



**The Hon Brad Hazzard MP**  
Minister for Planning and Infrastructure  
Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW

12/17412

Mr Scott Phillips  
General Manager  
Hornsby Shire Council  
PO Box 37  
HORNSBY NSW 1630

Dear Mr Phillips,

**Epping Town Centre Urban Activation Precinct**

I am pleased to advise that the NSW Government has declared the Epping Town Centre as one of Sydney's first Urban Activation Precincts. This is an excellent opportunity to provide for growth in appropriate locations whilst ensuring the provision of necessary infrastructure (as required) and high quality urban environments to support the growth.

The Department of Planning and Infrastructure (the Department) will coordinate the UAP program for the Epping Town Centre Precinct, and is looking forward to working with your council to progress the precinct investigations.

A key component of the joint working arrangements between the Department and Council will be the establishment of an Epping Town Centre Steering Committee. The role of the committee will be to receive updates on the precinct investigations and provide advice to the project team. More importantly, it will facilitate the active involvement of elected representatives in the UAP processes.

I invite you to nominate two councillors and two members of staff to be members of the Steering Committee, which will be chaired by a representative of the Department.

As part of the joint working arrangements the Department will also be liaising with your staff regarding the continuation of the Agency Working Group, and establishment of a Community Reference Group, which will also be chaired by a representative of the Department.

I have enclosed a copy of the UAP guideline and fact sheets for your information.

It would be appreciated if you can advise Michael File, Director, Strategic Assessment at the Department of Planning and Infrastructure of your Steering Committee nominations within 2 weeks from the date of this letter. If you have any further enquiries Michael can be contacted on 9228 6407 or by email [michael.file@planning.nsw.gov.au](mailto:michael.file@planning.nsw.gov.au).

Yours sincerely

**HON BRAD HAZZARD MP**  
Minister

RECEIVED

12 NOV 2012

RECORDS

7 NOV 2012

# NSW Urban Activation Precincts Guideline



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Department of Planning and Infrastructure

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# 1. Introduction

NSW State Government policy is to substantially increase the supply of housing and employment, and improve housing choice and affordability. To achieve this objective, it is important that the supply of housing is located in appropriate locations with good access to infrastructure, particularly transport. This applies equally to both greenfield and infill locations.

The NSW 2021 State Plan states that restoring economic growth is its number one priority. A key task that will support this aim is ensuring that an adequate supply of land for housing and employment is delivered. In order to deliver on the other aims of increasing jobs and population in rural areas, it is important that land supply is located not just in urban areas but in key regional locations. Of course, simply providing zoned land will not be enough to deliver on these aims. In order for it to translate into construction and economic activity as well as housing and employment the land has to be located in areas with good access to infrastructure and high amenity.

In order to deliver on the State government's important role in implementing planning policy across NSW, it is proposed to implement a program of Urban Activation Precincts. This will involve participation in the preparation of strategic land use plans, which will be important for the successful delivery of the Metropolitan, regional and subregional plans, the Transport Master Plan, the supply of housing, and employment lands, and maximising the State's investment in infrastructure through the integration of transport and land use planning.

A set of criteria have been established so as to orderly and transparently identify these important precincts. However, given their wider importance, it is anticipated that while the State will lead the strategic planning, this will be in close cooperation with local government

and other key stakeholders. In all instances, local government will play a key role in the development, implementation and delivery of these important precincts.

A State significant sites program (SSS) was implemented in 2005 as the main vehicle to deliver changes to land use for state and regionally significant sites including intensification of urban development and associated employment activity. The State government oversaw the rezoning process under that program and listed rezoned sites under a special purpose State Planning Policy. Sites commenced under this program are under review to ascertain their consistency with current policy objectives.

The Urban Activation Precincts program is intended to reflect a broader strategic approach consistent with current government policy. The policy and associated processes are based on the following principles:

- A strategic precinct-based approach (rather than a single site or development)
- Close involvement with local government at an early stage and throughout the process as an integral partner
- Precincts located in close proximity to existing and planned transport and service infrastructure
- Precincts, zones and development controls that are based on financial viability and affordability, and reflect market demand and investor feasibility.

The updated Sydney Metropolitan plan, regional and subregional plans and the Transport Master Plan will provide strategic guidance and a framework for the identification of precincts.

## 2. Urban Activation Precincts

### 2.1 Overview

Urban Activation Precincts are important areas that the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure considers have a wider social, economic or environmental significance for the community or have redevelopment significance of a scale that is important to implementing the State's planning objectives.

Precincts are envisaged as being larger areas, usually made up of multiple land-holdings. They will be capable of delivering significant additional growth and require coordination from State and local government to realise their potential.

For example, Urban Activation Precincts could facilitate additional housing or jobs on major State government sites, in major urban renewal precincts or facilitate investment in key economic and

employment generating precincts across the State, particularly those close to transport infrastructure.

It is important that strategic land use planning for housing and jobs is integrated with existing and planned infrastructure. These areas provide potential for a range of housing and jobs options that have greater access to public transport.



## 2.2 Criteria for Urban Activation Precincts

Criteria have been established to ensure that Urban Activation Precincts represent the best opportunity to deliver on the State's planning aims.

Proposals will be assessed against the following criteria to determine their significance to State and/or regional planning objectives:

- *Is the precinct consistent with a State, regional or local strategy, particularly relating to housing, employment or urban renewal?*
- *Does the precinct support or maximise the use of existing and planned infrastructure, especially transport?*
- *Is the precinct important to more than one local government area and/or has support from the local council?*
- *Is the precinct environmentally, socially and economically sustainable and viable?*
- *Is the development of the precinct financially viable and consistent with market demand?*

The criteria are an overall measure of the significance of a nominated precinct. There is no specific number of criteria that need to be met and compliance with all criteria, whilst desirable, is not mandatory.

## 2.3 Precinct Nomination and Selection

Nominations for potential precincts may come from a number of sources, such as Department of Planning and Infrastructure research and empirical data, and nominations from councils, State agencies and the private sector.

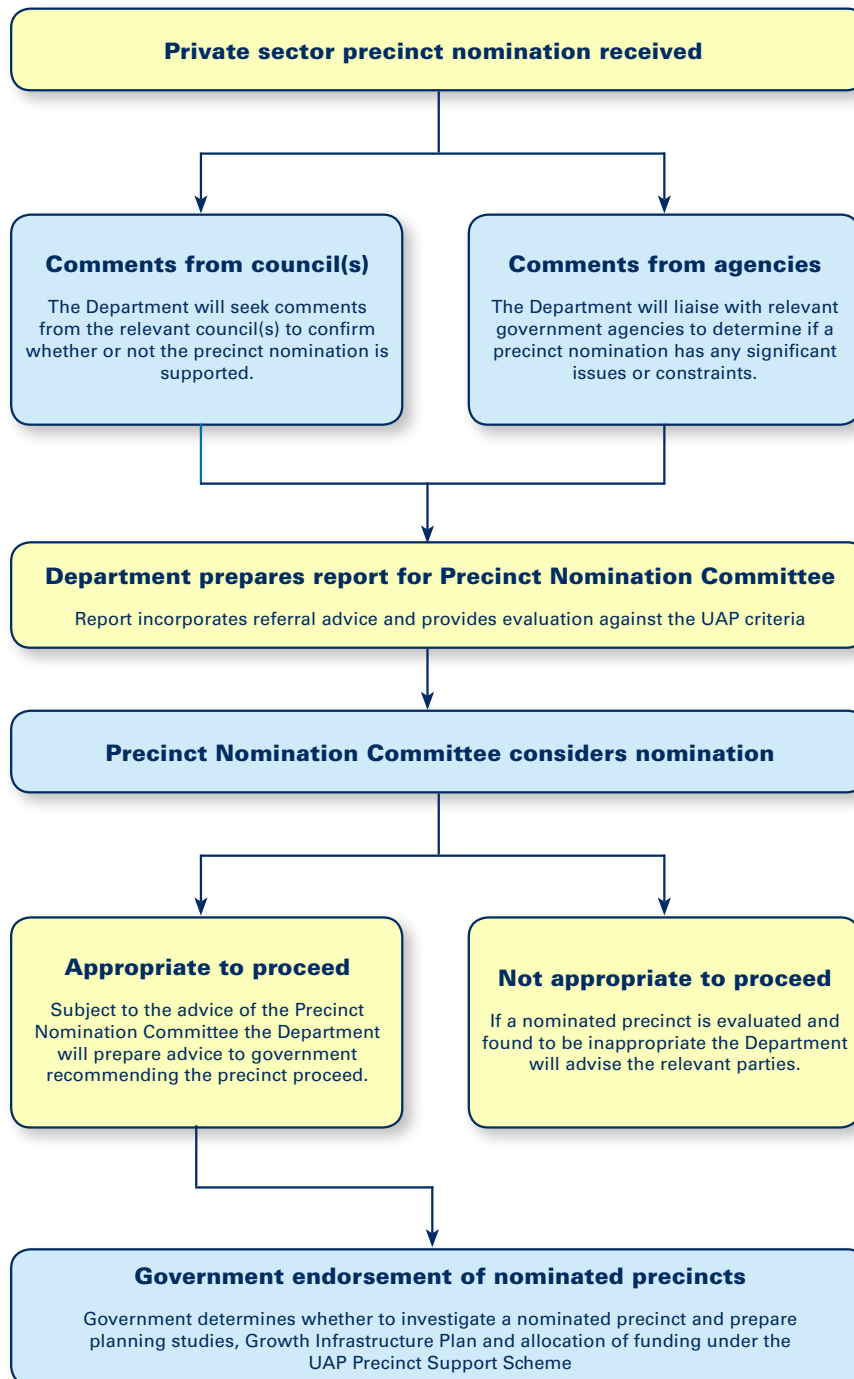
Precinct nominations are required to provide a concise statement addressing each of the UAP program criteria outlined in Section 2.2 of this guideline. A nomination must outline the proposed precinct location and describe its key attributes including future land use and growth outcomes that are being sought. Nominations should also provide copies of any relevant studies that have already been prepared.

The UAP program is a government-led initiative that encourages precinct nominations to be made by councils and State government agencies. However, in some cases it may be appropriate for the private sector to make precinct nominations. The Department of Planning and Infrastructure has developed a process for the receipt and evaluation of private sector precinct nominations and the evaluation process for council and government nominated precincts.

The process that will be followed when private sector nominations are made is illustrated on the following page. A fundamental element of the process is that comments from the relevant local council(s) and agencies will be sought as soon as the nomination is received and are an integral consideration in making any recommendation to government. The Department will prepare a report incorporating comments received and an evaluation against the UAP criteria for consideration by an interagency committee.

The interagency Precinct Nomination Committee will be chaired by the Director General of the Department of Planning and Infrastructure. Representatives from key agencies including Transport for NSW, Department of Finance and Services, Treasury, and Urbangrowth NSW will review all nominations for potential precincts and provide advice to the government as to whether a nomination is significant and appropriate to proceed.

## 2.4 Urban Activation Precincts – private sector nomination process



## 3. Procedures for Urban Activation Precincts

### 3.1 Overview

The Urban Activation Precincts process places much greater emphasis on community engagement and collaborating with key stakeholders. This is particularly important in the case of local government, being fundamental to the continuing growth and implementation of these precincts.

### 3.2 Preliminary Consultation

Before a recommendation is made to investigate a precinct, the Department will consult with local council and State agencies (except where a council or agency actually makes the nomination). The Precinct Nomination Committee will consider the views of councils and agencies as part of its review of nominations. The committee will provide advice to the NSW Government on whether a nomination is significant and appropriate to proceed.

### 3.3 Working Groups with Local Councils and State Agencies

Working groups will be established to investigate and discuss Urban Activation Precincts once they have been endorsed by government. Representatives from relevant local councils, Department and State agencies (in particular Transport for NSW), where relevant, will be invited to participate. It is expected working groups will meet regularly during the precinct planning process and will provide a forum for issues associated with each precinct to be identified, discussed and resolved.

Working groups will also be responsible for input into the outcomes brief and planning study requirements for the Urban Activation Precinct. The outcomes brief will establish overall objectives for the precinct in terms of housing, employment, land use mix, economic, accessibility and infrastructure connections, urban design and the public domain. The study requirements will identify the relevant planning studies to be completed and further requirements for stakeholder engagement and public consultation.



### 3.4 Planning Studies and Investigation

Detailed planning studies and investigations will generally be required for Urban Activation Precincts. In some instances, it will be appropriate to rely on information contained in existing studies. This will be determined at the study requirements stage.

Depending on the precinct, the planning studies and investigations may need to address:

- The strategic context of the precinct and relationship to government State, regional or metropolitan planning strategy
- Constraints and opportunities of the precinct, including environmental, social and economic factors as well as existing characteristics of the area or neighborhood
- Opportunities for increasing housing and employment
- Financial viability and investor feasibility
- Access to appropriate transport and service infrastructure
- Infrastructure growth requirements and any proposed contribution arrangements
- Appropriate land uses and proposed zonings, and development standards
- Implications of any proposed land use for local and regional land use, infrastructure, service delivery and natural resource planning
- Growth Infrastructure Plan that identifies the capacity within the network and required State infrastructure to support planned growth
- Funding for local government to provide local infrastructure required for the precinct to address pressures arising from population growth
- Code-based assessment framework to enable more streamlined assessment of development within the precinct and remove unnecessary delays in the delivery of housing approvals.



## 4. Community Engagement

### 4.1 Overview

Community engagement is important when investigating potential changes to a precinct. In addition to the formal public exhibition process, Community Reference Groups may also be established where the Department considers it appropriate. They will be established once a precinct has been endorsed by government. These groups should include a broad membership from the local community. The Department will liaise with the relevant council(s) to identify the most appropriate representatives.

The purpose of these groups will be for representative members of all sections of the community to access information and provide better informed feedback throughout the investigation process. Other community engagement techniques may also be used throughout the precinct planning process, tailored to the individual precinct.

### 4.2 Public Exhibition and Consultation

The Director-General will exhibit the study for a minimum of 30 days with an invitation to the public to make written submissions. The Director-General will send a copy of the study to the working group, relevant councils and agencies for comment. During the exhibition period, stakeholder information sessions will also be held.

If the proposed planning changes are likely to affect critical habitat of threatened species, populations or ecological communities, the Director-General must formally consult the Director-General of the Department of Premier and Cabinet and/or the Director General of the

Department of Primary Industries under the provisions of Section 34A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act.

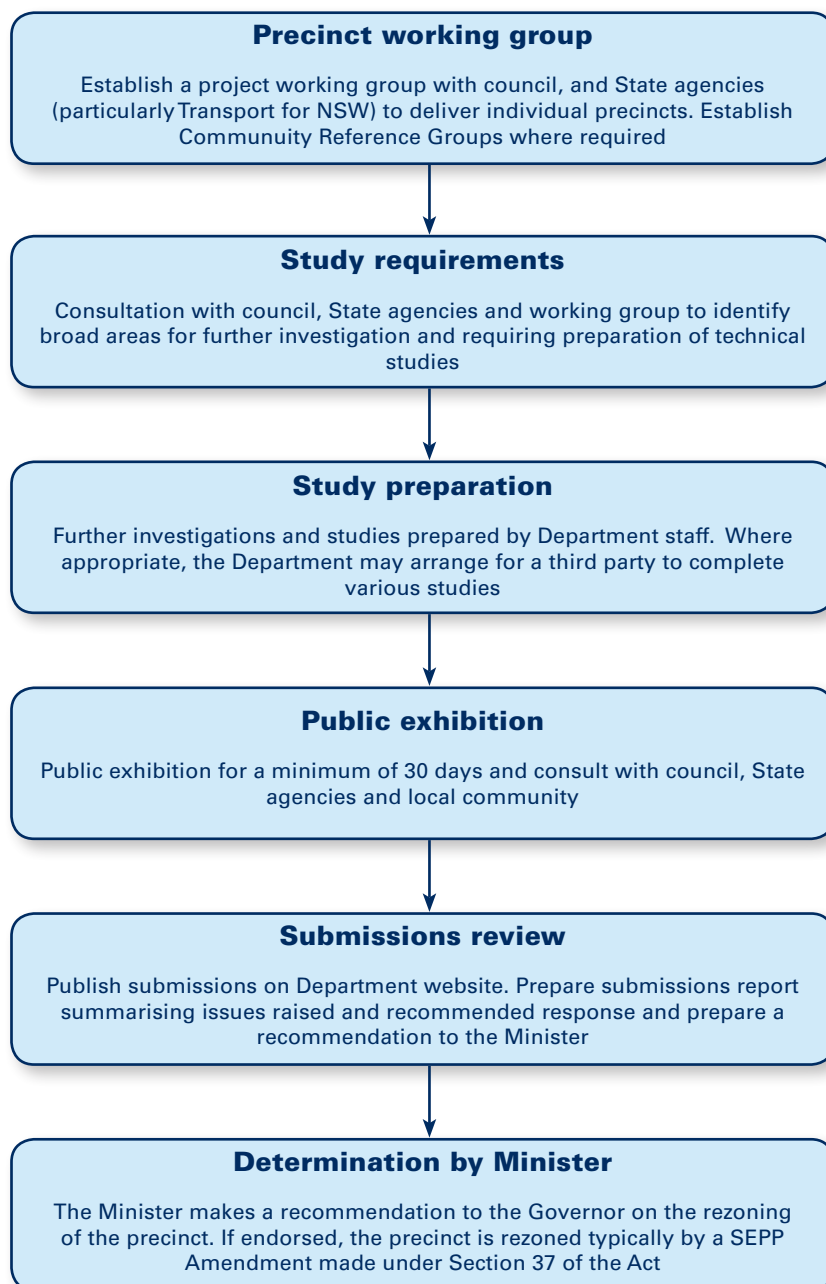
When submissions are received, the Director-General will consider the matters raised and, where relevant, modify the proposal to minimise impacts on the environment or to make it more consistent with State or regional planning objectives. Submissions will also be published on the Department's website.



## 5. Outline of Process

### 5.1 Precinct Planning Process

The process outlined below will commence following government endorsement of a nominated precinct. The target timeframe from endorsement through to determination by the Minister is six months.



Once the study has been exhibited and all issues raised in submission and by relevant stakeholders have been considered, the Director-General will consider the study and the implications of the proposed changes in land use and provide recommendations to the Minister relating to:

- The state or regional planning significance of the precinct
- The suitability of the site for any proposed land use including the results of the environmental assessment
- The implications of any change in land use
- Potential for streamlining of subsequent development within the precinct through the use of exempt and complying development controls.

The Minister may also seek advice from the Planning Assessment Commission at this crucial stage of the process, which may include public hearings or independent assessment of any aspect of the proposal.

## 5.2 Determination by Minister

Following the Director-General's assessment, if the Minister decides to proceed with preparing a new statutory framework for the Urban Activation Precinct, a State Environmental Planning Policy will be made to implement the planning framework, zonings and development standards for the precinct including exempt and complying development controls into the relevant LEP(s).



### 5.3 Outcomes and Delivery

If the State government decides to proceed with rezoning an Urban Activation Precinct, the following policies will assist the delivery of the precinct:

- Growth Infrastructure Plans (GIP) – identifies capacity within the infrastructure network and outlines the infrastructure required to support the planned growth. The GIP would input into the State government’s budget allocation process to ensure coordinated delivery of State infrastructure for the precinct.
- Precinct Support Scheme (PSS) – funding assistance for local government to deliver the local infrastructure needed for the precinct. The funding allocation for each endorsed precinct will become available once a rezoning has been gazetted.

The program will also aim to provide greater certainty for both the community and landowners regarding the future urban form of a precinct. This will be achieved through development of streamlined code-based assessment processes in appropriate locations. More information is available in the fact sheets on the Department’s website.



## Urban Activation Precincts – Growth Infrastructure Plans (Infill)

Traditionally, various infrastructure agencies have had separate budgets, planning process and consequently their own priorities in terms of infrastructure provision. This can cause issues and inefficiency in the timing and delivery of infrastructure or delay growth. There is a need to provide more certainty and consistency in order to allow efficient planning, priority setting and infrastructure investment.

A Growth Infrastructure Plan (GIP) will be used to identify where infrastructure needs to be augmented to support planned growth within an Urban Activation Area. Prepared in consultation with local councils and state agencies, the GIP will better align identified needs with forthcoming government agency asset management plans. GIPs will also be used to inform the State government's budget allocation processes.

GIPs will assist with the coordinated delivery of infrastructure in Urban Activation Precincts (UAP). GIPs will be developed to ensure that, as far as possible, the right infrastructure is planned and provided cost effectively in the right location at the right time to support growth.

GIPs are currently used in Greenfield areas and may also have a wider application to other urban infill development sites. However, the focus of this fact sheet is their application to Urban Activation Precincts.

### WHY ARE GROWTH INFRASTRUCTURE PLANS REQUIRED FOR INFILL AREAS?

Delivery of infrastructure in a UAP needs to keep pace with housing production and be coordinated between agencies. This will ensure housing delivery is not unduly delayed.

Infill development projects create additional demand for a range of state infrastructure services. Augmentation and upgrading of existing services is

the most common infrastructure requirement within an infill area development. This can be quite different to the Greenfield scenario where completely new services or major upgrades are often required to support growth. Nonetheless, infill areas still require early identification and coordination of infrastructure works to support growth.

GIPs will ensure the early identification of infrastructure needs. Combined with other UAP initiatives, GIPs will play a role in ensuring that development within a precinct occurs efficiently and effectively, ensuring appropriate levels of infrastructure are available to existing and new residents.

GIPs will be prepared in consultation with relevant local councils and state agencies. A draft GIP will be exhibited along with other investigation studies. A final plan will form part of the package of information provided to the Minister for determination.

### WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF GIP (INFILL)?

- Increased certainty regarding future development yields will allow agencies to use their infrastructure budgets more effectively.
- Infrastructure priorities within agencies and between agencies will be more easily identified.
- Information contained in GIPs will be used to inform State government decisions on infrastructure provision.
- GIPs will provide more certainty regarding planned infrastructure provision for industry and local councils.
- GIPs will inform the Housing Acceleration Fund program.

### WHAT INFORMATION DOES A GIP CONTAIN?

There are a number of key elements that will form part of each GIP including:

- Basic precinct information.
- Anticipated growth within a precinct.
- Projected timeframe for growth.
- Short, medium and long term infrastructure delivery requirements to support growth.
- Monitoring of growth and delivery requirements.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

Department of Planning & Infrastructure website:  
[www.planning.nsw.gov.au](http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au)

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# Urban Activation Precincts – Precinct Support Scheme

## INTRODUCTION

The Urban Activation Precincts guideline refers to the Precinct Support Scheme. This fact sheet provides additional information about this scheme.

## ABOUT THE PRECINCT SUPPORT SCHEME

The Precinct Support Scheme (PSS) is a NSW Government initiative, announced as part of the 2012-13 budget, which will assist local councils to address increased demand for local infrastructure.

A pilot allocation of \$50 million is available to local councils for infrastructure upgrades required as a result of population growth within Urban Activation Precincts. Councils that partner in Urban Activation Precincts will be provided payments to fund local infrastructure (both social and economic) that help these communities address pressures arising from population growth in the Urban Activation Precincts.

PSS funding allocations are in addition to local development levies (such as Section 94) collected in an Urban Activation Precinct.

The benefits of this pilot program include:

- Assisting councils to create high quality urban environments for existing and new residents;
- Supporting high-growth council areas to provide local infrastructure upgrades.
- Stronger relationships with local councils and a growth culture in the community; and
- Providing an opportunity to pilot a support program and consider a broader roll out or alternative options once the review of the NSW planning system is complete.

## HOW IS THE AMOUNT OF FUNDING CALCULATED?

The amount of PSS funding allocated to each endorsed precinct will be approximately \$5 million. The total amount of funding ultimately provided to each precinct will be dependent on its specific local infrastructure needs and the types of projects identified by local councils.

The funding allocation for each endorsed precinct will become available once a rezoning has been gazetted. Early funding availability will allow councils to effectively and efficiently plan and deliver new and upgraded community infrastructure within the UAP precincts.

## WHAT COULD PRECINCT SUPPORT SCHEME FUNDING BE SPENT ON?

Local councils will be given a degree of flexibility to determine what local infrastructure projects the PSS funding is spent on. Local infrastructure has been broadly defined so that it captures the various types of infrastructure a local council may need to provide. Local infrastructure projects could relate to open space, public domain, local roads, traffic calming measures and car parking requirements.

Local infrastructure projects will be expected to demonstrate:

- Funding will be allocated towards the capital costs of the project.
- The project will provide direct benefits to the precinct.
- The project need is related to growth identified for the precinct.
- It can be demonstrated that appropriate consultation has occurred within the community.
- The project can be delivered within an expedient and identifiable time frame.

- The project is not a pre-existing project already funded by other grants or contributions.

In certain circumstances PSS funds may be permitted to be allocated for the partial funding of a project located outside a precinct. This can only occur where a clear nexus between the project and the precinct growth has been demonstrated. Such opportunities should be discussed with the Department of Planning and Infrastructure prior to a funding request being made.

It is also acknowledged that in some circumstances a council may provide additional funding over and above the PSS funding in order to deliver a project.

During the precinct planning process the Department will work with local councils to assist in the identification and scoping of projects that are suitable for PSS funding.

### **HOW IS THE PRECINCT SUPPORT SCHEME FUNDING ACCESSED BY A LOCAL COUNCIL?**

In order to access a precinct's PSS funding allocation, the local council will be expected to submit proposals to the Department for consideration.

Proposals can be submitted prior to gazettal of a precinct where they have been identified through the precinct planning process.

Funding allocations must be accessed within five years of the rezoning. After this date any remaining allocation will be returned to the overall PSS fund and allocated to a future precinct.

### **ONGOING REVIEW OF THE SCHEME**

The funding allocation processes for this pilot program will be subject to ongoing consultation with councils and review by the Government as part of the assessment and delivery of the initial precincts.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

Department of Planning & Infrastructure website:  
[www.planning.nsw.gov.au](http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au)

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