstream on both sides of the river would further enhance the regional networks of the Great River Walk.

Should the opportunity arise to reconsider the retention of the existing bridge for use as a pedestrian and cycle route, it would have the potential to greatly enhance the experience of crossing the river away from vehicular traffic, whilst providing the potential for people to appreciate the river and the historic value of this structure in its setting. This would also present the opportunity to remove the shared path from the proposed bridge which would reduce the bulk and scale of the bridge and would, in turn, reduce some of the impact of the bridge and the approach roads on the area.

Table 8.1: OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION
(REFER TO ACCOMPANYING DIAGRAM FIGURE 8.1).

	OPPORTUNITY TO BE INVESTIGATED
Thompson Square, George Street, The Terrace and the river foreshore	<div><div></div><div>An urban design and landscape plan should be considered for the entire Thompson Square area in close collaboration with Council, State government agencies and the community.</div><div></div><div>Consideration should be given to designing the lower half of Thompson Square to accommodate both group events and individual activities, creating a landform such as a grassed amphitheatre with terracing, to provide informal seating overlooking the river.</div><div></div><div>Consideration should be given to the relocation of the existing bus zone on Thompson Square road to the corner of Baker Street and The Terrace. This would allow for Thompson Square road to be narrowed along its length and thereby increase the grassed area within the parkland.</div><div></div><div>Consideration should be given to Thompson Square road and The Terrace (from Baker Street to the Windsor Wharf area) being designated as a slow speed 10km/h shared zone that would greatly enhance the setting of the parkland within the square and allow for a safer connection to the river for pedestrians and cyclists, as well as people with disabilities.</div><div></div><div>Consideration should be given to the interpretation of the old bridge alignment on the foreshores that could take the form of a viewing deck or platform to mark the location of the existing bridge abutments. This would also enhance people's viewing experience of the river. Interpretive material could be incorporated into the deck design to provide historic information for visitors.</div><div></div><div>Consideration should be given to the placement of a viewing deck above the existing retaining wall adjacent to the Doctors House that could provide for panoramic views over the river and it's foreshore. Interpretation of the existing bridge alignment and other historic features would also be possible from this vantage point.</div><div></div><div>Consideration should be given to the interpretation of previous road alignments which have crossed the square over time. These could take the form of subtle markers in the grass and pavements.</div><div></div><div>Consideration should be given to streetscape upgrade works in George Street including new pavement treatments that would improve the character of the street, making it safer for pedestrians and better integrating the space into the square.</div><div></div><div>Consideration should be given to the potential upgrading of the existing open space at the southern corner of Thompson Square, at the corner of George Street and Bridge Street.</div></div>
The northern foreshore and intersection	<div><div></div><div>The possibility of reducing the scale of the proposed roundabout should be further explored. A reduced scale roundabout would be more appropriate in the context of the urban form and scale of Windsor and the rural roads of Wilberforce and Freemans Reach Roads.</div><div></div><div>Further consideration should be given to the potential for the medians and residual areas around the proposed roundabout to be landscaped with soft landscaping wherever possible in order to reduce the extent of hard surfaces in this area</div><div></div><div>Consideration should be given to the interpretation of the old bridge alignment on the foreshores could take the form of a viewing deck or platform to mark the location of the existing bridge abutments. The incorporation of interpretive material as part of the design of the deck would also enhance people's viewing experience of the river.</div><div></div><div>Consideration should be given to the interpretation of the old alignment of the Wilberforce Road approach to the existing bridge such as with the placement of subtle markers in the grass and pavements.</div></div>



Figure 8.1: Opportunities for further investigation -Thompson Square, river foreshore and adjoining areas.

AMPHITHEATRE



Plate 8.1: Example of grassed amphitheatre and stairs, Bradley's Head, Mosman NSW. This treatment could be utilised in the lower half of Thompson Square providing access down to The Terrace as well as providing for a performance area adjacent to the river.



VIEWING PLATFORM / DECK



Plate 8.2: Example of viewing deck on the Hawkesbury River (near Kable Street, Windsor). A similar viewing deck could be utilised to mark the alignment of the existing Windsor bridge and provide a location for interpretation of the heritage of the area.

THE TERRACE - SHARED ZONE



Plate 8.3: The Terrace adjoining Thompson Square road could become a shared pedestrian and slow vehicle speed zone. A similar viewing deck could be utilised to mark the alignment of the existing Windsor bridge and provide a location for interpretation of the heritage of the area.

INTERPRETATION OPPORTUNITIES

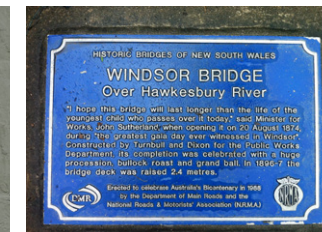


Plate 8.4: New interpretation elements could be utilised to support and enhance existing interpretative features within and adjoining Thompson Square.

8.3 CONCLUSION

Road infrastructure projects cause a range of impacts on both natural and cultural environments while providing a wide range of tangible transport and development benefits to the local and wider community. The Windsor bridge replacement project is no exception. Whilst the replacement of the existing, 138 year old bridge has arisen due to capacity, durability and maintenance considerations, the siting of a new bridge within the historic Windsor township, and particularly within the Thompson Square Conservation Area, is a complex and therefore challenging task.

Following the analysis of a range of alternative bridge locations in and around Windsor, RMS selected the Old Bridge Street alignment through Thompson Square as the preferred location for the replacement bridge. This route maintains the historic crossing location over the Hawkesbury River within Thompson Square and continues the use of the square as a primary place for public access to, as well as over the river. A range of formed and unformed roads have criss-crossed the square since it was first designated as public land by Governor Macquarie over 200 years ago.

As the traffic demands have increased over time, so too have the form and scale of the roadways resulting in an increasing dominance of the road carriageways over the square. Relatively steep topography within the square is one of the key reasons for the dominance of the space by roads over time.

The new bridge and its approach roads would increase the dominance of this infrastructure in the area and have a substantial impact on the local environment of both Thompson Square and the river foreshores. It's increased height and width, compared to the existing bridge and approach roads, increases the bulk and scale of the road infrastructure in this highly sensitive setting.

While the square was designated as a public place for more utilitarian functions, it has gradually assumed an important role as a setting for civic and recreational functions over time, and has the potential to increase this role in Windsor, particularly as access to and along the river foreshore improves for cultural and recreational activities.

Hawkesbury City Council and the community have indicated their desire to see Thompson Square and adjoining public domain along George Street and the river foreshore develop to assume this cultural and recreational role with a series of plans and reports which have recommended improvements. As these improvements are made in adjoining areas, the imperative for the enhancement of Thompson Square to facilitate civic and recreational activities increases.

The Windsor bridge replacement project would improve the visual and physical access between the square and the river foreshore by infilling the Bridge Street cutting and reshaping the landform to create a more regular grassed slope connecting George Street to The Terrace. In addition, connections to Macquarie Park, an important recreational destination on the northern foreshore, will be easier and safer for pedestrians and cyclists making this area more accessible and better integrated into the township of Windsor.

The replacement bridge would improve the arterial road and local access functions for the local community and a wider regional community by providing improved safety, traffic efficiency and flood immunity for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians. In addition to these benefits, it is recommended that this project be used as a catalyst for further improvement to enhance the public domain character and functionality within and beyond Thompson Square.

The opportunities identified in this report, together with the results of the proposed consultation process regarding the design of Thompson Square would form a valuable basis for both State and Local government agencies to embark on a comprehensive and collaborative master planning and design process which embraces the improved integration of the Windsor bridge replacement project into the wider area, incorporating Thompson Square and the adjoining streetscape, the river foreshore and Macquarie Park. The challenge for this project is to achieve a coordinated outcome which delivers the best possible enhancements for Windsor and particularly Thompson Square, one of the most historically important public spaces in Australia.

