

PLANNING circular

PLANNING SYSTEM

Urban Activation Precincts

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Related	

Urban Activation Precincts

The purpose of this circular is to consult with councils, agencies, industry and the community about the proposed Urban Activation Precincts program and associated initiatives.

Introduction

The Urban Activation Precincts program reflects a more strategic approach to urban development. Precincts will deliver more appealing and interconnected urban areas where people will want to live. Urban Activation Precincts will provide potential for a range of housing and jobs that have greater access to public transport and are properly integrated with existing and planned infrastructure.

Future Urban Activation Precincts will be transformative opportunities which:

- Are consistent with State, regional and/or local strategies
- Optimise use of existing and planned infrastructure
- Are important to one or more LGAs and/or supported by council(s)
- Are environmentally, socially and economically sustainable and viable; and
- Are financially viable for development and consistent with market demand.

The program will also aim to provide greater certainty for both the community and landowners regarding the future urban form of a precinct. This will be achieved through development of streamlined code-based assessment processes in appropriate locations.

Guidelines have been released for comment and provide further information (see public exhibition details below).

Supporting initiatives: Precinct Support Scheme and Growth Infrastructure Plans

The Precinct Support Scheme will provide \$50 million financial support for councils that partner in Urban Activation Precincts. The scheme will assist councils to address increased demand for local infrastructure and create high quality urban environments for existing and future residents.

Growth Infrastructure Plans will be used to identify where infrastructure needs to be augmented to support planned growth within Urban Activation Precincts.

Public exhibition details

The guidelines and associated documentation are on exhibition until 4 July 2012. Targeted consultation will also be undertaken. In addition, the Department of Planning and Infrastructure will work with local government on the nomination and identification of precincts that meet the criteria set out in the guidelines.

Further information

Further information on the Urban Activation Precincts program, including copies of the guideline and fact sheets, can be downloaded from the department's website at www.planning.nsw.gov.au/on-exhibition

For further information please contact the Strategic Assessments branch on 9228 6382.

Department of Planning & Infrastructure circulars are available from www.planning.nsw.gov.au/circulars

Authorised by:
Sam Haddad
Director-General

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Precinct Support Scheme for Urban Activation Precincts

INTRODUCTION

The draft Urban Activation Precincts guideline, which is on exhibition until 4 July 2012, refers to the Precinct Support Scheme. This fact sheet provides additional information about this scheme.

ABOUT THE PRECINCT SUPPORT SCHEME

The \$50 million Precinct Support Scheme (PSS) is a NSW Government initiative, announced as part of the 2012-13 budget, which will assist local councils to address increased demand for local infrastructure.

The PSS is available to local councils for infrastructure upgrades required as a result of population growth within Urban Activation Precincts.

Councils that partner in Urban Activation Precincts will be provided payments to fund local infrastructure (both social and economic) that help these communities address pressures arising from population growth in the Urban Activation Precincts.

The benefits of this pilot program include:

- Assisting councils to create high quality urban environments for existing and new residents
- Supporting high-growth council areas to provide local infrastructure upgrades
- Stronger relationships with councils and a growth culture in the community; and
- Providing an opportunity to pilot a support program and consider a broader roll out or alternative options once the review of the NSW planning system is complete.

HOW IS THE AMOUNT OF FUNDING CALCULATED?

The Urban Activation Precinct (UAP) process will estimate expected future development in the relevant precinct. This will include an analysis of market conditions and financial feasibility so that it is

possible to determine the approximate annual dwelling yield for the precinct.

The amount of annual funding will be determined based on the anticipated annual dwelling yield. This will provide certainty for councils regarding the amount of annual funding, allowing them to effectively and efficiently plan and deliver new and upgraded community infrastructure within the UAP precincts. It is proposed to consult further with councils on the scheme's administration. PSS funding will be in addition to local development levies collected in the precinct.

HOW COULD THE SUPPORT SCHEME FUNDING BE SPENT?

Local councils will be given a degree of flexibility to determine what local infrastructure projects the PSS funding is spent on. Local infrastructure will be broadly defined so that it captures the various types of infrastructure a local council may need to provide. Local infrastructure projects could include open space, local roads, traffic calming measures and car parking requirements.

The criteria that will be applied to the funding are firstly that the broad definition of local infrastructure must be met. Secondly, that the funding is spent on projects located within the UAP area. In certain circumstances funds may be permitted to be allocated to partly fund a project outside a UAP where a clear nexus between the project and the UAP growth can be demonstrated.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Go to www.planning.nsw.gov.au or contact the Strategic Assessments branch on 9228 6382

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Growth Infrastructure Plans for Urban Activation Precincts

INTRODUCTION

The draft Urban Activation Precincts guideline, which is on exhibition until 4 July 2012, refers to Growth Infrastructure Plans (GIPs). The purpose of this fact sheet is to provide additional information about GIPs.

ABOUT GROWTH INFRASTRUCTURE PLANS (GIPS)

Traditionally, various infrastructure agencies have had separate budgets, planning process and consequently their own priorities in terms of infrastructure provision. This can cause delays in the timing and delivery of infrastructure and therefore growth. There is a need to provide more certainty and consistency in order to allow efficient planning, priority setting and infrastructure investment.

A Growth Infrastructure Plan (GIP) will be used to identify where infrastructure needs to be augmented to support planned growth within an infill area. Prepared in consultation with local councils and state agencies by the Department of Planning and Infrastructure, the GIP will better align identified needs with forthcoming government agency asset management plans. GIPs will also be used to inform the NSW Government's budget allocation processes.

GIPs will assist with the coordinated delivery of infrastructure in Urban Activation Precincts (UAP). GIPs will be developed to ensure that, as far as possible, the right infrastructure is planned and provided cost effectively in the right location at the right time to support growth.

WHY ARE GIPS REQUIRED FOR INFILL AREAS?

Delivery of infrastructure in a UAP needs to keep pace with housing production and be co-ordinated between agencies. This will ensure housing delivery is not unduly delayed.

Infill development projects create additional demand for a range of state infrastructure services. Augmentation and upgrading of existing services is the most common infrastructure requirement within an infill area development. This can be quite different to the greenfield land release scenario where completely new services or major upgrades are often required to support growth.

Nonetheless, infill areas still require early identification and co-ordination of infrastructure works to support growth.

GIPs will ensure the early identification of infrastructure needs. Combined with other UAP initiatives, GIPs will play a role in ensuring that development within a precinct occurs efficiently and effectively, ensuring appropriate levels of infrastructure are available to existing and new residents.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF GIPS FOR INFILL AREAS?

Benefits include:

- Increased certainty regarding future development yields will allow agencies to use their infrastructure budgets more effectively
- Infrastructure priorities within agencies and between agencies will be more easily identified
- Information contained in GIPs will be used to inform NSW Government decisions on infrastructure provision
- Increased certainty regarding planned infrastructure provision for industry and local councils.

WHAT INFORMATION DOES A GIP CONTAIN?

There are a number of key elements that will form part of each GIP including:

- Basic precinct information
- Anticipated growth

- Projected timeframe for growth
- Short, medium and long term infrastructure delivery requirements to support growth
- Monitoring of growth and delivery requirements.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Department of Planning & Infrastructure website:
www.planning.nsw.gov.au or contact the Strategic Assessments branch on 9228 6382.

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DRAFT NSW Urban Activation Precincts Guideline



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1. Introduction

NSW State Government policy is to substantially increase the supply of housing and employment, improve housing choice and housing affordability. To achieve this objective, it is important that the supply of housing is located in appropriate locations with good access to infrastructure, particularly transport. This applies equally to both Greenfield and infill locations.

The NSW 2021 State Plan states that restoring economic growth is its number one priority. A key task that will support this aim is ensuring that an adequate supply of land for housing and employment is delivered. In order to deliver on the other aims of increasing jobs and population in rural areas it is important that land supply is located not just in urban areas but in key regional locations. Of course, simply providing zoned land will not be enough to deliver on these aims. In order for it to translate into construction and economic activity as well as housing and employment the land has to be located in areas with good access to infrastructure and high amenity.

In order to deliver on the State government's important role in implementing planning policy across NSW it is proposed to implement a program of Urban Activation Precincts. This will involve participation in the preparation of strategic land use plans, which will be important for the successful delivery of the Metropolitan, Regional and Subregional plans, the Transport Master Plan, the supply of housing, employment lands and maximising the State's investment in infrastructure through the integration of transport and land use planning.

A set of criteria will be established so as to orderly and transparently identify these important precincts. However, given their wider importance it is anticipated that while the State will lead the strategic planning, this will be in close cooperation with local government

and other key stakeholders. In all instances, local government will play a key role in the development, implementation and delivery of these important precincts.

A State significant sites program (SSS) was implemented in 2005 as the main vehicle to deliver changes to land use for state and regionally significant sites, including intensification of urban development and associated employment activity. The state government oversaw the rezoning process under that program and listed rezoned sites under a special purpose State planning Policy. Sites commenced under this program are under review to ascertain their consistency with current policy objectives.

The Urban Activation Precincts program is intended to reflect a broader strategic approach consistent with current government policy. The policy and associated processes are based on the following principles

- A strategic precinct based approach (rather than a single site or development)
- Close involvement with local government, at an early stage and throughout the process as an integral partner
- Precincts located in close proximity to existing and planned transport and service infrastructure
- Precincts, zones and development controls that are based on financial viability and affordability, and reflect market demand and investor feasibility.

The updated Sydney Metropolitan plan, regional, subregional strategies and the transport master plan will provide strategic guidance and a framework for the identification of precincts.

2. Urban Activation Precincts

2.1 Overview

Urban Activation Precincts are important areas that the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure (the Minister) considers have a wider social, economic or environmental significance for the community or have redevelopment significance of a scale that is important to implementing the State's planning objectives.

For example, Urban Activation Precincts could facilitate additional housing or jobs on major State government sites, in major urban renewal precincts or facilitate investment in key economic and employment generating precincts across the State, particularly those close to transport infrastructure.

It is important that strategic land use planning for housing and jobs is integrated with existing and planned infrastructure. These areas provide potential for a range of housing and jobs options that have greater access to public transport.

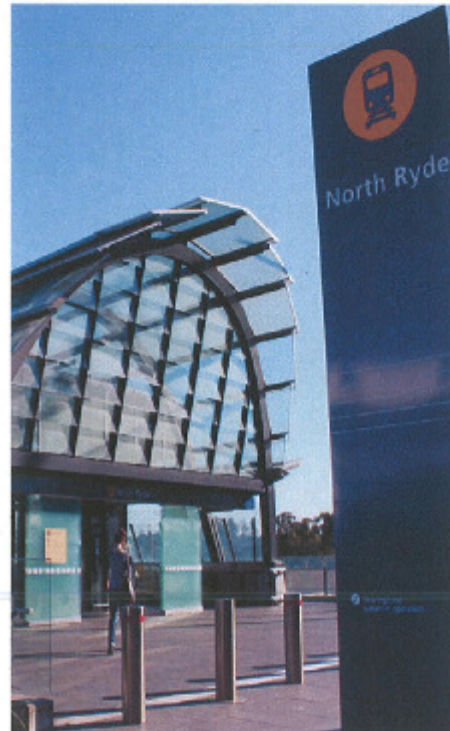


2.2 Criteria for Urban Activation Precincts

Criteria have been established to ensure that Urban Activation Precincts represent the best opportunity to deliver on the States planning aims

Proposals will be assessed against the following criteria to determine their significance to State and/or regional planning objectives:

- *Is the precinct consistent with State, regional and/or local strategies, particularly relating to housing and employment? or*
- *Does the precinct support or maximise the use of existing and planned infrastructure, especially transport? or*
- *Is the precinct important to more than one local government area and/or has support from the local council? and*
- *Is the precinct environmentally, socially and economically sustainable and viable? and*
- *Is the development of the precinct financially viable and consistent with market demand?*



2.3 Precinct Selection

Nominations for potential precincts may come from a number of sources, such as Department of Planning and Infrastructure research and empirical data, and nominations from Councils, State agencies and the private sector. The Department will review all nominations and chair a committee that will provide advice to Government on whether nominated precincts should be investigated. The relevant local Councils will be consulted and their views will be an integral consideration in making a recommendation to Government.

3. Procedures for Urban Activation Precincts

3.1 Overview

The Urban Activation Precincts process places much greater emphasis on community engagement and collaborating with key stakeholders particularly with local government. This is particularly important in the case of local government, being fundamental to the continuing growth and implementation of these precincts.

3.2 Preliminary Consultation

Before a recommendation is made to investigate a precinct, the Department will consult with local Council and State agencies. An interagency committee will be chaired by the Department to review nominations for potential precincts and provide advice to Government on whether they should proceed.

3.3 Working Groups with Local Councils and State Agencies

Working groups will be established to investigate and discuss potential Urban Activation Precincts. Representatives from relevant local councils, Department and State agencies (in particular Transport for NSW), where relevant, will be invited to participate. It is expected working groups will meet regularly during the detailed investigation process.

Working groups will be responsible for input into the outcomes brief and planning study requirements for the Urban Activation Precinct. The outcomes brief will establish overall objectives and targets for the precinct in terms of housing, employment, land use mix, economic, accessibility and infrastructure connections, urban design and the public domain. The study requirements will identify the relevant planning studies to be completed and further requirements for stakeholder engagement and public consultation.



3.4 Planning Studies and Investigation

Detailed planning studies and investigations will generally be required for Urban Activation Precincts.

Depending on the precinct, the planning studies and investigations may need to address:

- The strategic context of the precinct, and relationship to government State, regional or metropolitan planning strategy.
- Constraints and opportunities of the precinct, including environmental, social and economic factors as well as existing characteristics of the area or neighborhood
- Opportunities for increasing housing and employment.
- Financial viability and investor feasibility.
- Access to appropriate transport and service infrastructure
- Infrastructure growth requirements and any proposed contribution arrangements.
- Appropriate land uses and proposed zonings, permitted land uses and development controls.
- Implications of any proposed land use for local and regional land use, infrastructure, service delivery and natural resource planning.
- Growth infrastructure plan that identifies the capacity within the network and required State infrastructure to support planned growth;
- Funding for local government to provide local infrastructure required for the precinct to address pressures arising from population growth;
- Code based assessment framework to enable more streamlined assessment of development within the precinct and to remove unnecessary delays in the delivery of housing approvals.



4. Community Engagement

4.1 Overview

Community engagement is important when investigating potential changes to a precinct. In addition to the formal public exhibition process, community reference groups may also be established where the Department considers it appropriate. These groups should include a broad membership from the local community.

The purpose of these groups will be for representative members of all sections of the community to access information and provide better informed feedback throughout the investigation process. Other community engagement techniques may also be used, tailored to the individual precincts.

4.2 Public Exhibition and Consultation

The Director-General will exhibit the study for a minimum of 30 days with an invitation to the public to make written submissions. The Director-General will send a copy of the study to the working group, relevant Councils and agencies for comment. During the exhibition period stakeholder information sessions will also be held.

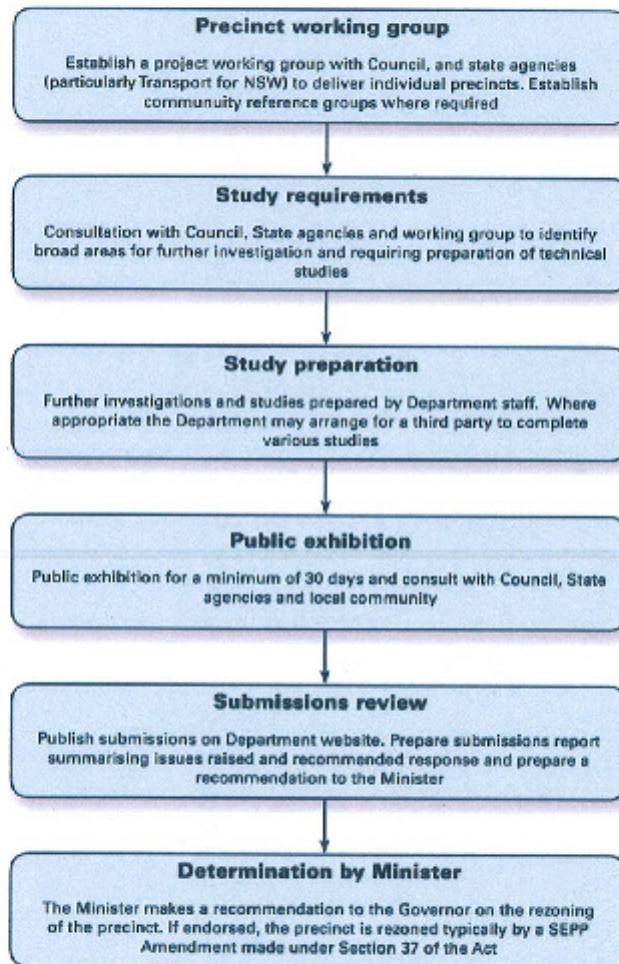
If the proposed planning changes are likely to affect critical habitat or threatened species, populations or ecological communities, the Director-General must formally consult the Director-General of the Office of Environment and Heritage and/or the Director General of the Department of Primary Industries under the provisions of Section 34A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act.

When submissions are received, the Director-General will consider the matters raised and, where relevant, modify the proposal to minimise impacts on the environment or to make it more consistent with State or regional planning objectives. Submissions will also be published on the Department's website.



5. Outline of Process

5.1 Assessment of Urban Activation Precincts



Once the study has been exhibited and all issues raised in submission and by relevant stakeholders have been considered the Director-General will consider the study and the implications of the proposed changes in land use and provide recommendations to the Minister relating to:

- The state or regional planning significance of the precinct,
- The suitability of the site for any proposed land use, including the results of the environmental assessment, and
- The implications of any changes in land use, and
- Potential for streamlining of subsequent development within the precinct through the use of exempt and complying development controls.

The Minister may also seek advice from the Planning Assessment Commission at this crucial stage of the process, this may include public hearings or independent assessment of any aspect of the proposal.

5.2 Determination by Minister

Following the Director-General's assessment, if the Minister decides to proceed with preparing a new statutory framework for the Urban Activation Precinct, a State Environmental Planning Policy will be made that contains the planning framework, zonings and controls for the Precinct including exempt and complying development controls where appropriate. The Minister will also decide the appropriate environmental planning instrument for the new planning framework, such as the LEP or a State policy (SEPP). Following rezoning the LEP or SEPP will be published on the NSW legislation website.

5.3 Outcomes and Delivery

If the State government decides to proceed with rezoning an Urban Activation Precinct, the following policies will assist the delivery of the precinct:

- Growth Infrastructure Plans – identifies capacity within the infrastructure network and outline the infrastructure required to support the planned growth. The GIP would input into the State government's budget allocation process to ensure coordinated delivery of State infrastructure for the precinct.
- Precinct Support Scheme – funding assistance for local government to provide the local infrastructure needed for the precinct. Payments would be based on the estimated dwelling yield for the precinct and would be paid annually over a six year period.

The program will also aim to provide greater certainty for both the community and landowners regarding the future urban form of a precinct. This will be achieved through development of streamlined code based assessment processes in appropriate locations. More information is available in the fact sheets on the Department's website.