This fact sheet provides advice to practitioners, proponents and local government about how and when community engagement during the precinct planning process under the Urban Renewal Act 1995 should occur.

What is community engagement?

Better Together: Principles of Engagement is the State Government’s guide to engaging communities and stakeholders. It defines engagement as the practice of actively bringing community voices into decisions that affect or interest them.

Better Together uses the IAP2\(^1\) Public Participation Spectrum as its basis to clearly define the level of participation people have in the decision-making process. The spectrum shows that differing levels of engagement are legitimate depending on the goals, timeframes, resources and levels of concern in the decision to be made. Most importantly, the spectrum sets out the commitment being made to the public at each engagement level and helps with transparency.

The IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum has five levels of engagement with increasing levels of participation and impact by the community:

- **Inform**
  
  To provide the community with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.

- **Consult**
  
  To obtain community feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.

- **Involve**
  
  To work directly with the community throughout the process to ensure community concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.

- **Collaborate**
  
  To partner with the community in each aspect of the decision, including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.

- **Empower**
  
  To place final decision-making in the hands of the community.

---

\(^1\) International Association for Public Participation
What community engagement is required?

A key feature of the Urban Renewal Act 1995 (the Act) is its approach to community engagement. While the legislation sets out minimum requirements for consultation, it has been specifically designed to encourage innovative and creative approaches to community engagement that are tailored to the specific needs of each precinct.

Importantly, the Act allows the proponent to identify the community engagement proposed as part of the business case, which is provided to initiate the precinct planning process. This is in the form of a high-level ‘engagement strategy’, which will play an important role through the planning and implementation of the declared precinct.

The engagement strategy will be an important part of the consideration of the Minister for Housing and Urban Development (the Minister) in choosing to declare a precinct. Further, in declaring a precinct the Minister may also prescribe additional statutory engagement requirements.

What are the key steps?

The Act has the following statutory steps that must be undertaken in respect to engagement:

- The proponent prepares a business case which includes an engagement strategy plan.

- The Minister must consult with the relevant council(s) and the Minister for Planning on the business case. The Planning Minister may seek the advice of the Development Policy Advisory Committee.

- If a proposed precinct includes land that is part of the Adelaide Park Lands, the Adelaide Park Lands Authority must agree to its declaration as a precinct.

- The Minister declares the precinct and may set out any specific community engagement requirements, including:
  - composition of panels
  - how panels may assist in engagement
  - whether a public meeting is required for a precinct master plan
  - specific requirements for precinct implementation plans.

- The business case and a report by the Minister to the Environment Resources and Development Committee of the Parliament (ERDC) on the reasons for declaring a precinct must be published.

- The Minister may seek the advice of the Development Assessment Commission (DAC), whose advice must be published.

- The precinct authority sets up a community reference panel, a design review panel and any other panel considered necessary.

- The precinct authority engages with established panels and any councils or government agencies with a direct interest in the preparation of a precinct master plan or precinct implementation plan.

- The precinct authority releases a draft precinct master plan for consultation through a public notice and a public meeting may be held at the end of the consultation process, if required by the Minister – this is the minimum requirement and additional engagement is encouraged.

- The precinct authority must undertake such consultation on a precinct implementation plan as the Minister deems to be necessary.
• Following consultation on a precinct master plan or precinct implementation plan the precinct authority must submit a consultation report to the Minister and the Minister for Planning. The Minister may seek the advice of DAC on that report. The consultation report and any advice from DAC are published.

• Adopted precinct master plans and precinct implementation plans must be published.

• A report by the Minister to the ERDC on the adoption of a precinct implementation plan must be published.

• The precinct authority must engage with the relevant council(s) on any acquisition of precinct powers that are traditionally the council’s responsibility.

Why engage the community?

Engagement with communities and residents is an essential part of the planning system and provides opportunities for the community to share their views on how an area grows and evolves in a constructive way.

The Act requires, at a minimum, the community to be consulted at key stages of the precinct planning process. However, there are real benefits in engaging with the community early, and while planning for the precinct is still evolving – an informed community is more likely to have confidence in, and therefore support the precinct planning process.

There are also opportunities for a precinct authority to consider engagement at the ‘involve’ or even ‘collaborate’ levels (under the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum) at certain stages of the precinct planning process. The community reference panel may, if used effectively, help the precinct authority in this regard.

The benefits of engaging the community include:

• allowing local knowledge, values and priorities to be considered

• providing the community with a better understanding of the proposed development of the precinct

• building a rapport within the community which may increase overall support for the project

• taking a ‘no surprises approach’ that reduces the risk of possible delays during the final stages of the precinct process.

• creating greater opportunity for the community to be involved in the process of precinct development.

Why engage with council and statutory bodies?

It is important to engage with affected local governments and state agencies during the planning of a declared precinct. This is particularly important where agreement is needed on the delivery and ongoing maintenance of infrastructure and services.

What does an engagement strategy look like?

A draft engagement strategy should be provided with the business case that includes the following information:

• Engagement objectives and scope
  These should be measurable, achievable, accessible and realistic.

• Who will be engaged
  Consider geography, interest groups, industry bodies, state agencies, local government, etc noting that not all stakeholders will need to be engaged at the same level.

• Community reference panel
  Define how the panel will be established, who will be on the panel, and how the panels may assist in the engagement process.
• **The process for engagement**

Provide the reasons for engagement with the community, including consideration of various levels of engagement, and engagement tools, materials and methods.

• **Negotiable/non-negotiable outcomes and goals**

Clarify what aspects of the proposal are negotiable and non-negotiable.

• **Reporting and Feedback**

Describe how community feedback will be received and incorporated into the planning and development of the project, and detail how this will be fed back to the community.

• **Timing and budget**

The engagement strategy should remain a flexible document that can be reviewed and modified to adapt to changing circumstances. Engagement should have a defined budget that reflects the extent of engagement proposed.

The engagement strategy should be reviewed and endorsed by the community reference panel.

---

### Further information


For further information on precinct planning and the Act please contact the Growth Areas Team at the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure or visit the website:

- **Phone:** (08) 8303 0760
- **Email:** DPTI.PDgrowthareas@sa.gov.au
- **Mail:**
  - Growth Areas Team
  - Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure
  - GPO Box 1533
  - Adelaide SA 5001


The website includes a full suite of fact sheets prepared about the precinct planning process and includes information on declared precincts, including key documents required to be published under the Act.

- **Fact sheet 1 | Overview of the precinct planning process**
- **Fact sheet 2 | What does precinct planning mean for councils?**
- **Fact sheet 3 | What are panels and how are they established?**
- **Fact sheet 4 | How to prepare a precinct master plan**
- **Fact sheet 5 | How to prepare a precinct implementation plan**
- **Fact sheet 6 | Community engagement**

Also refer to *Design Guidance Note 1.1.3 Master Plans* (March 2014) from the Office of Design and Architecture SA, which is also available on the website.