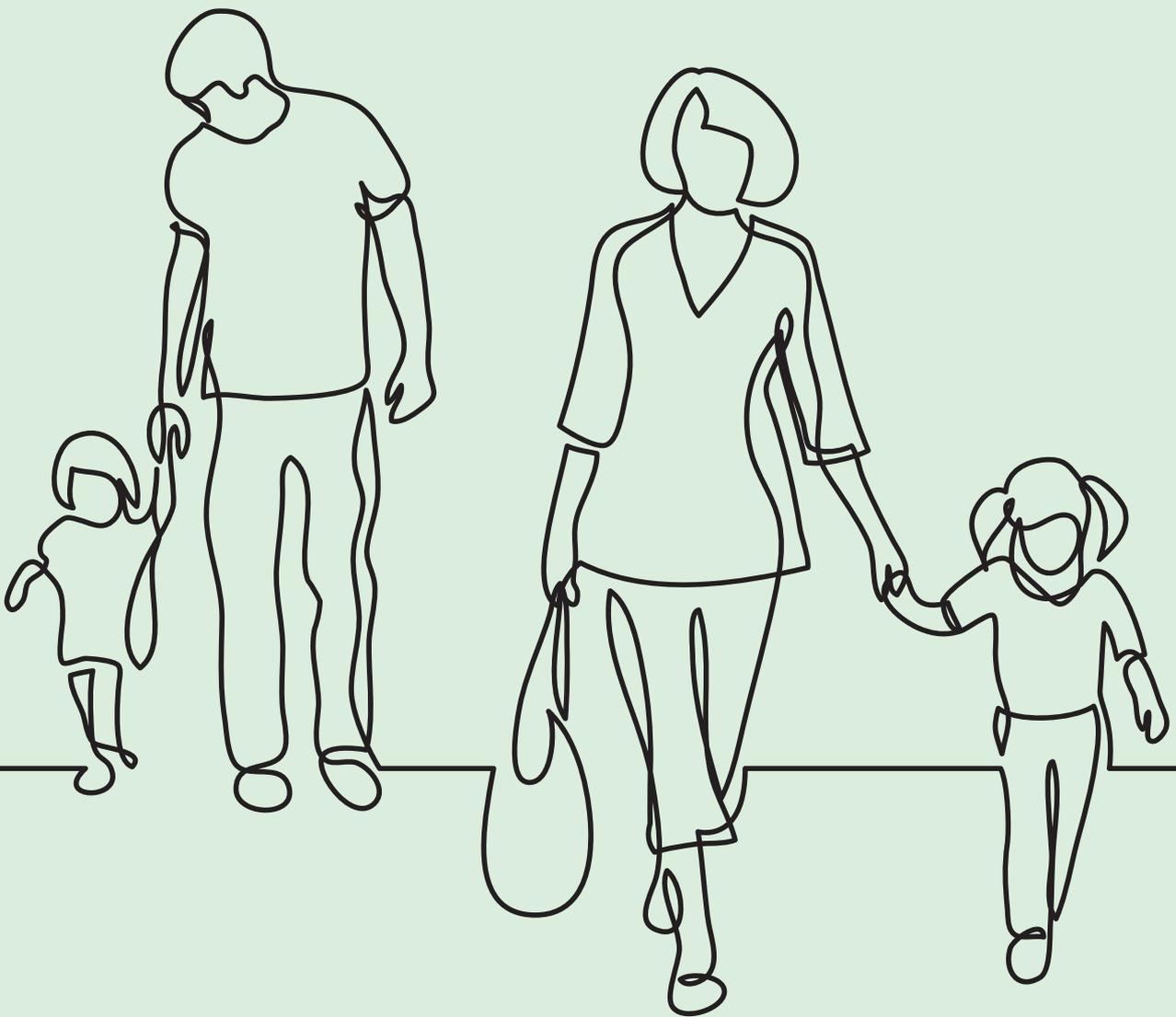


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The last significant upgrade of the Orange CBD was undertaken in the 1990s. Since then, there has been significant changes in the city and in the retail sector. In late 2018 Orange City Council engaged urban designers and architects to develop a plan for upgrading the CBD.

The development of the plan involved widespread community consultation, including the formation of a Community Reference Group with 30 members from a wide cross section of Orange.

In 2020 the plan was released, exhibited for public comment and adopted by Council as the way forward.

There were three strong themes:

1. Attract more people to the CBD
2. Increase the number of people living and working in the City Centre
3. Make the City Centre more walkable - addressing the dominance of private vehicles in the City Centre, reducing reliance on the use of private vehicles as the primary mode of transport and making the City Centre more attractive, comfortable and safe to walk around.

There was overwhelming support (94%) for the Future City idea of attracting people to spend more time in the CBD.

That support declined but was still solid (70%) when asked if respondents supported strategies to increase the number of people living in the CBD.

There was strong support (84%) for the Future City idea of making the CBD more 'walkable'.

Given the scale of the project the program was split into three tranches.

Tranche 1 included McNamara Lane between Summer and Kite streets, Lords Place between Summer and Byng streets and Byng Street between Lords Place and McNamara Lane.

These elements of the project have been completed.

Included in Tranche 2 was an upgrade of Lords Place between Summer and Kite streets (Lords Place south).

The 2020 plan for Lords Place south included the following ideas:

- New street trees and shade
- Outdoor dining areas
- Innovative planting design
- Additional street furniture and lighting
- Innovative materials selection
- Rationalised car parking

In 2021 Council sought more community feedback and started work to refine the design. The engagement included community forums and one on one consultation. It is noted that this consultation was limited by COVID-19.

The feedback included:

- Wider footpaths
- Revitalised street trees
- Improved lighting
- Accessible parking nearby
- Celebrating the street differently during the day versus the night
- Greenery
- Willingness to explore less on-street parking if a multi-level car park is nearby
- Safer pedestrian spaces "slow the street down" which would mean loss of parking in places
- More street furniture
- Outdoor dining spaces (all-weather structures)
- Street art

Since then, Council has been successful in securing a \$500,000 grant from the NSW Government's Streets as Shared Spaces Program. The program is for trial projects that test permanent changes that strengthen the amenity, accessibility and economic vitality of a high street and surrounding area.

Following the success of the grant application Council has developed a concept design to meet the original themes adopted in 2020, to respond to the feedback we have received to date and to align with the grant.

The concept plan includes:

- New street trees
- Footpath widening to create outdoor spaces
- A narrowing of the available drive lanes to improve pedestrian safety and to slow vehicle speeds
- Shade structures
- Seating
- Lighting
- Parklets

New street trees

There are currently 16 trees in Lords Place south. The concept plan includes removal of 10 of these. Three trident maples near the Commonwealth Bank and 3 ornamental pears near Crema, The Canobolas Hotel and StarChem will be retained.

When the tree planting part of the project is completed there will 28 trees in Lords Place south. The new trees are advanced specimens of red ash and field maple and are approximately 4m tall.

The new trees will be planted on an alignment similar to angled parking. This limits the loss of parking spaces and extends the tree line closer to the travel lanes. The trees will provide additional shade and reduce heat impacts.

The trees to be removed are either in poor health, poorly positioned or were planted in such a way as to limit future growth or

tree health. The current trees in Lords Place south like others in planted in inner city areas, struggle because their roots are mostly covered by concrete and bitumen.

Since the Future City program began, new trees have been planted in self-contained underground structures or cells, which are designed to stop the trees' roots spreading out to damage nearby roads and footpaths.

These underground cells are connected to nearby stormwater channels, letting the trees thrive and become well-established. The underground cells are filled with high quality soil along with a weight-bearing plastic or a rock-based supporting framework.

Another advantage of tree cells in a busy urban area like this block of Lords Place is that they're designed to be trafficable, so that a car can park safely alongside the tree without damaging the tree's roots. The use of tree cells lessens the loss of parking spaces, as trees can be positioned to maximize parking along the street. Orange's first trees in underground cells are already thriving in Kite Street (near the Quest building) and in McNamara Street.

Footpath widening to create outdoor spaces

Streetscape improvement projects offer the opportunity to consider other types of car parking and to allocate more space to other transport modes through widened footpaths.

Different mixes of footpaths and car parking can be used to:

- Slow traffic speeds
- Improve safety and sight distances
- Reduce the visual impact of cars in the street
- Decrease the number of cars in the street

The new spaces created in the street will be defined in a number of different ways including the placement of furniture planting and shade structures and pavement treatments such as painting.

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A narrowing of the available drive lanes to improve pedestrian safety and to slow vehicle speeds

At the moment Lords Place south is currently one lane in each direction. However due to the width of the street it can in practice be used beyond the two available travel lanes, which encourages speeds at the limit and makes crossing the street more difficult.

In the concept design the interaction between vehicles and pedestrian changes. By narrowing the vehicles travel paths through tree alignment, the addition of some parallel parking, wider footpaths and parklets it shifts the focus from vehicles to pedestrians. The narrowing of the travel lanes will slow vehicles speeds and a 40km speed limit will also be introduced.

Shade structures

Aside from awnings there are currently no permanent shade structures in Lord Place south. In the concept design 6 have been included. This will encourage visitors to the street to spend more time in the precinct in varying weather conditions.

Seating and dining

Aside from the temporary eating area outside Crema there is currently no permanent street seating in Lord Place south. Included in the concept design are eight seating/dining areas and some incidental seating. In all approximately 120 seats have been added to the street. This will encourage visitors to the street to spend more time in the precinct to dine or take a break.

Lighting

Lighting upgrades in Lords Place south will include pedestrian lighting, outdoor dining lighting and festoon lighting in Post Office Lane.

Parklets

The parklets play an important role in greening the street, improving the amenity of the precinct and creating new public open space.

They are also part of the traffic calming solution.

When will work start?

Work is expected to start in September.

The plan is to exhibit the concept for feedback, make any necessary changes and then have it adopted by Council at the meeting on 6 September. From there Council will undertake procurement to ensure the best value for money.

It will be undertaken in two stages.

Stage one will focus on the trees and tree pits across September, October and November.

The majority of the trees are expected to be planted by early December.

Stage two, which is the balance of the concept plan, will commence in the new year.

How long will the work take?

Depending on the design and procurement in stage two the works are anticipated to take up to 12 months.

How will council limit impacts on my business?

Council will work with businesses in the street to limit impacts.

This will vary from business to business and may include working around delivery times or undertaking out of hours work.

While a project of this scale will cause disruptions, Council is committed to keeping these, where possible, to a minimum.

Will my business have to pay to use outdoor dining areas?

There are two options available. If a business wants to secure a portion of outdoor space for its exclusive use during its opening hours Council has an outdoor eating area licence available at \$45.95 per year. There is also a fee for the placement of street furniture which is \$170.40.

There is no charge for non-exclusive use. One of the considerations will be to ensure there is an appropriate mix of exclusive and non-exclusive areas to meet community needs.

How much parking will we lose?

There are currently 67 parks in Lord Place south. Under the concept plan the number will be 44.

How will these parking losses be offset?

Council is looking at a number of options to address changes in parking availability. This could include changes or shortening of permissible parking times, changes from all day to limited timed parking in the Ophir Car Park or nearby streets. It could also include shorter timeframes to support drop off/pick up zones for relevant businesses. Council is keen to hear from businesses in the street about their needs.

When will we get new a new multi storey car park?

Council has identified the Ophir Car Park as a possible site for a multi storey car park. Council will continue to evaluate the potential of this proposal but it is not within the scope of this project.

How can I have my say about the project?

The concept plan will be exhibited for community feedback from 17 August to 31 August.

A community forum will be held on 25 August 6.30pm in the Civic Centre.

The Orange Your Say is also open for comment from 17 August to 31 August. It can be found at yoursay.orange.nsw.gov.au

What happens to my feedback?

Your feedback will be reported to Council and will be part of the discussion before the final concept is considered by Council and adopted. There will need to be a balance between some community views and meeting the goals of an upgraded CBD.

It is likely that some of the feedback Council receives will be polar opposites. For example it is possible there may be some views that no car parking spaces should be lost and others that may seek an expansion of footpaths zones and outdoor eating areas.



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For more information
contact

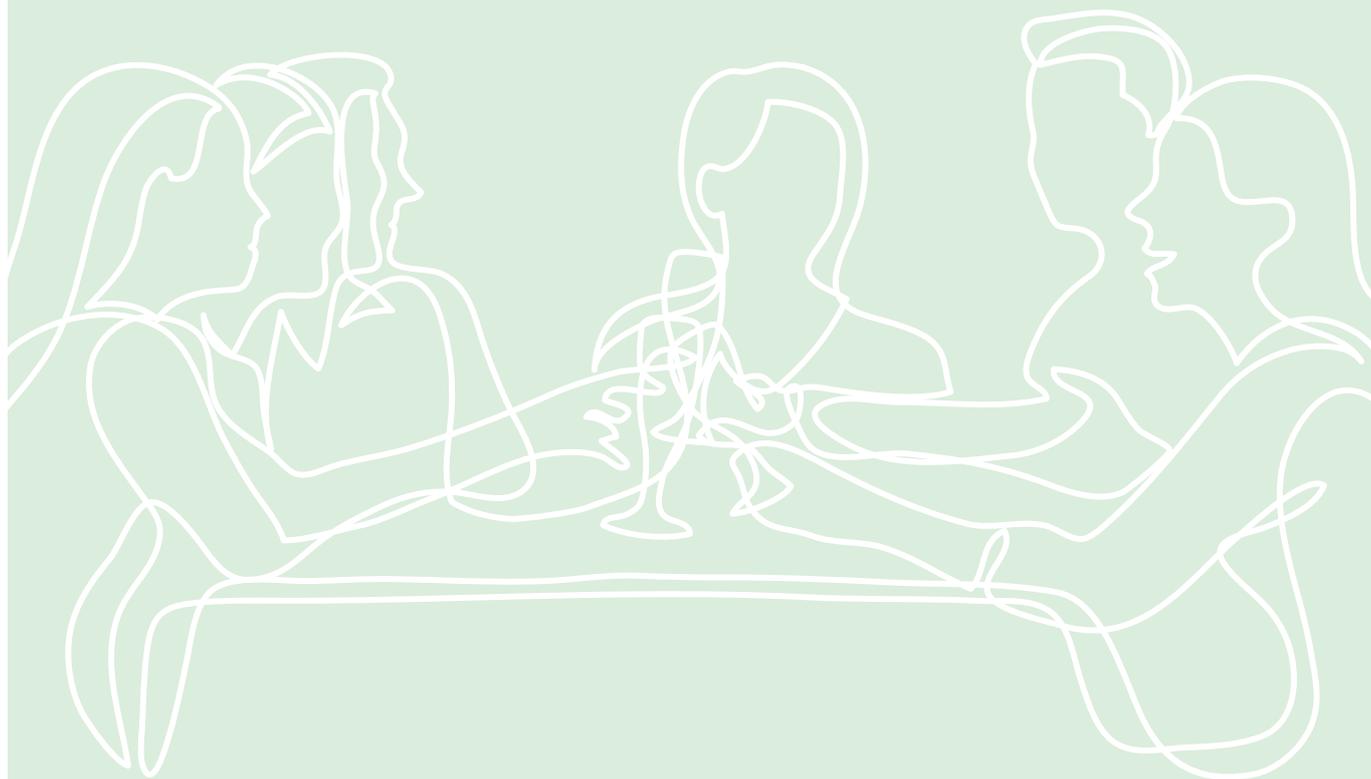
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