

Committee(s): Streets and Walkways Sub Committee Planning and Transportation Committee	Date(s): 18/10/2019 22/10/2019
Subject: Lunchtime Streets – first year review	Public
Report of: Director of the Department of the Built Environment	For Information
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Summary

During the summer of 2019, the City Corporation worked with businesses on St Mary Axe and Chancery Lane to deliver two ‘Lunchtime Streets’ events, which closed each street to traffic at lunchtime for three consecutive days.

St. Mary Axe, and Chancery Lane were chosen as they both have very high volumes of people walking at lunchtime. St Mary Axe is proposed to become a pedestrian priority street as part of the City Cluster Vision. A pedestrian zone on Chancery Lane was proposed in an area wide enhancement scheme in 2010. While not approved at the time this remains an aspiration for the street’s occupiers.

The events also provided the opportunity for engagement with businesses and trialling re-timing of deliveries outside the lunchtime peak.

During the events, public perception surveys were carried out to monitor support for the events, and potential timed closures to enhance the experience of the streets at lunch and for longer periods. Surveys showed strong public support for traffic free environments in both locations. Survey results are provided in Appendix 2. Social and mainstream media coverage was extensive and positive.

We have already been approached by other business groups wishing to organise similar events. The intention is to continue and expand the Lunchtime Streets programme in 2020.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. 'Lunchtime Streets' events are proposed in the City of London Transport Strategy and the Road Danger Reduction and Active Travel Plan 2018.
2. St Mary Axe was selected as the first location as it has a large working community which makes the street very busy with people walking at lunch time.
3. St Mary Axe is also proposed to become a pedestrian priority street in the City Cluster Vision. The event included an exhibition to showcase the plans for the area.
4. The event was also an opportunity to engage with representatives of local employers. The Steering Group, chaired by Henry Colthurst, included representation from Aviva, Leadenhall Building, 30 St Mary Axe, Fitzwilliam House, The Baltic Exchange, St Helen's Church and Hiscox. This group will continue to meet and be expanded to support the delivery of the City Cluster Vision
5. Chancery Lane was selected following a request from the Chancery Lane Association. The street is very busy at lunch time and can experience high traffic levels.
6. The Association strongly supported proposals for a pedestrian zone as part of the 2010 Area Enhancement Strategy. With new high-profile employers such as Framestore and Saatchi & Saatchi moving onto the street, the Association is keen to engage with the City Corporation to work towards improving the public realm.
7. The two events each lasted for three consecutive days, with the streets closed to traffic from 10am – 3pm. Additional seating and greening were installed, with activities such as music, food markets, garden games and bicycle exhibitions taking place between 12 – 2pm. Images from the events can be seen in Appendix 1.
8. We conducted surveys on both street events. The results are very positive. Showing an average of over 90% supporting traffic free lunchtimes. See Appendix 2.

Lessons Learnt

9. Both Lunchtime Streets events were successful, with positive feedback and engagement with employers and workers. They have established a solid platform for further events.

10. There were no reports of negative feedback from local employers about impacts on deliveries. There were no reports of major negative impacts on traffic in neighbouring streets.
11. Some complaints from taxi and delivery drivers were logged, but these were far outweighed by the very strong support on social media from local workers.
12. The media coverage, both print and social, was positive.
13. Construction traffic parking on the St Mary Axe caused issues as the street ran two-way to allow the event to take place. These were quickly resolved by the parking enforcement and construction logistics teams. Complaints about construction traffic parking on Undershaft and St Mary Axe have been on-going and were not specific to the event. The event created a communications channel between employers and the City Corporation and provided an opportunity to highlight and discuss issues that impact the area.
14. We received several complaints from individuals on Chancery Lane due to noise on the third day. This was due to amplified music. In future events music should be acoustic, classical music seems to fit best.

These projects require extensive community and stakeholder engagement throughout the process. This is time consuming for officers, but also an opportunity to engage with businesses about issues like retiming deliveries, safer walking and cycling and delivering the City of London Transport Strategy.

Next steps

15. The intention is to continue and expand the Lunchtime Streets programme in 2020. We have already been contacted by two other business organisations, in addition to those we worked with in 2019, seeking to partner with us to deliver similar events in 2020
16. We will seek to build a funding model and support to increase the number and range of events, with more emphasis on the participation of local employers to support deliver.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

17. The Lunchtime Streets event support the Transport Strategy Proposal 13: Use timed and temporary street closures to help make streets safer and more attractive places to walk, cycle and spend time.
18. We will seek to use the engagement with public and employers to build momentum for the introduction of timed closures to include morning peaks, which would have positive road danger reduction benefits and support the delivery of Vision Zero.

Conclusion

19. The surveys taken during the event show strong support for traffic free streets during lunchtime and other times of the day.
20. Lunchtime Streets provide an excellent tool to engage with business and the public.
21. Given the success of the events, opportunities to continue the programme in 2020 are being explored, including the potential of expanding to more sites.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Images and media from the events
- Appendix 2 – Survey results from St Mary Axe & Chancery Lane Selected

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