

Precinct Planning Guidelines

FOR TASMANIA

These guidelines have been prepared to support a consistent approach to the development of precinct plans in Tasmania.

Context

Precinct planning can help guide the detailed development of areas, consistent with the policies and strategic directions already in place. They set out the finer grained plans for parts of designated growth areas so that they become great places to live, work and study, both today and into the future.

The guidelines have been developed as an initiative under the Hobart City Deal and *Greater Hobart Act 2019*. Informed by the precinct planning work undertaken through those partnerships, the following information has been prepared to guide precinct planning across the State.

Precinct plans set the blueprint for development and investment that will occur over future years – to create diverse, compact and well connected communities that are affordable and plan for opportunities for jobs, infrastructure transport, services and culture.

These guidelines provide supporting information to encourage:

- good land use planning and design outcomes in relation to precincts across the State
- a consistent process for precinct plan preparation
- land use and design standards that meet precinct objectives
- the development of a clear plan/outline for growth and renewal within a precinct to provide long term certainty and flexibility to meet changing needs
- consideration of future infrastructure needs and funding opportunities.

The Central Hobart Precincts Plan, undertaken by Hobart City Council with support from the Tasmanian Government, can be used as a model to better understand existing urban conditions and maximise future opportunities that can be applied to Tasmania more broadly.

Precincts

Precincts can take different forms, and perform various roles and functions.

For example, a precinct may:

- apply to all or part of an activity centre
- comprise a combination of integrated and complementary land uses
- be focussed around significant transport infrastructure or a transport corridor
- be a location identified as suitable for increased residential density.

It is important to have clear objectives for a precinct, as this will determine the purpose, character, complexity and scale of the precinct.

Given the wide variety of potential precincts, discretion will be required to determine the factors under consideration. In addition, precinct plans should also consider the interactions of other actions or strategies, such as housing policies or other strategic or economic development type activities.

Precinct boundary criteria

There are various factors and geographical constraints that can help to define the boundary of a particular precinct.

Some of the factors that influence precinct boundaries include:

- existing strategic targets, directions or plans
- legislative boundaries
- existing land use, zoning and overlays
- existing urban structure
- existing land ownership
- existing built form characteristics
- transition to neighbouring areas
- physical characteristics and features
- existing transport infrastructure
- servicing infrastructure.

Aims of precinct planning

The aim of precinct planning is to plan for a defined path forward for the growth and development of a particular area. This path forward will help facilitate a coordinated and strategic development process for the precinct that is consistent with or set out in higher level policies and strategic plans.

Some of the considerations and eventual outputs from a precinct planning process include:

- spatial arrangements that indicate:
 - the allocation of land uses, open space and public realm,
 - location of utilities infrastructure,
 - access and transport arrangements, including the reservation of corridors,
 - community facilities such as schools, child care and health care,

- design guidelines to inform built form or urban structure
- integration with surrounding areas
- projections of employment or business activity
- desired characteristics
- environmental sustainability objectives
- other items of importance to the region, council / community in respect to the precinct.

The process for precinct planning

The process for precinct planning will reflect the type, form and scale of the precinct, so will vary taking into account the requirements and objectives of the council / community.

It is critical to ensure that any precinct plan is easily and readily integrated into wider area growth and development plans to maintain consistency across multiple projects and areas.

Stakeholder and community engagement

The development of a precinct plan should include a stakeholder engagement plan.

Early, effective and consistent engagement with stakeholders and the community during the precinct planning process is essential to incorporate stakeholder interests in the development stages to ensure the successful delivery of a precinct plan.

The type and level of engagement required will be determined by the shape, form and scale of the precinct.

Early engagement will enable greater understanding of commercial realities, community expectations and State interests. Involvement of a wide range of stakeholders ensures a

planned and coordinated approach to change within a precinct, and provides signals on future direction, which supports future private and public investment within the precinct.

Key stakeholders that may require early engagement include:

- businesses / land owners
- representative organisations for community or business interests
- TasWater
- TasNetworks
- Department of Justice (Planning Policy Unit)
- Department of State Growth
- Department of Communities Tasmania
- Metro Tasmania
- Department of Education
- Department of Health
- Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment

An engagement plan will ensure appropriate levels of engagement at key stages of precinct plan development. This will ensure a smooth and informed transition from planning into implementation. Depending on the scale of the precinct plan, it may be appropriate to convene a reference group or steering committee made up of stakeholder representatives.

Engagement can be undertaken for the entire precinct plan if appropriate, however it can also be focussed on individual issues of interest like road layout, passenger and active transport routes, housing density or car parking, for example.

The form of engagement will depend on whether it is intended to inform, consult, involve, collaborate or empower stakeholders and the community.

The planning process

Step 1: Project planning

Note that the first step should begin with determining whether a precinct plan is the most appropriate mechanism to progress the development or renewal of a particular area.

Once it has been established that a precinct plan will be developed, a comprehensive Project Brief should be drafted that includes, as a minimum, the following:

- project objectives and scope
- precinct boundaries, which are geographically defined and justified
- an engagement plan, to help guide stakeholder consultation and engagement throughout the planning and implementation process
- project governance structures that reflect delivery responsibilities
- resource allocation, across organisations if appropriate, including engagement of consultants
- detailed breakdown of project milestones and overall timeframes.

Step 2: Background research

It is important that relevant data is gathered to help inform the plan. This should, as a minimum, include:

- identifying existing strategies and policies across all three levels of government that might support managing growth and change within the precinct
- clearly identifying the current function of the precinct through analysis of existing population, social, economic, planning, housing, heritage, infrastructure and environmental conditions and issues

- identifying data sources that point to opportunities for growth and development, including population growth, demographic change, economic analysis of commercial trends, urban design, vacant and underutilised land, transport and infrastructure
- identifying planned future infrastructure provision within the precinct through public and private sector investment
- identifying further areas where expert analysis or studies may be required

Regular engagement with relevant government departments and key private sector stakeholders to coordinate effort is advised.

Step 3: Discussion paper

The background research should inform the preparation of a discussion paper that identifies the key issues and opportunities for the precinct.

This document can be used to engage directly with stakeholders and the community on potential change within the precinct.

Aspects that could be included in a discussion paper include:

- project objectives and scope
- a summary of the features, strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats (SWOT) for the precinct
- an understanding of community and stakeholder needs for the precinct
- an analysis of expected changes (eg demographic, economic, planning) over future years and their implications for the precinct
- aspirational targets for housing, retail, commercial, office, education and employment,

taking into account capacity constraints and economic and retail projections

- existing and proposed land use
- existing and proposed urban form based on detailed analysis
- existing public transport network and potential for modal interchanges
- total transport network and mobility options in accessing the precinct, and proposed solutions and support mechanisms to help achieve the stated transport outcomes.

Step 4: Draft precinct plan

The information from the discussion paper, and responses to it, should be used to prepare the draft precinct plan.

The draft precinct plan should articulate the issues and opportunities open to the precinct in light of the factors identified during the background research, development of the discussion paper and stakeholder engagement.

The draft precinct plan should therefore:

- clarify the role and function of the precinct consistent with State or regional planning policies and strategies
- present the detailed analysis that supports growth plans
- consider interrelationships with similar areas within the region
- present a vision for the precinct, based on shared and agreed objectives
- identify where growth and change will be facilitated based on themes or smaller precincts (eg retail, office, housing, mixed zones)

- define the boundaries of the precinct/s to allow sufficient growth based on any State or regional planning policies and strategies
- provide a spatial view of potential development zones, including suitable locations for specific development to help guide future investment
- identify opportunities for a range of housing types and increased residential densities, including flow-on opportunities and impacts for social and physical infrastructure and transport
- incorporate the public transport network and integrated transport plans where relevant
- demonstrate that the precinct plan can support interlinking travel choices, travel behavior change, and an increase in active and public transport usage
- plan to maximise transport access to maintain participation in social and economic activities
- demonstrate that the precinct can accommodate projected requirements for housing, office, social and community infrastructure, retail, entertainment and employment
- provide a detailed implementation plan, including allocation of responsibilities for delivery (see Step 6 Implementation plan).

As outlined, the draft precinct plan should be a collaboration between councils and the Tasmanian Government. Early engagement between local government and state agencies will provide greater scope for collaboration and coordination of planning and future investment in services and infrastructure for the benefit of the precinct, the council area, and the State more broadly.

Note also that the draft plan should be concise, yet sufficiently detailed, to allow for the preparation of

a draft implementation plan including statutory and strategic actions to activate the precinct.

Step 5: Final precinct plan

Stakeholder engagement on the draft precinct plan should inform the final precinct plan, which must:

- comply with any State or regional planning policies and strategies
- provide final positions on the issues and proposals put forward in the discussion paper and draft precinct plan.

Provided that stakeholder engagement has been conducted early and consistently throughout the process, it is likely that council and stakeholders have begun to incorporate the delivery of agreed actions within specific areas of responsibility into their respective strategic planning and infrastructure programs.

Step 6: Implementation plan

The implementation plan is the culmination of the precinct planning process and is critical to ensuring the overall precinct plan can be delivered.

The implementation plan should detail actions and strategies to achieve the precinct plan.

It is likely to be developed and released in parallel to the draft and final precinct plans, but this may not always be possible.

Some considerations in developing an implementation plan include:

- governance framework, to ensure ongoing delivery of the precinct plan actions
- engagement of key stakeholders to ensure delivery of agreed actions
- roles and responsibilities of key delivery partnerships during the life of the precinct

- timeframes and key milestones for implementation
- identification of key transformative projects for prioritisation, as well as smaller projects to ensure quick wins to commence progress
- budget commitments and potential future funding channels where appropriate
- details of any special funding mechanisms
- adoption by key stakeholders into individual corporate and strategic planning frameworks
- details of ongoing community and stakeholder engagement where required
- details of anticipated community development activities to strengthen precinct resilience.

Planning scheme amendments may be required through the statutory planning framework to deliver on the overall vision and objectives of the final precinct plan. If this is the case, the implementation plan should include a section providing appropriate detail on the proposed changes to the planning scheme.

Planning scheme amendments need to be consistent with the existing State and regional policy and strategy settings. If the precinct plan includes aspects that are inconsistent with the relevant settings then early consultation with the Planning Policy Unit in the Department of Justice is required to consider if the plan should proceed.

Step 7: Monitoring and review

The ongoing governance structure outlined in the implementation plan should actively monitor progress towards achieving the vision and objectives of the precinct plan. This includes ensuring that essential data is kept up-to-date over time.

The implementation plan should be reviewed regularly every year in light of data and trend

changes to ensure it remains appropriate to achieve the vision and objectives of the precinct plan.

Further assistance

The Planning Policy Unit in the Department of Justice, and the Department of State Growth will be important Tasmanian Government contact points throughout the precinct planning process.

It is essential that both agencies are engaged early and consistently during the development process so advice can be provided on the consistency of the precinct plan with State planning policy and State infrastructure and transport policy.

Both agencies will provide links to the Tasmanian Government, and cooperation and collaboration between the two levels of government will increase the potential for transformative and productive change within a precinct.

Additional resources

The precinct planning process utilised by Hobart City Council, with the support of the Tasmanian Government, for the *Central Hobart Precincts Plan* provides examples of the process, documentation and collaboration that may be required to undertake a precinct planning process in Tasmania.