Driving change in our capital city

The Minister for Planning recently approved an amendment to the Adelaide (City) Development Plan that introduces new planning policies for the city.

The policies will provide a sound platform for development, attract investment and stimulate more activity and vibrancy in the heart of the city and around the Adelaide Park Lands.

For example, they allow for changes in building heights, a greater mix of uses (housing, shops, cafes, restaurants and offices), more vibrant main streets and better defined boulevards and activation of the city squares. They also allow for innovative developments on large ‘catalyst sites’ that will stimulate more vibrant neighbourhoods around them.

The reforms came into effect on a temporary (interim) basis from 28 March 2012 while feedback was sought from the community. In response to community concerns, the Minister revised the amendment to:

- introduce additional policy measures
- strengthen some existing policies
- adjust several planning procedures.

The reforms are complemented by:

- a new regulation requiring all development projects in the city over $10 million to be reviewed by the State Government Architect and an expert design panel in order to promote high-quality, innovative design and buildings that are better connected with their surroundings
- initiatives to revitalise under-utilised laneways and buildings to create a more bustling city environment, such as the trial closure of Leigh Street to through traffic
- existing investment in major infrastructure projects such as the Adelaide Oval, the Adelaide Convention Centre, the Riverbank Precinct and the new Royal Adelaide Hospital.

Since the reforms were introduced in March, $1.2 billion worth of private development projects have been proposed, which includes four projects worth $256 million that have been approved by the Development Assessment Commission (the planning authority for the City of Adelaide for projects over $10 million).
What were the interim amendment changes?

The approved amendment confirms policy changes in several strategic areas:

> O’Connell Street – 6 storeys south of Tynte plus catalyst sites*
> Rundle Street – street face character retained with 6 to 12 storeys setback
> Hindley Street – 6 storeys at street face with 15 storeys setback
> Gouger Street – 6 storeys at street face with 15 storeys setback
> Southern squares – rezone with a height limit of 8 storeys plus catalyst sites*
> Hutt Street and East Terrace - catalyst sites in the main street (Hutt) and residential (East Tce) zones
> South Terrace west of Pulteney Street – rezone with a height limit of 10 storeys plus catalyst sites*
> Mixed Use Areas – increase building heights

* Catalyst sites are large sites, in main street zones and zones fronting the park lands, where innovative development will encourage more vibrant surrounding neighbourhoods.

What are the post consultation changes?

The additional changes resulting from consultation on the interim amendment include:

> **a new vision** for the city that better reflects *The 30-Year Plan for Greater Adelaide* and sets long term aspirations
> **increased public notification requirements** for development on catalyst sites and at the interface between medium-to-high rise development and low-rise residential or historic conservation zones
> **earlier community engagement** via the pre-lodgement process for development on catalyst sites and at the interface between medium-to-high rise development and low-rise residential zones
> **more focus on contextual design** by emphasising building context in desired character statements and zone policies, particularly for development that exceeds guideline building heights and other parameters
> **better treatment of the interface** between medium-to-high rise development and low-rise residential and historic conservation zones to manage issues such as traffic, noise, overshadowing, and massing and building proportions
> **new procedures for local heritage** in the areas affected by the DPA (not including residential areas or historic conservation zones), including merit-based policies limiting demolition to where a heritage place no longer adequately represents its heritage value
> **exemptions to minimum building heights** to allow for lower heights in compliance with airport regulations, at the interface with residential areas or heritage places, and where a damaged building must be replaced; for example, building heights are lowered in parts of West Terrace in response to airport constraints and around Wright Street in response to resident concerns
> **better access to sunlight** along footpaths in Hindley, Rundle and Gouger streets
> **a better balance of daytime, evening and late night activities** across the city so that they complement one another
> **appropriate location of adult venues** away from city squares, park lands fronting on South and East terraces, and Sturt-Halifax, O’Connell and Melbourne streets
> **zoning changes** to include Wright Street and a small area around it in the Main Street Adelaide Zone with lower building heights (reduced from 43m to 22m), and to realign a small boundary along O’Connell Street.
Key changes resulting from consultation

Wright Street:
> rezoning to allow lower building heights south of the street (reduced from 43m to 22m)

In the south east area:
> catalyst site development must better reflect the local context
> increased public notification requirements
> earlier community engagement

In the south west area:
> better treatment of interface between medium-to-high rise development and low-rise residential
> increased public notification requirements
> earlier community engagement

The new planning policies allow:
- Taller, better designed buildings and more public spaces
- A better mix of housing, shops, cafes, restaurants and offices
- More vibrant main streets
- Better defined boulevards
- Greater use of squares
- More active park lands
- Adaptable student housing
- Innovative developments
About the consultation process

Consultation on the amendment took place from 28 March until 1 June 2012 and was conducted by the Development Policy Advisory Committee (DPAC), an independent statutory committee that provides advice to the Minister on planning and development issues.

A total of 52 submissions were received, including 6 from councils, 13 from State Government agencies and 33 from the public and business sector. The submissions can be viewed:

> online at www.sa.gov.au/planning/ministerialdpas or
> by visiting the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure offices, 136 North Terrace, Adelaide, during office hours.

A public meeting was held on 27 June 2012. Twenty-five verbal submissions were made in support of the written submissions.

The Minister revised the amendment on the basis of DPAC’s report on the consultation and recommendations. Notice of the Minister’s approval of the final amendment was given in the South Australian Gazette on 25 October 2012. The approved amendment can be viewed:

> online at www.sa.gov.au/planning/ministerialdpas or
> by visiting the Department at the address above.

About development plan amendments

Development plans contain the planning controls that guide what can and cannot be developed in council areas. Planning authorities use these planning controls to assess development proposals.

A development plan amendment, often called a DPA, is a document that describes proposed changes to a development plan.

DPAs must be prepared according to certain processes set out by legislation (the Development Act 1993 and associated regulations). They may be undertaken by councils or, under circumstances identified in section 24 of the Act, by the Minister for Planning. The Capital City DPA was undertaken by the Minister.