

# Memorandum of Understanding:

Between SSROC Councils and NSW Government regarding  
Preparing District Plans and Managing Urban Intensification

## 1. Potential Inclusions to MoU for District Plans

SSROC has set out the expectations of member councils for the preparation and delivery of district (previously subregional) strategies for South, Central and West Central districts. SSROC has developed positions on major policy issues based on the theme:

***“Improving liveability alongside growth and intensification”***

This document suggests inclusions for an agreement among SSROC members and state government partners (ie Greater Sydney Commission, Department of Planning and Environment and other state agencies). They address the goals, approach, methodology and conduct for District Plan formulation and delivery. The fundamental outcome being sought by SSROC Councils is to work together with the State Government to achieve the high level goals below.

Liveability can be broadly defined as the well-being of a community and represents the characteristics that make a place where people want to live now and in the future<sup>1</sup>. It is the sum of the aspects that add up to the quality of life of a place, including its economy, amenity, environmental sustainability, health and wellbeing, equity, education and learning, and leadership<sup>2</sup>.

## 2. Goals

***Agree that any intensification should result in a measurable improvement of the liveability of the district and the particular renewal precinct.***

Adequate infrastructure capacity should be in place to support urban intensification. ‘Capacity’ includes physical infrastructure (and related services) such as for transport - as well as community infrastructure such as open space, playing fields and the availability of affordable housing.

It is acknowledged that the perceptions of what represents adequate capacity differ according to local preferences. These are revealed through the implicit trade-offs residents make choosing to live in an inner or outer suburban area or form of housing.

As many of the infrastructure needs are State concerns there is an expectation that the State Government would collaborate through the district planning process in the early identification, asset planning funding prioritisation, funding and delivery of adequate infrastructure capacity.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.highdensityliveability.org.au/about130\\_liveability\\_research.php](http://www.highdensityliveability.org.au/about130_liveability_research.php)

<sup>2</sup> <http://livable.org.au/index.php?id=12>

It is also expected that precinct scale planning would respond to the more immediate needs of new and existing residents in local areas undergoing intensification. The quality of public spaces, sustainability, walkability, access to transit and a functioning retail, entertainment and community services centre are very important at the precinct scale.

### 3. Scope and Agenda for District Plans

#### ***Agree to accommodate the planning policy agenda recognised by SSROC Councils:***

1. Linking urban intensification with infrastructure capacity for improved amenity:
  - The identification of locations for urban intensification grounded on a planning justification based on current and planned future capacity to accommodate growth while improving liveability.
  - State Government participation in assessing and resolving infrastructure capacity to ensure intensification areas benefit with improved liveability.
  - Ensuring that social infrastructure benchmarks (including for affordable housing, education, health, community services, open space and place making) are developed, measured and met as essential elements of the capacity of an area to accommodate growth.
  - Planning for sufficient quantity and quality of open space, as a key factor for accommodating urban intensification.
  - Providing mechanisms and initiatives to provide more district level open space including playing fields for active recreation
  - Improving walking, cycling and active transport opportunities as key elements of the sustainability, accessibility and liveability improvements expected alongside urban intensification.

*This approach recognises that the funding and provision of affordable housing has equivalent status as other community infrastructure, and should be funded and delivered on the same basis.*

*District Plans should mandate agreed levels of open space provision for strategic renewal areas. District open space planning should complement planning for growth. Improved access to open space should also be pursued. Sydney's Green Grid provides an ideal context for this agenda and offers an opportunity for SSROC members to shape the agenda and future funding of this initiative.*

2. Supporting employment - strategic centres and employment lands:
  - Commitment to planning and infrastructure provision for employment growth in strategic centres.
  - Responding to long term employment land needs.
  - Designation of the relative significance and role of employment land precincts (i.e. metropolitan, district and local).
3. Innovation in energy supply and resource management:
  - Demonstration of innovation in energy supply and waste management in opportunity area planning and intensification to reduce community costs and environmental impacts.

4. Strengthening a 'network' city:
  - Commitment to expand access to opportunity by enhanced cross – radial (or orbital) connectivity including public transport connections to strengthen a network city.
5. Strengthening centres as hubs for local services:
  - Strengthening centres as accessible nodes in the transport network via a sound centres and retail policy.
6. Efficient gateways for ports and freight movement:
  - Commitment to prioritising freight access and movements for Sydney Airport and Port Botany gateways and strategic intermodal facilities.
7. Manage cumulative traffic impacts and parking:
  - Manage the cumulative impacts of major infrastructure (including motorway) projects so that they do not degrade the amenity of local centres and roads, and do not prejudice justified urban intensification opportunities.
  - Parking supply should also reflect the relative accessibility of a location and respond to housing cost and affordability.

***Agree to address the place initiatives recognised by SSROC Councils:***

1. Investigation of urban intensification capacity - in:
  - St George – building on Banksia and Arncliffe Priority Precincts
  - Bankstown rail line corridor station precincts
  - East Hills rail line corridor station precincts
  - Bays Precinct
  - Sydney CBD
2. Sydney airport environs access strategy:
  - Access strategy to manage cumulative transit, road transport, parking and land use issues in Kogarah, Rockdale, Randwick and Botany – within 5km of airport.
3. Regional transit corridors - to better integrate the south and central districts within the metro economy:
  - Hurstville – Bankstown – Parramatta (linking the south with the growing economic focus of Sydney's second CBD)
  - Hurstville – Strathfield / SYDNEY OLYMPIC PARK – Macquarie Park (further connecting the south with Sydney's Global Economic Corridor)
  - Caringbah/Miranda – KSA Airport (strengthening capacity of a congested link - transit solutions for investigation include the F6 corridor and extension of Metro Rail to Hurstville.)
  - Anzac Parade – Green Square (recognising the importance of a cross radial (orbital) link avoiding CBD congestion)
  - Greenway – active transport corridor link: Cooks River to Iron Cove – walking, cycling and landscape initiative involving Ashfield, Canterbury, Marrickville and Leichhardt councils

## 4. Planning for Intensification

### ***Agree to a shared process for identifying, measuring capacity, funding and delivering infrastructure and planning and approving precinct development***

The process for identifying and delivering urban renewal precincts should be transparent and enable proactive council and community involvement. It would involve the application of agreed best practice methodology for assessing capacity and for identifying precincts for urban intensification at key nodes (and identification of new centres). This may include collaboration on the development of best practice guidelines for urban renewal. The key stages are set out in the diagram in Appendix A and include:

1. Nomination of candidate housing (and employment) renewal precincts using council housing strategies.
2. Collaboration on the development and application of best practice guidelines for urban renewal addressing:
  - housing and employment demand supply assessments.
  - urban capacity for intensification, covering housing and employment uses.
  - travel demand, mode share and parking policy benchmarks.
  - benchmark metrics for liveability and sustainability and ensuring timely and coordinated community infrastructure (including open space, education and affordable housing).
3. Participation in outline structure planning for candidate precincts, including:
  - preliminary (state and local) infrastructure appraisal.
  - market appraisal assessment (eg using the Urban Feasibility Model).
4. Investigation and classification of the metropolitan, district and local (contestable) significance of employment lands.
5. Determination of immediate (or long term) priority for short listed renewal precincts.
6. Detailed structure planning of immediate priority renewal precincts, leading into:
  - Preparation and negotiation of Growth Infrastructure Plans for the nature and timing of state infrastructure to support growth.
  - Funding for state infrastructure and developer contributions strategy for local infrastructure (s94 / VPAs).
  - Amendment of LEP and other development controls.
  - Place making and economic development innovations to support growth and increase amenity.

## 5. Adoption of Liveability Benchmarks

***Agree to support a clearly defined targets and benchmarks on the key components that define liveability***

Develop a common methodology for determining the appropriate level of community infrastructure to maintain acceptable standards of liveability for urban renewal precincts. This would involve an SSROC / NSW Government working group designing and adopting a process for:

1. Benchmarking the provision of open space, affordable housing, key community infrastructure and services (including schools, community and health facilities) for population growth.
2. Recognising sustainability is a key component of liveability as it relates to walkability, habitat, vegetation, efficient use of resources and climate change mitigation and adaptation.
3. Measuring existing levels of service and their capacity to absorb growth from across the District.
4. Establishing where augmentation of community services is cost effective or where growth should be diverted.
5. Developing an integrated local and State Government investment strategy linked to the timing of urban intensification for the augmentation of cost effective community services.

It is noted that residents of different districts and demographic and socio-economic groupings make trade-offs to balance their liveability ideals with other values in different ways. Measures of liveability will need to respect different perceptions of what represents a good liveability in different situations.

## 6. Allocation of roles in urban intensification precincts - Precinct governance

***Agree to engaging councils in urban intensification projects adapting a governance model along the lines of that applied for the Parramatta Road UGNSW Local and State Government Partnering Agreement.***

This involves allocation by DPE/GSC of leadership and coordination roles for delivery of key precincts among UrbanGrowth NSW, councils and State planning and infrastructure agencies based on the strengths and capabilities of each agency.

The model would involve:

1. joint State / local government staffed project management office
2. secondments of council officers to the project team

3. joint workshop / charrette opportunities at key stages – involving senior representatives of state infrastructure agencies

## 7. Framework for investment: State / Local infrastructure prioritisation

***Agree to an approach for prioritising necessary state growth infrastructure via a District 'Growth Infrastructure Plan' linked to each District Plan.***

Framework for integration of state infrastructure agency and council investment planning for District growth priorities, involving:

1. Identification of district scale infrastructure needs set out via population, dwelling and employment planning via District Plans being linked to infrastructure delivery agencies asset planning processes.
2. Identification of precinct scale infrastructure needs set out via outline precinct structure plans – embedded within District Strategies.
3. Establishment of a growth infrastructure investment prioritisation process across state government which responds to the District Plans (and the embedded precinct structure plans).
4. SSROC Councils would link planning progress and local infrastructure funding and provision (with these identified priorities) via complementary Community Strategic Plans and Asset Strategies.

## 8. Value capture

***Establishing value capture arrangements to fund provision and/or improvement of local infrastructure.***

Under these arrangements, the developer voluntarily offers to pay a monetary contribution to Councils above and beyond Section 94/94A contributions, and/or provide material public benefits, in exchange for additional floorspace over and above the maximum floors space stipulated in the Local Environmental Plan. The additional development would result in increased land values as well as greater demand for local infrastructure and facilities. The community should be entitled to a share of the financial benefit from the additional development.

## 9. Gateway / planning proposals

***Agreement that the gateway process operates to facilitate planning proposals that are 'District Plan consistent' and prevent an outbreak of spot rezonings inconsistent with the adopted strategy.***

SSROC councils with GSC/ DPE would develop a process to incentivise planning proposals that were advancing specific District Plan priorities supported by integrated infrastructure investment plans.

## 10. Advocacy and Collaboration

### ***Ensure integrated planning among adjoining districts.***

SSROC councils with GSC/DPE would develop a process to ensure across boundary issues and the cumulative effects of other District Plans are addressed in each District Plan and the structure planning for intensification precincts.

### ***Support a Council of Mayors to direct council political engagement in the District planning process***

The Greater Sydney Commission will be governed by a commissioner, three specialist commissioners (Social, Environment and Economic) and six District Commissioners corresponding to each former subregion of Sydney. The District Commissioners would not be political representatives but would be advocates for the issues and concerns of each region.

While SSROC Councils would relate with their District Commissioners, the SSROC councils have expressed support for a Council of Mayors (involving all councils in the District) to direct council political engagement in the District planning process. South East Queensland<sup>3</sup> has a successful model for engagement in regional planning processes which has delivered a powerful and consistent growth planning agenda with State Government for the SEQ Regional Plan. A Council of Mayors (supported by technical officers) would be a suitable forum to engage on the trade-offs on growth targets among centres across LGAs in the region. They would be in position to inform the Commission on the positions of Councils on strategic issues.

## 11. Community Involvement

### ***Adopt a community participation charter and schedule for community involvement in key urban intensification planning decisions.***

### ***State Government collaboration with SSROC Councils (applying this charter) in the design of community involvement for new urban intensification investigation precincts.***

Councils and State Government share the responsibilities for enabling strong community involvement in District Plans. However, specific arrangements for community involvement (eg Bays Precinct and Parramatta Road) need to be developed as new precincts are put forward for investigation for intensification. Council involvement in the early planning of precinct engagement strategies is essential for a long term successful outcome.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.councilofmayorsseq.qld.gov.au/About/>

## Appendix A: Potential Framework for SSROC Council Collaboration on Urban Intensification Precincts

