

South Australia's Planning Policy

fact sheet

Overview

The Department of Planning and Local Government (DPLG) is reforming the state's planning policies with the aim of making it easier for councils to align their Development Plans with the South Australian Planning Strategy.

The changes include five new zone modules to guide key aspects of *The 30-Year Plan for Greater Adelaide*—particularly the growth of new neighbourhoods, targeted infill around corridors and public transport services, and growth of employment lands—and a complete updating of the library's existing policies to better reflect the Planning Strategy.

The reform process is being undertaken in two stages during 2011. Once finalised, the changes will result in a new planning policy library (to be consolidated in December 2011).

The new library builds upon the Better Development Plans (BDP) project, which began in 2007. This project introduced the concept of planning modules to help standardise and streamline planning policies and the Development Plan format across the state.

The new library will lead to more efficient and consistent Development Plans and greater certainty for local governments, communities and industry. This will help secure housing affordability and underpin the competitiveness of the state's economy in the long term.



Key features of the policy reforms

- **A new policy approach**—positive and enabling zoning policies that deliver permissibility, giving communities and investors confidence about where certain forms of development will be allowed.
- **Innovative zoning approaches**—incentives to encourage innovative development proposals (for example, in infill areas, policy to encourage the provision of affordable housing, roof top gardens or the amalgamation of allotments to achieve better design outcomes) and emphasis on the design of buildings and the way buildings contribute to creating attractive places for people to live, work and shop. Policy can also maximise the range of uses for innovative developments, encouraging a mix of compatible land uses.
- **Streamlining and reducing complexity**—a new framework to simplify the zoning system by supporting a staged reduction in the number of zones used in each Development Plan (in consultation with councils).
- **Local adoption and variation**—a clearer framework to apply specific policies at the local level to preserve opportunities to build on local character and heritage. The decision about which zones and policies to apply will be the primary way to address local circumstances and reflect local character. There will be some capacity to vary specified zone and/or general provisions within defined parameters based on appropriate planning investigations that demonstrate a clear link to the Planning Strategy.

Consultation and testing

DPLG is seeking feedback on the new and updated policies from all councils in South Australia, as well as other state government agencies and key industry groups. The consultation with councils will include workshops and other opportunities to provide input and comments on specific changes.

As part of the consultation process, DPLG is partnering with the Integrated Design Commission SA on an initiative to 'design test' selected zone modules. This is an alternative method of reviewing the draft policy through the eyes of designers, who will ultimately translate the policy into the buildings and spaces it aims to deliver.

The testing will be undertaken by architectural consultants, based on briefs for typical building types and real sites that are relevant to the modules. They will test the modules' ability to promote good design by developing two options for each brief: a policy-driven approach involving a close interpretation of the draft policies; and a more intuitive and design-led approach for comparison. The testing will be on a conceptual level, focusing on building envelope implications on quality design rather than a detailed design. The results will be shared with councils and other stakeholders and will be used to refine the zone modules.

Two-stage reform program

The policy reforms will be undertaken in two stages, as follows.

Stage one: zone modules and related general provisions

The completion of new zone modules is a priority to help councils implement structure plans and consider infill development projects as early as possible in 2011. The consultation on these modules and related general provisions therefore takes place in stage one.

The proposed zone modules are as follows:

- **Urban Core Zone**—allows a combination of major land-use types, such as residential, retail, office, commercial and civic uses, for application in compact and higher-density growth or regeneration areas.
- **Urban Neighbourhoods Zone**—supports new forms of residential and related development in new growth areas and on larger infill development sites at moderate densities. It provides for compatible neighbourhood-scale activity centre development.
- **Urban Corridor Zone**—supports an innovative mix of higher density urban development along strategic growth corridors (fixed rail or road). The focus is on land that abuts the transit corridor.
- **Urban Employment Zone**—a single employment zone supporting a more flexible regulatory arrangement for employment-generating land. This zone accommodates a range of uses and activities that provides maximum flexibility and allows land use to adapt to changing labour market requirements without a rezoning process.
- **Suburban Activity Node Zone**—supports a range of medium and high density dwelling forms supported by a mix of compatible land uses around a key focal points, such as a fixed transit stop, activity centre or high quality open space. This zone promotes well-designed and functional mixed use areas with a walkable urban form, pedestrian- and cyclist-friendly streetscapes and active streets.

Stage one schedule:

- Release of proposed zone modules and general provisions in draft form: 1 February
- Consultation and design testing: 1 February to 11 March
- Workshops with councils: February
- Written feedback from councils: requested by 14 March
- Finalisation of modules and provisions: mid-2011

Stage two: review and updating of the planning policy library

DPLG will review and update the remaining policies and related general provisions in the current policy library to align with the Planning Strategy during stage two. A key part of this work will be steps towards reducing the number of urban development zones, as recommended in the Planning and Development Review 2007.

Stage two schedule:

- Release of the remaining policies and general provisions in draft form: October 2011
- Consultation period: six weeks
- Finalisation/incorporation into new library: December 2011

Integration of the policy modules into Development Plans

The new and updated policy modules will be consolidated into a new policy library, which will be gazetted as required under the *Development Act 1993*. All councils in South Australia will therefore be required to use the new library when revising their Development Plans to achieve alignment with the Planning Strategy, as required under section 30 of the Act. The policy modules will become part of Development Plans through Development Plan Amendments (DPAs).

As part of this process, councils must prepare Strategic Directions Reports describing the actions needed to achieve specific targets and the proposed DPAs needed to facilitate zoning changes.

Councils in Greater Adelaide are required to align their Development Plans with *The 30-Year Plan for Greater Adelaide* by February 2013. To achieve this, councils are requested to prioritise those DPAs that aim to support the directions and targets of the Plan for Greater Adelaide. They must also ensure that any new Statements of Intent (SOIs) demonstrate the strategic importance of the proposed DPAs in relation to the Plan for Greater Adelaide and identify the policy modules to be adopted in the DPAs.

DPLG is timing the finalisation and release of the new modules and updated policy library to align with the preparation and completion of councils' Strategic Directions Reports. Councils will therefore be able to identify in their subsequent SOIs and DPAs which of the new and updated policy modules will be adopted into their Development Plans.

Ongoing review and implementation

As part of the reform process, DPLG is developing a formal process for reviewing and implementing the policy library on an ongoing basis. This process will involve consultation with councils and other key stakeholders regarding areas for improvement.

For further information

If you have any questions about planning policy reform, please contact Anita Allen, Team Leader—Policy, Strategic Policy, on 8303 0761 or email anita.allen@sa.gov.au.

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