

2020

GREATER

CERTAINTY

FOR GREATER SYDNEY

INSIGHTS INTO NSW PLANNING REFORM



**place
design
group.**



Acknowledgement of Country

The UDIA of New South Wales, Place Design Group and all associated Councils of the Greater Sydney Region would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners, the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation, and pay respect to Elders both past, present and future.

Executive Summary

What is LSPS and why is it important?

The Local Strategic Planning Statement preparation process was a two year journey for NSW local governments, beginning in 2018 and has now come to a close for the Greater Sydney metropolitan region.

The LSPSs were designed to provide a 20-year vision for land-use in a local areas, demonstrating how change will be managed including the areas to be protected & improved. The promise is that these will underpin how development controls in Local Environment Plans (LEPs) evolve and create greater local involvement and “buy-in” for the future growth of Sydney. The hope is that the statements will provide a clear playbook for implementing each Council's own priorities which is lined up with the Greater Sydney Region Plan and the relevant District Plan.

However, there are certain realities of rolling out such an enormous undertaking. UDIA in conjunction with Place Design Group deemed it necessary to provide a touchpoint for councils and industry to evaluate what has been achieved so far and what the expectations are for the future of these documents.

We have taken the time to speak in depth with a number of Greater Sydney councils and state government agencies, and, to understand how we can learn from the process to date, and continue to evolve and improve the forward planning agenda.

We welcome the start of a long, future-driven conversation around the process of delivering the first stages of planning reform... and the experiences, ideas and perceptions for what could lay ahead.

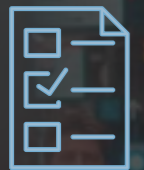
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Campaign Methods



2x Facilitated Boardroom Lunch Sessions



An Industry Survey



Targeted, one-on-one interviews with heads of NSW Councils



An Insights Piece: Greater Certainty for Greater Sydney



Industry Launch to kick start conversation

A Provocation

Over the past 18 months, local governments across Greater Sydney have delivered the foundations for the next 20-years of 'ground-up' urban planning and design controls. The creation of the Local Strategic Planning Statements (LSPSs) has set the groundwork for future reform and a vision of the future cities we are to build.

It's a great time to be part of such change. The inaugural Local Strategic Planning Statements and their affiliated informing studies will become a legacy piece for councils, state agencies, the Greater Sydney Commission, consultants, and NSW and federal government decision-makers alike, as we now progress to the action and delivery stages of these vision statements.

From our in-depth discussions with Councils, one thing is clear: everyone recognises this is just the beginning and the sentiment is unanimous on progressing forward in a collaborative and outcomes-driven way. The Councils have set the bar high and in doing so it seems they are more collectively driven across Greater Sydney not just for development – but for good development outcomes.

There is pressure now on local government to deliver all that was promised to communities through this process over the course of the next 20 to 30 years. The fear is that this hard, important work will gather dust.

There is no doubt that this process has created a new foundation for how we can better plan for our cities and communities. In other ways though, it has opened Pandora's Box, and posed new questions, that beg new answers, new thinking and new processes.

How do we keep momentum, grow certainty in market, and continue to collaborate to deliver the proposed change we have envisioned for our communities?

And importantly, what is now needed to actually get there?

The UDIA and Place Design Group would like to thank all participating councils and representatives for sharing their experiences and agreeing to provide their own accounts, in their own words for inclusion in this study.

Overall the response was positive. There was genuine goodwill to cooperate across the city. There was a genuine understanding by the Greater Sydney council planning community for a strong structure across the city that everyone can work towards.

We encourage you to read on, and learn more about the experiences past, and thoughts, feelings and ideas for the road ahead.

02

An Evolving Framework

In 2014 the NSW Government released the strategy document “A Plan for Growing Sydney” which led to the creation of the Greater Sydney Commission (GSC). To meet the needs of a growing and changing population the GSC developed a vision that sought to transform Greater Sydney into a metropolis of three cities:

- » the Western Parkland City
- » the Central River City
- » the Eastern Harbour City.

Along with being the holders of the Greater Sydney vision, the GSC were tasked with oversight of Local Strategic Planning Statements (LSPS) being prepared by the 33 local councils of metropolitan Sydney.

In response to this vision, and the accompanying District Plans, the State Government required every Council to prepare a Local Strategic Planning Statement.

Local Strategic Planning Statements focus on the vision and priorities for land use in the local area, whereas Community Strategic Plans (prepared under the Local Government Act 1993) have a broader focus on achieving the long term social, environmental and economic aspirations of the community. They are the governing document for the council in its strategic business planning across all of its activities.

What has been produced has been a series of founding LSPS documents by a diverse range of Local Government Areas (LGAs) across Sydney who have taken in some instances very different paths to achieve their outcomes.

These are the first attempts at delivering a consistent narrative for the entire Sydney region in what will be an evolving story.



03

Greater Sydney Region



Trends

The Greater Sydney Region is not one place but a rich patchwork of diverse communities, spaces and environments. From the Northern Beaches to the Sutherland Shire and from Randwick to the Blue Mountains, there is significant variation in the nature and context of 'place' and the city's 4.7 million people.

Sydney is growing up as well as out. But the nature and stages of growth are not consistent across Sydney. Each of the LSPS documents needs to respond to a very different sets of pressures. Inner city areas are faced with issues of growth from infill transition of land uses, intensity of uses and built forms with established neighbourhoods and populations that are sometimes resistant to change and retrofitting of infrastructure. While in the outer reaches of Sydney, the first waves of greenfield development are spreading across the landscape. They bring a vastly different set of issues, such as basic infrastructure provision, access to services facilities, employment, open space, biodiversity, and car dependent suburbs.

Some LGAs, like Canterbury-Bankstown, have very different pressures including ageing housing stock, a highly diverse population culturally and linguistically, and a significant Council amalgamation to resolve whilst undertaking the preparation of the LSPS and LEP review. Growth in these middle ring areas is one of structure and location and directing growth to leverage existing infrastructure investments.

The responses to the surveys and the reflections set out further in this piece don't always reflect the nuances that occur across Sydney.

For instance, the pressure to establish new infrastructure in the west of Sydney is not an issue facing the mature transport networks of inner-city Sydney. In this regard the commentary provided by some of the LGAs perhaps better represents the individual pressure of each LGA.

The survey however does reveal some instructive ideas around the valuable role the GSC played in the process and the necessity for an ongoing role for such a body.



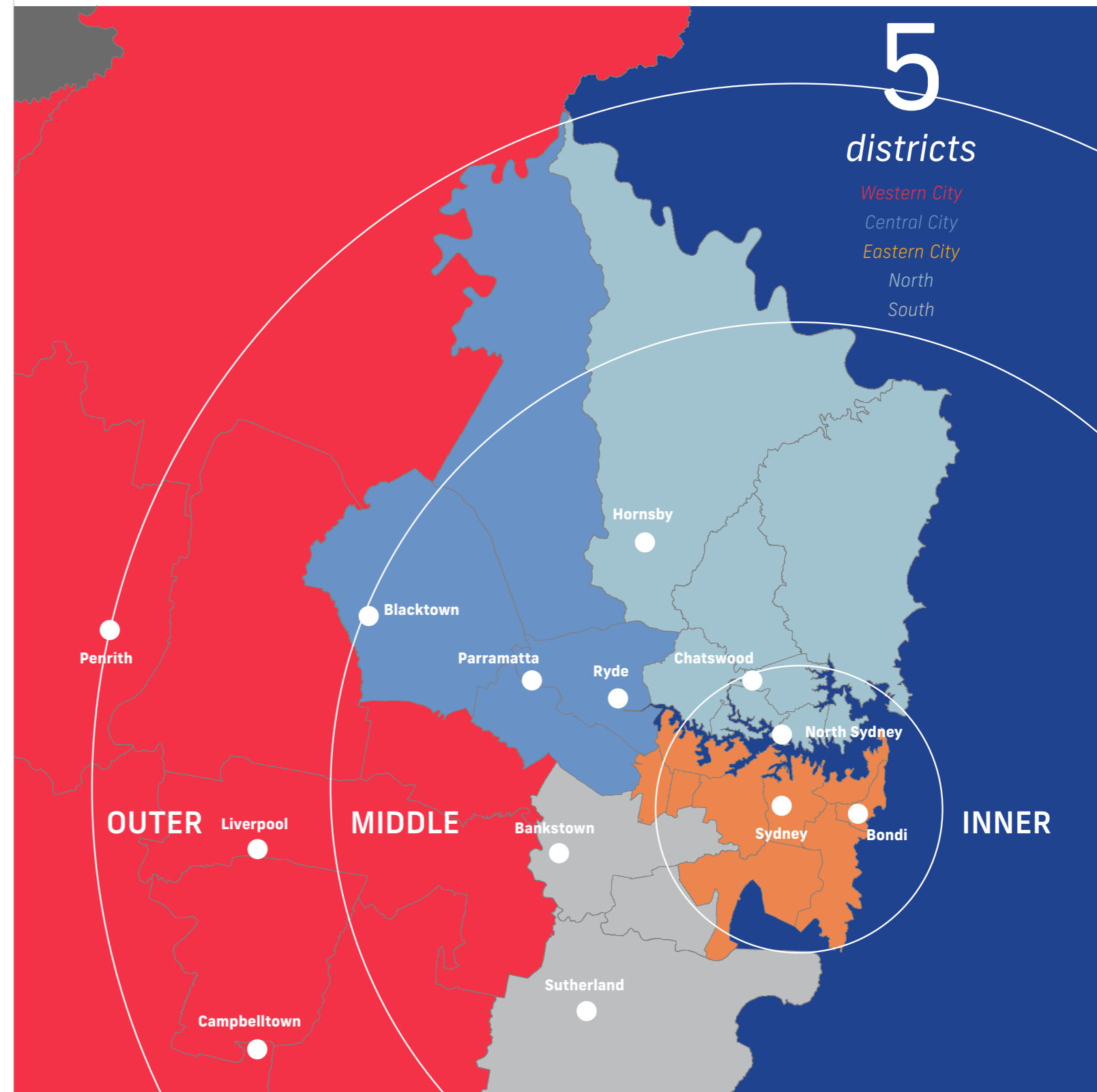
4.7
million people



1.6
million increase
in 20 years



40
year vision



Statistics & Sentiments

An industry survey was conducted as a critical element of this insights campaign, targeting planning leaders and heads of Greater Sydney Councils who were, or had recently completed their LSPS process.

The purpose of this survey was to collect individual perspectives from all participatory councils across NSW, and develop a suite of evidenced, quantified process sentiment.

Participants from Greater Sydney Councils were invited to participate and share their views, but the data captured was anonymised to ensure a safe and comfortable platform for professionals to have their say in a meaningful and trusted manner.

Across a possible response pool of 33 councils, 28 willing participants provided responses across the course of the two months the survey was in market (December 11 to 7 Feb 2020).

The sample size was strong and the reach achieved across all Greater Sydney districts, was closely representative of the percentage split of councils that sit within each district, indicating that the data set was a great foundation from which to gauge a bigger picture idea of what may have been a possible collective experiences across the state.

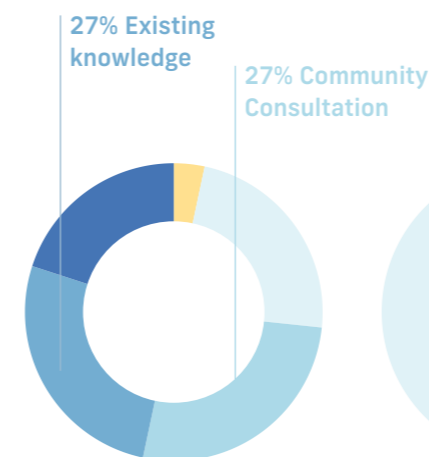
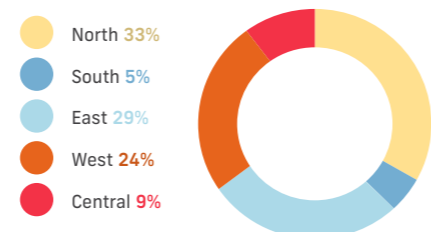
Snapshot/Overview of :

- » Movers and shakers – local councils perceived LSPSs as an opportunity to create big moves of regional significance.
- » Trust and engagement - We saw increased engagement and improved strategy for local land use planning and a more optimistic sentiment towards open spaces and green space networks. The LSPS is an opportunity to bridge the community into the planning process in a more detailed fashion. It provides for building trust between local communities and the government decision-makers.
- » Longevity of the LSPS – overwhelmingly Councils saw the LSPS as underpinning the District plan, not just future LEPS.

- » Economic Support – local government want to see more support for their economic development strategies. At the time of the survey, only 40 per cent of respondents had confidence that the metro strategy aligned with their LSPS. Economic development is a stand-out issue with a third of respondents finding GSC has been not very effective in coordinating across LGAs on this issue.
- » Timing - 88 per cent of local councils found the LSPS timeframes were compressed or very compressed and said that (why did they need more time? What would they have done with more time?)
- » State funding – the reliance on state funding raises the question of whether or not the states are able to adopt some or all of these strategic plans.

Here is what they said...

% SPLIT OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS ACROSS DISTRICTS



Q1

What technical work, or studies, have formed the evidence base for the LSPS and most heavily influenced the shape of the LSPS document?

In response to the range of approaches to the development of the LSPS document, the survey shows that half of the LSPS documents were produced using existing information and backgrounds reports, or were based on community consultation.

Q2

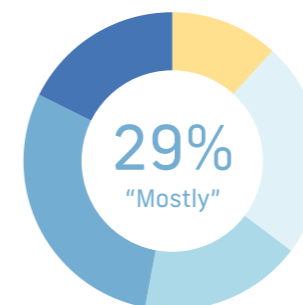
How would you describe the timeframes to complete the LSPS?

Nearly 90% of the LGAs believe the timeframes to complete the LSPS was too compressed.

Q3

Should your LSPS be used to inform further iterations of the District Plans?

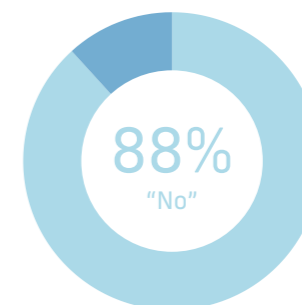
Overwhelmingly, the LGAs believe that their LSPS document should inform and be reflected in future iterations of their respective District Plans.



Q4

Did the transit links provided in the District Plans provide enough certainty for the preparation of your current LSPS?

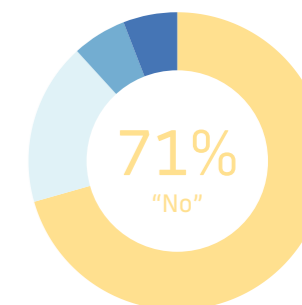
Less than 20% of respondents believed that the District Plans provided enough certainty regarding transit links and transport infrastructure.



Q5

Is there sufficient funding for transit infrastructure to support the amount of growth in your LGA?

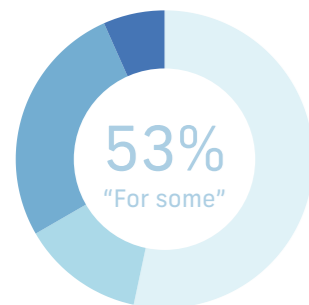
Almost 90% of respondents indicated that there is not sufficient funding for transit infrastructure to support growth in the LGAs.



Q6

Do you feel the current levels of development contributions cover infrastructure for planned growth targets?

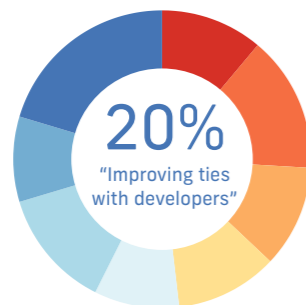
Less than 15% of respondents felt that the current levels of development contributions cover infrastructure for planned growth.



Q7

Have you commenced advocacy/lobbying for LSPS key moves funding yet?

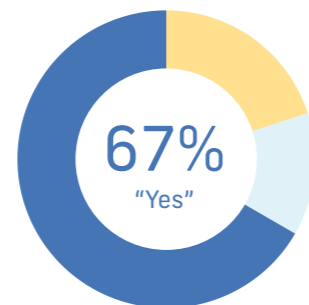
60% of respondents say that they have begun using the LSPS as a basis for advocacy on key moves in their LSPS.



Q8

In which one of the following ways (advocacy, improving ties with developers, message delivery, cross-LGA coordination, negotiation with other levels of Government, information and research provision, promotion of key LSPS moves and/or other) could the UDIA help in partnering with the local authorities to deliver on the aspirations of the LSPS documents?

Over 50% of respondents felt that the UDIA had a role to play in advocating for outcomes within the development industry and with State government.



Q9

Is there a role for a State body to coordinate planning and investment in State and Local infrastructure?

Nearly 70% of respondents noted that there is a role for State bodies to coordinate planning and investment for State and Local infrastructure.

Q10

What do you think the GSC could have done better in the LSPS process?

- » Good things: co-ordination of agencies
- » Things to improve: more time and messaging consistency from beginning to end

Co-ordination of agencies is deemed as a positive, while things to improve include more time and messaging consistency from beginning to end. There have been far too many requested changes, and changes on changes both from GSC and the agencies, very few of which have real strategic merit. The requests are just passed on or stated at a meeting, without comment from GSC. GSC could play a role in vetting the individual ad hoc comments from the various agencies.

LAND USE PLANNING

53%

"Partly Improved"

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

41%

"Partly Improved"

OPEN SPACES

64%

"Partly Improved"

MOVEMENT

53%

"Partly Improved"

HOUSING DENSITY

66%

"Strong Potential"

NEW ROAD/RAIL PROPOSALS

47%

"Strong Potential"

JOBS AND DEVELOPMENT

53%

"Strong Potential"

DELIVERY OF RENEWEAL PROJECTS

73%

"Strong Potential"

DELIVERY OF MAJOR PRECINCTS

66%

"Strong Potential"

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT GRANTS

40%

"Unsure"

INFRASTRUCTURE AGREEMENTS

54%

"A lot"

BENEFITED AREAS

47%

"Unsure"

VALUE CAPTURE

47%

"Unsure"

STATE FUNDING

80%

"A lot"

Q11

If you could pick your top three key ideas or strategies in your LSPS, what would they be?

- » Focus on centres' planning
- » Better alignment of land use and transport
- » Infrastructure provision and coordination

A focus on centres planning, better alignment of land use and transport, and infrastructure provision and coordination.

Q12

Do you feel like you are in a better strategic position in terms of land use planning as a result of preparing the LSPS from the following perspectives;

- » Land Use Planning,
- » Economic Development,
- » Open Space/Green Space Network
- » Movement

Overwhelmingly, the LGAs believe that they are in a better strategic position as a result of the LSPS in terms of land use planning, and not so much in economic development.

Q13

How much potential do you feel the LSPS has to act as a tool for advocacy for; jobs and economic development, delivery of renewal precincts, delivery of major projects, new road/rail infrastructure and housing diversity?

Most LGAs feel as though the LSPS has great potential for advocacy around a range of issues including; economic development, renewal precincts, major projects, road/rail infrastructure proposals and housing diversity.

Q14

How reliant will you be upon the following funding mechanisms to deliver on your key moves and growth targets proposed within your LSPS; State funding, value capture, benefited areas, infrastructure agreements, Federal Government grants and other?

Respondents noted they are overwhelmingly reliant on State funding to deliver key moves in their LSPS documents.

The LGA Experience

Building a case for renewal
(...but who's plan is it?)

An important part of sharing insights should always be to give participants a voice, and facilitate meaningful connection across councils themselves, so that they have more opportunities to learn from each other, and grow through NSW planning reform, together.

Below is a table which indicates the five districts and allocation of council areas that sit within each. Those councils highlighted in yellow are featured on the following pages and have shared their experience and thoughts around the LSPS process. Those councils highlighted in green have also participated in the broader insights program.

Western City	Central City	Eastern City	North	South
Blue Mountains	Blacktown	Bayside	Hornsby	Georges River
Hawkesbury	Cumberland	Burwood	Hunter's Hill	Canterbury-Bankstown
Penrith	Parramatta	Canada Bay	Ku-ring-gai	Sutherland
Camden	The Hills	Inner West	Lane Cove	
Campbelltown		Randwick	Northern Beaches	
Fairfield		Strathfield	Mosman	
Liverpool		Woollahra	Willoughby	
Wollondilly		Waverley	Ryde	
		City of Sydney	North Sydney	

Place Design Group interviewed seven (7) participatory councils who attended the initial LSPS Round Table Series Luncheons, and asked them to share meaningful case studies representative of just some of the prevailing key themes, questions and ideas that have arisen across the state.

It's important to note however that all councils' stories, approaches and circumstances were important to share. However, for the purposes of this Insights piece, a handful were chosen and agreed to include their stories based on the prevailing key themes for which they represented.

The UDIA and Place Design Group would like to thank these councils, and all who participated, for sharing their learnings and assisting with kick starting the conversation. It was agreed that all councils shared the common goal of wanting to work together and grow through the next phases of delivery and implementation, and beyond. We encourage you to read their words and learn more about the different and disparate approaches and avenues taken to get the job done.

The following case studies are provided by council's themselves. They are written with their words and experiences, having successfully lived through the recent LSPS and LEP processes.

Blacktown



“The GSC has been a resounding success. It has had the legislative power to bring other agencies who weren’t in the tent to come together and we have seen such a change in the process as a result.”

**Glennys James,
Assistant CEO, Director
Planning & Development
at Blacktown City Council**

Glennys has been an influential adviser to the NSW Government on matters relating to the future growth of Western Sydney and has served on a large range of advisory committees to government over her career. In 2013, she received a Commendation in the development industry’s awards for excellence by women in development. Glennys James joined Blacktown City over 40 years ago and has been at the forefront of Blacktown’s growth from a municipality of 180,000 people to a vast city of 360,000. She received the Public Service Medal in the Queen’s birthday awards in 2019.

“And they are helping to find solutions – and so are the other key state agencies to the development process, like Transport for NSW (TfNSW) and Sydney Water. They are all wanting to engage.

Transport for NSW has been so much a part of the new way of planning for Sydney’s growth and that is critical to infrastructure provision. It is very much on our page and we both can see the huge impact collaboration has in assisting to overcome the funding challenges we tend to experience out here.

We saw the LSPS and LEP Review processes as a real opportunity to make Blacktown a better place to live, work and play.

Its usually hard to get our needs across, which is a real shame because we have some very disadvantaged communities in terms of transport and services access.

What was great about this process is that we were encouraged from the start by the GSC to tell them what we want. So we did. And will continue to. Overall, through this process, I think that the understanding of local government needs has come a long way.

My main problem is equity of access for the Blacktown community to the infrastructure it needs to flourish.

There are huge numbers of people living here with no public transport. That is something that happened 30 years ago – it shouldn’t now, in 2020.

Over time the momentum has shifted to the West. And the focus has shifted. There is now a huge commitment to the airport and Parramatta which is great - but the rest of us in Western Sydney also need attention.

I remember when the Parklea area was released and there was development happening on our side and in the Hills area. There was a huge outcry to Windsor Road being only a two lane rural road and that forced the Government’s hand and they built the road. But it should have been provided before it became that bad.

Hopefully examples like this one will not occur in the future because of the GSC’s influence in the forward planning of Sydney’s future.”



Blacktown



"We agree that the LSPS should be a plan that is consistent - but also about what we think is important to our community long term, and what we know it needs."

**Chris Shannon,
Manager Strategic Planning
at Blacktown City Council**

Chris has worked in planning for over 22 years. He holds qualification in planning and law. He was seconded to the Greater Sydney Commission to provide expert planning advice in the preparation of the District Plans, particularly from a local government perspective. He has worked on various planning projects in Blacktown that have received UDIA National and State Awards. He is a current member of the UDIA Planning Committee and also on the Property Council of Australia's Western Sydney Taskforce.

"The GSC has been effective in bringing people to the table. Once upon a time, it was impossible to get your foot in the door with State agencies and now you can. So they have done well here to open these doors and allow for greater collaboration.

It was the first time in my career that I've seen things come together this way. We've all matured in a way that State agencies have accepted and are working better with councils. So next time, the working relationship should be even better as we have all experienced it before.

I worked on the LSPS and LEPs here at Blacktown - but I was also formerly working for the State, tasked to work on the District Plans. Putting the District Plan together was a challenge because I wasn't afforded the opportunity to better understand or know what the councils wanted. Now, they have the start of a better idea through this process.

I do feel there would be some benefit though in having specific actions and timeframes come from the District Plans, which can feed down locally. This would improve transparency and assist industry and councils in planning for their LGAs.

If you open the District Plans, they are similarly worded, which is great for consistency across Greater Sydney, but many would agree that there is probably a layer required that sits beneath each of the District Plans, that is the economics. Without an economic layer, there comes a point where they risk - or will demonstrate - falling into competition with each other at the local level.

Perhaps there could be a more formalised type of district collaboration. Otherwise, we do have some concerns that we will be competing against each other (other councils) for priorities and funding.

We really think that the State could play a really important role to help alleviate this risk, and do more to support a more collaborative, less competitive occurrence.

For councils, it still feels in some cases that currently there is a perception that all we really do is approve things at the end of the day. For example, Blacktown is nominated as a Strategic Centre, but what does that mean? Right now, they (the State) don't currently have a clear plan to deliver the agreed ideas. And that would be great to see.

For Blacktown Council, we've had to proactively go out ourselves and seek information and pathways to kick start many things. We have completed our own research. We are doing the relationship building and ground work to develop things such as a health precinct and university campus. So, in terms of the State, it could potentially be more of an information hub, and 'sharer of resources'. This would be a really important role to play. That would be of great value to us all.

In Blacktown, it's been the case that if we rezone, they will come. And the shifting momentum has always come to us in terms of housing. But the employment hasn't. This is a challenge for the State and us to get the right jobs in Western Sydney.

We are evolving as a city, and we are not 'the frontier' anymore. We are at the end of that wave, and we know we will likely be fully urbanised in 15 years.

So whilst we know it's a slow burn, we agree that it's important to have these plans in place now, and to start using them to advocate for the right outcomes for Blacktown in years to come."



Liverpool



“Connected Liverpool 2040, Liverpool City Council’s Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) represents the shared vision of Council and the community and will inform future land use planning for Liverpool, which is one of the fastest growing areas in Sydney.”

David Smith,
Manager Planning & Transport
Strategy at Liverpool City
Council

Liverpool is one of Sydney’s most progressive urban and regional centres.

David and his team are leading a catalytic planning period for the city, with significant local infrastructure projects such as the Western Sydney Airport in the pipeline, a Smart Transit Corridor linking the City Centre to the Western Sydney Airport, large scale Greenfield release areas and a City Centre that is currently undergoing substantial transformation.

“A clear vision for Liverpool’s future and a robust plan for getting there are vital if we are to harness the rapid change and growth the city is experiencing.

The LSPS details our priorities over the next 20 years of development, and provides a list of actions that make sure we can meet our goals.

These actions include the completion of some of Council’s most ambitious strategic projects ever attempted – realigning our CBD around the Georges River including a river-edge promenade and new river crossings; developing Woodward Park into our own ‘Central Park’ – an iconic lifestyle precinct that will be a thriving hub of community activity known as Woodward Place; creating a rapid transit link between the Liverpool City Centre and the new Western Sydney International Airport; and transforming our ageing stock of community facilities into a world class network of modern, attractive facilities that address community needs.

The LSPS is our strategic roadmap for the future. It is based on and expands upon the priorities of our Community Strategic Plan, Our Home, Liverpool 2027, and provides a one-stop resource for the major planning work we’re doing to make Liverpool a vibrant, diverse and attractive place.

Council worked collaboratively during the preparation of the LSPS with Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) and the Greater Sydney Commission (GSC) and through that collaboration, the final LSPS prepared by Council aligned with the Western City District Plan, and through the GSC Assurance process, only minor changes were required.

The guidelines and templates released by DPIE to assist Council’s in preparing the LSPS were clear and helpful.

A key consideration during the development of the LSPS was ensuring the LSPS was aligned with metropolitan planning objectives. Apart from the fact it is a legal requirement, it is also important that local planning priorities are consistent with the broader metropolitan strategies to ensure Sydney, as region, is planned well.

There have been some key learnings from the development of our first LSPS including ensuring sufficient time is available for a robust evidence base for the development of local planning strategies, local planning priorities and actions, including joint studies between Councils.

The LSPS process can be further improved for the future by having one consolidated, whole of government submission on the LSPS. Council consulted widely with, and received submissions from, many government agencies. A consolidated submission from Government overseen by the GSC would streamline the consultation and assurance process and limit the number of revisions to the LSPS.

The LSPS process has been useful in other ways as well. It has allowed relationships to be built across government and Council that didn’t exist as strongly before.

To ensure the success of the LSPS, DPIE and Councils need to ensure that future planning proposals are aligned with the LSPS and the District Plan to provide certainty for both the development industry and our communities.”



Canterbury-Bankstown



"We agree that the LSPS should be a plan that is consistent with State level strategic thinking - but also carefully balances what we think is important to our community long term, and at the same time meeting their needs. For us however, as the LSPS process progressed, it felt like it began to lose some of its distinguishing local flavour."

Simon Manoski,
Director of Planning,
City of Canterbury Bankstown

Simon has almost two decades of experience as a manager, director and advisor on major planning, policy, economic development and infrastructure projects across the private and public sector. This experience spans across state and local government including Department of Planning and Environment.

Simon currently leads the planning division at the City of Canterbury Bankstown. As the local government area with greatest population in NSW, he has a clear focus on positively guiding growth across the city and delivering contemporary and innovative solutions to its resident and business community.

"I acknowledge that for all councils to deliver a consolidated plan you need an efficient process in place where numerous elements can be worked on and delivered concurrently. This process avoids years of indecision and this is particularly important for amalgamated Council's. We are making changes here that will affect the area for the next 10, 20, 30 years and beyond.

It's been a relatively quick process and I am comfortable with our end result and outcomes. To achieve this has also been personally satisfying, as this is the first time either former Council had a genuine comprehensive strategic vision for how the City would grow and how the changes would be supported by services, utilities and infrastructure.

We all want to give the community, and industry alike greater certainty. And I want that certainty too! Certainty to know whether those things we are proposing are possible, and will happen. And, that they will be absolutely right in the long term, for the city?

In saying this, the LSPS was quite complex and had to meet many requirements, and be so much to so many areas, on a scale that was higher than any local place-based planning process to date.

However, it's really important to recognise that there are differences across all areas of Sydney. All LGAs are all so different - as are the expectations and the outcomes that will occur as a result of this process. I look forward to seeing the end result and how it all fits together across greater Sydney over time.

Compared to smaller scale tools, like Local Area Plan's which are really just focused on the local centres as tools to inform and support greater certainty, the LSPS has provided more than we ever had, a single overarching vision for the city but as importantly how it interconnects with the broader metropolitan area.

Yet, with the sheer amount of centres we have within CB City, how do you deal with it on such a detailed scale in the LSPS? You can't. Or not reliably. There is more needed. Another layer and that is what we are working on now. There is more place-based strategic planning and engagement to be done to give true effect and meaning to the LSPS.

So it's not just about development outcomes. It's also about additional policies and positions of Council, how it will evolve with respect to housing choices, access to employment, sustainable development and design and striking a balance with well located integrated open spaces and well designed public spaces with all users in mind.

The lines have become blurred between State and Council when you start introducing things like planned precincts.

So now, we really need to make the call and make it happen - it would be a shame if the LSPS's and their commitments end up sitting in a black hole for 18/24 months or worse, are never really implemented acknowledging that change in the planning space will continue and the parameters under which the LSPS's were established may also shift. Building in flexibility and the need to change and respond is critical.

An idea could be to set up a "co-ordination group" of Metro Council Directors with a senior executive from the Department who together, can affect more change and keep things moving so we can deliver more - and in good time. This could be independently chaired.

Regardless, for us, as the largest LGA in New South Wales, we are ready and confident to take on precinct level work ourselves. Yet there is still the feeling that notwithstanding the size of the Council, decision making on important land use and planning decisions is limited and we are not experiencing that change we thought was coming with the amalgamation process.

Much of what is needed for the LGA is in many ways about regeneration. In CB we are fortunate in that we already have a strong infrastructure base - the roads, water, telecommunications, transport and facilities already in place. We are not a greenfield area - so our challenge is ultimately a renewal one. And we are focused on investing time and energy into our centres off the back of our renewed, great public realm experiences.

But overall - as a recently amalgamated LGA - having captured the key elements about the LGA right now, counts for a lot. This has been the best thing about the process.

For the first time we also have more certainty around the role of the Canterbury-Bankstown CBD. So we have done the right thing here with the LSPS/LEP process starting, no doubt, with more change to come, and we look forward to that."



Burwood



“We used it as a platform to re-position Burwood within the state. Burwood is a diamond in the rough – so we saw it as a catalyst to get Burwood at the table.”

- Kimberly Everett, Burwood Deputy General Manager, Land Infrastructure and Environment, Burwood Council

Kimberly is a leader in delivery of Major Infrastructure Projects with global experience successfully mentoring multi-disciplinary teams to deliver complex projects. With a thorough appreciation of different business models and political processes required to navigate the complexities of government regulation and commercial outcomes, Kimberly has broad experience in infrastructure planning, project management, environmental regulation and strategic planning and an extensive international experience across the US, Europe, Middle East, Southeast Asia and Australia.

“We were not an LEP acceleration Council, therefore, no external money was available to do the LSPS. But I said no, we are going to be proactive about this - not reactive.

We are lucky our councillors are responsive to the changing requirements of strategic planning. We were afforded six meetings in six months which was great. They are engaged and informed and this helped immensely.

We started the process by asking, what do we want for Burwood? And we worked hard on developing that, including initiating workshops with councils we share a boundary with.

Then, in our first workshop with the NSW Government they asked where we were at. And we responded with a yellow butter-paper map and a few strategic arrows across it. By the time the District Plan requirements were added to the mix, the LSPS went from 30 to 80 pages. And we had to relate all actions and priorities to the State's plans.

We had to fight for our plan along the way - because this is a local strategic statement.

But then you have other considerations to factor in outside of us, like Parramatta Road which has a regional impact.

This has to be looked at because it's not a Council road, and our LSPS cannot solve the problem on its own.

My thoughts around Parramatta Road is that we consider it as something we have to do. The position we have asked the State to take is to please just tell people about the status of the PRCUTS (Parramatta Road Corridor Urban Transformation Strategy) - just tell people so they know how to plan.

But they don't seem to have anyone looking at that. In the 22 years I've been in Sydney, there has never been a management agency to really deal with Parramatta Road.

Perhaps they need a short-term body to coordinate this. Like they did for

Barangaroo - create a plan and set some principles. And let's make it the best enterprise corridor we can together.

Another important point - and I want to be fair about this - was the new Burwood North Metro Station. It's a game changer for us and Parramatta Road. We have met with Metro West numerous times and they have been proactive coming to meet with us. But the design is still TBA. They have set the expectation of not to expect any change for at least two years.

I guess that's like the thing that holds us back with Parramatta Road. The Ministerial Direction says that no uplift can happen unless there is an infrastructure plan to support it.

And we are still under that direction and with the Metro not here yet - only the EIS for the tunnelling available to the public - we can't decide what to do with it, or how to respond. The remit of the new Project Delivery Unit (PDU) within the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment supposedly includes the delivery of the PRCUTS. Funding? The Department of Premier and Cabinet are also calling us about public art along Parramatta Road. All of this begs for understanding of who's got the master plan on how it all fits together for a great outcome? Is it DPIE, Transport, P&C or the eight councils?

We are completely coming up with our own plan. So what does the state need to do? I think the state needs to let us get on with it.

I've worked on major capital works with the state. Planning is planning, and we know that things take a long time.

The GSC is committed to their KPI's and that's why they were successful in getting the LSPSs through.

The GSC had the right people around the table and brought agencies to the table too. That was good.

But then what happens? The revision of LEPs, DCPs and Local Housing Strategies go back to DPIE.

I met recently with the State and asked them, how are you organised to receive, review and make all of the amended LEPs within the deadline (mid-2021) set? What's the briefing to the planning panels, as planning authorities, so that they understand the significance of the LSPS in relation to the LEPs.

Because my concern is that we don't know what's next - and we have done all this work. We give it to DPIE and then it's a long time before we hear anything back.

It's not a criticism yet - because nothing had happened yet. But I feel we need to put some things in place this time to ensure there is a clear timetable.

I think as councils, we have to just keep putting the questions out there.

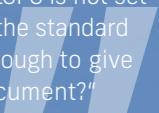
There has been an "us and them" mentality between councils and the state, but it's changing. If councils push a bit harder, that is be on the front foot, they may be able to keep more of their local character and have a more successful impact on the results.

I'm 80 / 20 person - potentially be willing to concede twenty percent, to get 80 percent of what we want.

We have 81 actions in our LSPS, and we are a small council. So we are now grappling with how do we respond with those as a council?

This project has a risk of just sitting on a shelf. There is a strong need for an implementation piece - how do we track the progress of those actions. A standard process is needed across all councils. Burwood has already included the LSPS actions into the IP&R system for FY 20/21 as a way to assign and measure success.

To my knowledge, there is no work being done on this? And the LSPS is not set up for that. So I ask, is the standard instrument effective enough to give effect to the LSPS document?"



Emerging Ideas

The conversations we have had have been both inspiring and on occasion daunting in their implications.

There were many more topics that could have been explored but these insights represent the key ideas and issues that arose through those conversations. In general it was clear there was considerable praise for the work the GSC have undertaken. Whilst it was not perfect – no system ever is – it was an extremely good base in which to build from. This is both from a technical planning perspective as well as a relationship building perspective.

This is only the beginning of contemporary strategic planning across the Greater Sydney Region. But it is a massive achievement to have at least started.

- 1 Advocacy
- 2 In(equity)
- 3 The “Office of Information”
- 4 Delivery
- 5 Nothing’s Perfect
- 6 Good Development

1

Advocacy

The LSPS documents have all set out to establish a vision. One that reflects their communities, their identity and their aspirations both now and into the future.

Some LGAs relied on existing information to generate this vision and set the course for the future while some have taken on the community's voice and translated this into a more meaningful conversation around the future shape of the LGA.

Obviously, pressures within each LGA are different. Some are dealing with amalgamation some with resource constraints, and the list goes on. All are dealing with issues of growth, whether that be growth from infill development or growth in greenfield areas. Some like Liverpool are experiencing a mix of both.

The District plans provide a broad pattern for urban development and an equally broad vision for the Greater Sydney region. They don't solve growth problems and they don't set out a vision for economic resilience. That is rightly the job of the LGA and the community.

Some LGAs took on this challenge boldly and set out a compelling vision that extended beyond the framework set out in the District Plans. Some explored key projects and initiatives that are ground-breaking for their communities and could help to drive a compelling economic narrative that has far reaching implications.

Many of these initiatives cannot be brought to fruition through the actions of the LGA alone and require State and even federal funding or a range of partnerships both private and with institutions such as universities and TAFE etc. This requires a vision, coupled with advocacy to drive delivery and funding. Some LGAs have done exactly that and chosen to extend beyond merely dealing with land use and transport models to explore regionally significant projects. In this respect the LSPS becomes more than a vision. It becomes an advocacy for an economic or transport narrative, that moves the conversation from housing diversity and land use to a more compelling city building proposition.

Liverpool City Council has realised this opportunity and have used the LSPS to promote a number of city wide initiatives the most significant being their FAST Corridor linking Liverpool City to the Aerotropolis. This corridor has the potential to drive a range of land use, transport and housing outcomes well beyond that envisaged in the District Plan. It's a sound idea worthy of some considerable investigation and investment. Liverpool City Council thinks so too and are using the LSPS as a platform to advocate for this outcome and also put it on the GSC's agenda.

1

In(equity)

Having a strong evidence base as well as good community feedback allows for a broader discussion around urban structure.

This is where the discussion with the community needs to begin. What do we want our city, neighbourhood, community to look like? There are a couple of key points here. One is the lack of certainty in the metropolitan plan and the other is the communities view on development.

Every structure plan is at its core a discussion about trying to create the most sustainable urban form that includes elements of economic development, liveability, movement and access (not just roads).

The District Plans provide some shape and form to a rapidly growing city. It does all those good things that a structure plan should – it shows major centres, growth areas, employment locations, areas of environmental value. It begins to fray at the edges however when transit connections are added. These are shown as visionary and look more like guess work than planning.

Most of the connections are likely to be good ideas and begin to make rational linkages between activity nodes. But there is a substantial lack of evidence to suggest how, why and when.

Every good structure plan needs to set out what the state interests are, such as housing, economic development, big ticket environmental matters (rivers, water catchments, RAMSAR, etc). It also needs to be backed by an infrastructure plan that is definitive in terms of delivery and implementation.

The danger in not doing this is in creating a two speed planning system where residential growth is running well ahead of infrastructure delivery. Some of this is happening already in parts of Sydney where housing is being created without adequate infrastructure to service them effectively.

Creating large areas of residential development may meet housing targets but it does little to create good places to live if those areas of residential development are not serviced by public transport, community facilities (schools, child care, etc), shops and retail services and perhaps more importantly employment. The danger is in the creation of areas of (relatively) affordable housing with little access to services and employment has the potential to create areas of social disadvantage.

The District Plans and the creation of housing needs to be tied the delivery of public transport, education and community services, open space, employment and other services. Community development needs to be the focus of the District Plan and the LSPS process in greenfield areas not just housing.

1

The "Office of Information"

2

State and local governments have always had fraught relationships. Its perhaps the nature of the beast.

3

With agendas that don't always align politically, financially, etc getting good development outcomes that represent a good balance of Local and State interests is not always easy through one on one negotiations. This is particularly so when the achievement of those development outcomes requires commitments in both money and infrastructure.

4

Into this environment the Greater Sydney Commission has stepped in. Along with being the holders of the Greater Sydney vision the GSC were tasked with oversight of Local Strategic Planning Statements being prepared by local councils.

5

Overwhelmingly the LGAs involved have seen the process and the outcomes to be successful. It has pushed the LGAs to take a long term strategic view of development in a spatial sense and begin to set out a development agenda on how and where and development is to be accommodated. It would be difficult to argue that each of the LGAs were not in a better position from a planning and development perspective now the LSPS process has been completed.

6

Many of the LGAs will argue that the timeframes were far too compressed in order to achieve the desired level of detail and in many respects that is perhaps more a function of bedding down a new process with outcomes that were not entirely clear. To draw from the old saying: it was like designing and building a car whilst trying to drive it to a place you had never been.

That will improve over time. But it does require some underlying elements to be improved.

The greatest success of the GSC as described by the LGAs has been to get the right people around the table. Being the holder of the Vision is one thing, but to be able to coordinate all the players to get the desired response is an ongoing critical role that is vital to achieving the vision. The current process has the GSC playing a key coordinator role - by getting agencies and departments to directly interface with each LGA. This model assumes there is a consistent view of what a state interest is as opposed to a local government interest. It also assumes that each department has a clear view of what can and can't be achieved through and as part of the LSPS process.

Nether of those two preconditions currently exist. There is no clear distinction between state and local interests and state agencies do not clearly understand the LSPS documents as a forward planning tool.

The opposite diagram explores a coordination model that is perhaps better fit for purpose that can better coordinate actions, activities and information between state and local governments. The GSC as a planning body has been enormously successful. But the GSC needs to play a broader role in coordinating feedback from all state agencies, assimilating that information into the district plan where a genuine state interest should be represented or passing specific information relevant to the development of the LSPS in a specific location directly to the LGA to properly process and plan for their local communities.

A number of LGAs noted there were inconsistencies between state government departments and agencies both in terms of the quality of information and indeed its relevance to the LSPS process. Having this information vetted before it reaches each LGA can deliver better consistency of information and shorten the feedback process with LGAs having to argue with agencies that the same information requirements could not be presented in the LSPS.

UDIA

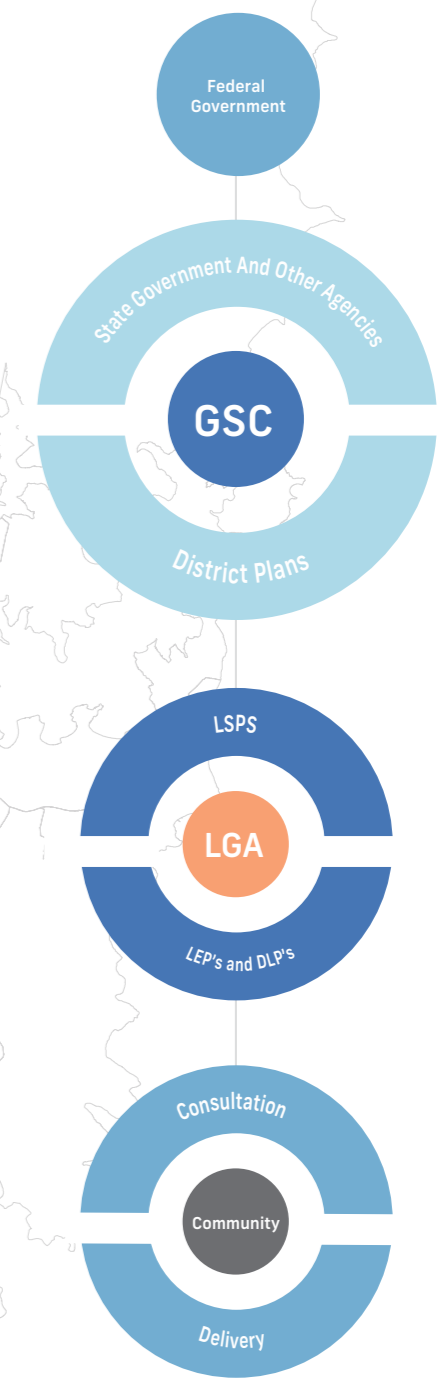


Figure 1: Coordination Model

1

Delivery

2

Implementation of a structure plan is every bit as important as the structure plan itself. Without timeframes and delivery frameworks then the structure plan is just a nice graphic.

3

Each LSPS contains an implementation schedule that identifies timing tasks and responsibilities for actions and priorities. This delivers certainty to those who benefit from the actions and for those who are responsible for delivery.

4

The District Plans however are presently failing to provide the same level of certainty that is required by the LSPS documents. From a planning perspective this is poor practice.

5

The District Plans need to provide certainty through definitive deliverable timeframes. At the moment the District Plans are too vague with respect to many of the public transport initiatives and even more vague its commitments to funding.

6

Essentially the State needs to develop an Infrastructure Plan which sets out clearly all funding costs and commitments, timeframes for delivery, detail on corridor alignments, etc. This enables local governments to align their strategic planning accordingly.

Most LSPS documents have aligned population growth to transport planning which in of itself is an appropriate model in terms of urban form. Indeed, throughout much of the public consultation for a number of the LSPS documents the general public supported the better alignment of land use, transport and housing diversity. The only thing lacking in this model is the certainty of the public transport and the commitment to funding. It is unreasonable to expect each LGA to properly plan for growth targets given the lack of State commitment to investment in infrastructure.

Without this clarity it is difficult for local government to appropriately respond with reasoned and logical local planning strategies particularly in terms of housing and economic development. It is clearly a major source of frustration for many of the LGAs preparing their LSPS documents

The State needs to prepare a comprehensive infrastructure plan that commits to funding and timing for all infrastructure items. If it is a requirement for all LGAs to prepare such a plan it is reasonable to expect the State to do the same.

1

Nothing's Perfect

2

Good structure planning in fact good planning of any type should be evidence based. It provides a solid basis for decision making.

3

How information has been gathered for the preparation of these founding LSPS documents has varied from LGA to LGA. Given the tight timeframes and the uncertainty of the endpoint LGAs opted for a variety of evidence sources to support their documents.

4

Again its easy to be critical how this was done but listening to many of those in charge of preparing the LSPS documents you can understand their logic.

5

Some LGAs relied on existing studies some produced a range of studies while others relied entirely on community consultation to drive the LSPS document and will look to refine their documents in subsequent rounds of amendments.

6

Which is the better approach, time will tell. But it must be remembered that not all LGAs are equal. Some are far better resourced than others and others have their own internal issues to resolve. Canterbury Bankstown City for instance is still trying to reconcile internal systems from the recent amalgamation. Others had very little resources in terms of either personnel or finances with which to complete the documents.

This along with tight timeframes drives innovation in terms of how documents are produced. Some geared up with full consultant teams to produced in depth technical reports on a range of issues. Some opted to rely solely on technical information at hand and some a combination of both. Either way the exercise did a lot to focus planning efforts on the broad range of issues facing each LGA. It did raise planners eyes from the present to the future. Some will openly admit that the exercise engaged them with the length and breadth of their own LGA in a way that had not done previously. In this respect the exercise though not perfect was extremely useful in reconsidering the nature of planning in each LGA and from a regional perspective.

1

Good Development

2

Through the process of interviews and discussion with planning managers and directors of a number of the LGAs it was clear there was extensive areas of common ground and potential areas of collaboration particularly at this level between LGAs.

3

We have discussed already the greater role that the GSC, or some similar body, can play in the information flow between State and Local government. Similarly, there is certainly more that can be achieved between LGAs themselves.

4

The roundtable sessions were particularly cathartic for some managers and directors being able to have a platform in which to discuss many of the planning issues they were dealing with on a week to week basis. The insights gained have informed this work.

5

The UDIA has a long history of working with the development industry to educate, innovate and advocate. The UDIA believe fundamentally that they are here to advocate for good development and not just represent developers.

6

This publication is a way to engage more meaningfully with LGAs and those who are at the forefront of development in those LGAs to engage in a dialogue about raising the standard of development across Sydney.

The UDIA is a willing partner in this respect to advocate on behalf of LGAs to achieve their vision for development set out in the LSPS documents. Some LGAs have already taken the opportunity to enlist the help of the UDIA to get their key messages out. Blacktown City Council help and held an information session in conjunction with the UDIA to talk about their vision and outcomes of the LSPS. The session talked less about the specifics of the documents and talked more about key outcomes and the major elements of the document. In this regard the session was more of an advocacy exercise than simply providing information.

In this regard the UDIA's role into the future is to ensure there is an ongoing dialogue between LGAs, and between LGAs and the State and the development industry to ensure there is a regular and constant communication and to ensure there is voice advocating for good development.



Just One More Thing...

At the end of each interview, council representatives were asked one final question, "If you had one last thing to say to the State in support of greater collaboration and success moving forward, what would it be?" Here is what they said:

"Listen"

-Anonymous

"Like any new process there are learnings because it's the first time we have done this. So maybe get 360's from EVERYONE."

-Anonymous

"How we get good alignment between all policies is an issue, but my concern is that the funding needs to come. All the community cares about is that stuff happens. So we want to make sure it does, and that this plan doesn't sit on the shelf."

-Anonymous

"Please be more definitive - There is no one accountable for the LSPS actions at State level, but we are being held accountable. The State could perhaps be more definitive in this space to support things working better together. "

-Anonymous

"Please take onboard some of the feedback that we are providing in the manner that we are providing it. It's not us banging our chest or bagging it. We are in support of the process and see it as essential - I think everyone has approached this where they have tried to be collaborative."

-Anonymous

"The less vague the better"

-Anonymous



A Way Forward: LSPS

The development industry is navigating uncertain times, and transparency and greater certainty around planning rules and obligations has never been more important. With supply pipelines in Sydney retracting by 45% since the peak in September 2016 (nearly 4 years ago) and forward demand profiles hard to predict because of COVID-19, providing clarity and certainty to the industry about what can be built, where and at what cost is critically important.

The NSW planning system is the most complex and costly planning system in Australia, with local scale land use planning rules and regulations varying wildly across the State. The overarching intent of Local Strategic Planning Statements (LSPS) is to provide a strategic vision for a Council area and position local economic, social and environmental priorities. The LSPS is tasked with providing granular detail and connection to the District and Regional planning strategies – setting out clear planning priorities and actions. These are sound objectives.

The Councils who participated in the UDIA / Place Design Group Insights Report have been clear about what they want: transparency around the process, clear alignment between their vision and local controls, and the certainty from State Government to be able to deliver committed local initiatives which the community now expects.

Some believe that “time will tell” but we don’t want to wait years for the LSPS to find its place in the grand scheme of the planning system. This should become apparent quickly to show the value from the investment in the LSPS preparation process. The test will be to see if the LSPS leads to meaningful change in LEPs. In certain instances the LSPS has created a new layer of

regulation, which has delayed DA and planning proposal determinations as Councils and industry have sought to understand what the implications from the LSPS will be on land use rules.

UDIA will continue to, support the GSC and the Department of Planning as custodians of the strategic planning vision and overseers of the LSPS implementation program. Accordingly, we want to see the judicious implementation of the LSPSs into Local Environmental Plans (LEPs) which shine a light on local economic development and the need for integrated land use and transport planning. The industry and government must forge strong collaborations for these initiatives to come to fruition.

Now is the time for the State Government to show it is listening to Councils and industry and to harvest ideas from those on the ground. Already, we are seeing a renewed focus from State Government to alleviate the pressure on Local Government, such as through the establishment of the Planning Delivery Unit (PDU), which will act as a “one stop shop” for complex planning proposals. The PDU will have the mandate to act across LGAs to deliver large scale redevelopment, such as across the Parramatta Road corridor and to deliver process / cultural improvements.

The local perspective on a reform project of this size is critical. Local idiosyncrasies inform and shape diversity across the urban fabric of NSW. We need to ensure we’re not forcing Councils into a mould that fits a certain agenda, but allows for local developments to flourish in keeping with the local area, while still supporting the State’s growth and economic development agenda. Finding the balance between local character and unifying Councils across the metropolis to create a vision for change remains a difficult task for the GSC and the Department of Planning.

I want to see the LSPS become the lynchpin which ultimately delivers a more efficient way to make local planning work in NSW. A short, sharp planning document which delivers key economic opportunities and allows for planning controls to be amended accordingly. The NSW Government has the opportunity to shift the paradigm from a focus on land use alone to establishing vibrant, connected cities.

Over the coming term UDIA NSW will be advocating for:

- » Better collaboration between State and Local Governments and industry with the goal of identifying and delivering new economic opportunities to LGAs.
- » Ensuring the LSPS implementation process does not become a bottle neck in the planning process, but enables local controls to reflect current priorities to generate economic development opportunities.
- » A reinstated Urban Development Program (UDP) for Greater Sydney to provide a clear line of sight for forward development and infrastructure coordination across each Council area – to help track progress towards the visions and aspirations set out in each LSPS.
- » Provide a clear planning ecosystem which creates liveable, affordable and connected cities

UDIA NSW will be playing an active role in amplifying the need for clarity between Local and State priorities. We want Government to give clear direction on land use and transport infrastructure coordination, together with the enabling infrastructure needed to build cities. We are listening to Local Government’s concerns that adequate infrastructure delivery must run alongside residential growth. The need for this has been foreshadowed through the strategies and it is important that the LSPS becomes a central and vital document and not a burden for Local Governments to bear, with the core aspiration of helping identify local opportunities for economic growth and collaboration across the state of NSW.

Steve Mann
CEO UDIA NSW

Thank you

Partners

This program proudly delivered in partnership with:

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Stephen Smith, Principal
Place Design Group



Erin Ashford, Principal
Place Design Group

Participating Councils

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Blacktown City Council
Burwood Council
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Liverpool City Council
Strathfield Council
City of Sydney
Camden Council
Penrith City Council
City of Ryde
The Hills Shire Council





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