

Submission of Master Plan Applications

Additional Guidance – Submission of Master Plan Applications

Purpose

This Guideline provides an overview of preparing a Master Plan application and the information generally required by the Urban Planning Department in the Ministry of Municipality and Environment (MME) when submitting a Master Plan Application.

This process would be used primarily for projects over 50,000sqm, sites over 5ha within Metropolitan Doha, sites 10ha and above outside Metropolitan Doha, sites non-compliant with the zone, Special Development Areas and Special Centre Zones.

Objectives

The objectives of the Guideline are to:

1. Standardise the scope, format, content and submission of Master Plan applications
2. Set the criteria by which a proposal is considered a 'Master Plan'
3. Detail the information required to be provided for each application
4. Encourage pre-lodgement consultation
5. Provide an overview of the Master Plan application process

What is a Master Plan?

A Master Plan is an appropriate and considered physical planning framework or blue-print to guide the future development of a site by stages or precincts. A Master Plan establishes a framework for the coordinated provision and arrangement of future land use, subdivision and development in new urban areas (greenfield sites) and in existing developed/redevelopment areas (brownfield sites) within metropolitan and regional areas. It coordinates the provision of transport networks, urban design concepts, public open space, utility and service networks, urban water management, development standards and community and other infrastructure investment and staging programs. A Master Plan is a particularly important planning instrument for land held in fragmented or multiple ownership.

The Master Plan should succinctly and articulately define how each stage or precinct will be individually developed such that the development as a whole integrates efficiently, effectively and harmoniously to create communities that:

- are well connected by public and private transport, pedestrians and bicycle networks
- have vibrant and attractive: buildings, public realms, streets, parks, malls, public access to waterfront (where applicable) and a network of open spaces
- are supported by an appropriate road network, bridges, utility services and social infrastructure
- support potential and existing tourist networks and facilities
- have a high degree of self-containment with mixed land-use activities
- have a regionally, climatic and culturally appropriate landscaping character

While a Master Plan application is separate to the development permit application and development application approval process, its approval establishes (amongst other items) the detailed land-use and zoning on which future development permit applications can be made.

Instructions for Master Plan Assessment Selection

Below are criteria that can be used to assess whether a proposal can qualify as a Master Plan.

When flexibility is needed

A proposal may not be anticipated by the zone regulations, which could mean that the proposal is classed as 'Prohibited' meaning that an application cannot be made. That was a purposeful mechanism inserted into the regulations and is based on one of the regulations' underlying principles: simplicity . A departure outside the regulations may however be permissible in some circumstances *where it can be demonstrated that there is an overall improvement in planning outcomes and/or the achievement of Government objectives*. The master plan route would provide the opportunity for the need for flexibility to be demonstrated. Instances where exceptions can be made are where the proposal:

- Is of strategic importance for example it is in a very prominent location where a higher standard of environmental outcomes should be sought;
- Is of cultural or heritage importance for example is extends over an area containing several heritage items so planning and development must be carried out in a very careful manner to ensure protection of those items;
- Is located in an environmentally sensitive location, for example is located in one of the Environmentally Protected Areas or in the Coastal Protection zone;
- Is delivering a major Government outcome or public work (e.g. an integrated health or education precinct) which needs to be integrated into the surrounding community

Scale

A proposal may be of such a scale or extent that assessment against the zone regulations alone would not fully address the full environmental effects of the proposal. The proposal may have a strategic impact on for example retail distribution or the centres hierarchy, which could be better explored through the Master Plan assessment process. A proposal may also cut across municipal or other jurisdictions, zones or character areas which makes a comprehensive assessment through several separate development applications difficult but would be resolved through assessment as a single master plan application.

Fragmented title ownership

A proposal may extend over several titles where separate planning applications make it difficult to align owners' interests and guarantee a good planning outcome. A Master Plan ensures alignment and that development is carried out in a coordinated manner.

Where added transparency is needed

Where a proposal is contentious and there is significant public interest it may need to be subjected to a greater level of scrutiny, and consultation processes adapted for greater public involvement, which are possible through the Master Plan process. The application would be assessed against the zone regulations and also the Master Plan approval criteria ensuring a more rigorous assessment and that the wider strategic dimension is explored and addressed.

Greenfield and Mixed Use developments

On larger greenfield sites and intense mixed use developments, Master Plans are a particularly appropriate tool to ensure development is carried out in a coordinated and comprehensive manner and anticipated environmental outcomes are achieved. On greenfield sites master plans define basic geographical and management frameworks around which future land uses, provision of infrastructure, open space networks and transport linkages will be based. In intense mixed use developments where success is based on nuanced treatment master plans ensure that the right activities, interventions and densities are inserted into exactly the right places.



Summary

In summary the following criteria are circumstances where a Master Plan approach can be considered:

The proposal –

1. Is of strategic importance
2. Is identified to use the Master plan process for its determination such as a Special Development Area and Special Centre Zones
3. Contributes to the achievement of Government State interest outcomes
4. Contains several elements of cultural or heritage importance
5. Is located in an environmentally sensitive location
6. Is of a scale and extent that creates an environmental impact that needs assessment at a strategic level
7. Cuts across municipal jurisdictions, covers multiple zones or character areas
8. Contains land that is held in multiple ownership
9. Is particularly contentious and should be subjected to a greater level of scrutiny, and/or public ability to comment should be expanded.
10. Developments 5ha and above in Metropolitan Doha and 10ha and above elsewhere

It is purposefully not defined as to how many of these criteria need to be satisfied before a proposal could be considered a 'master plan', to allow decision makers the flexibility to make decisions on a case by case basis. Some are standalone, such as No. 9 which on its own is sufficient, but other proposals may require satisfaction of several criteria.

Master Plan Application

Applications for a Master Plan approval must demonstrate compliance or alignment with key policy and regulatory plans and documents. The Master Plan application must be supported by a written report that addresses the following:

Qatar National Development Framework 2032

The Master Plan application must demonstrate alignment with the following provisions of the Qatar National Development Framework 2032 (QNDF):

- 17 Strategic Planning Objectives
- the spatial strategy as outlined in Figures 3.3 and 3.3a
- the structure plan, planning objectives and future growth management for the relevant municipality identified in Section 4.0
- all relevant Policies and Policy Actions identified in Sections 5.0 – 10.0
- compliance with the Regulatory Provisions identified in Section 12.0

Municipal Planning Context and Assessment

The Master Plan application must demonstrate alignment with the relevant municipal planning document. Local Neighbourhood Audit

The Master Plan application must take into consideration the subject site and adjoining neighbourhood to determine suitability/compatibility with the proposed development. Relevant considerations may include:

- Site constraints such as slope, flooding, geotechnical and ground water issues
- Compatibility with adjoining developments
- Compatibility with visual setting (e.g. wadis, foreshores, streetscape, etc)
- The local urban design framework and character (e.g. zoning, building heights, social profiles, environmental/physical character, etc)
- Existing use of the site and the date that use commenced

- Existing use of land immediately adjoining the site
- Existing cultural and heritage constraints
- Existing infrastructure constraints (including but not limited to roads, electricity, water and telecommunication)
- Site contamination
- Solar and predominate wind orientation

Proposed Development

The Master Plan application must provide sufficient detail about the proposed development to enable assessment against the planning provisions outlined above and to determine the impact of the proposed development on the site and local neighbourhood.

The Master Plan application must include, as a minimum, the following information:

- a) Details of the proposed stages, precincts or phases
- b) Location and allocation of land-uses and buildings
- c) Approximate GFA of each land-use
- d) Maximum building heights
- e) Proposed residential and employment population and densities (including methodology and assumptions)
- f) Existing and proposed road network and hierarchy
- g) Social and Economic Impact Assessment Report (SEIA) detailing the economic and social justification and need for the project
- h) Non-vehicular movement
- i) Public transport provision
- j) Infrastructure provision
- k) Community facilities provision
- l) Heritage features
- m) Sustainability features and ratings (such as GSAS, LEEDS, etc)
- n) Urban design elements and philosophy (including design standards, criteria and parameters adopted)

Additional Information

All Master Plan applications are different. MME reserves the right to alter or request additional information based on the individual Master Plan application.

Submission Format

The applicant shall submit the following documentation:

- Hard copies of all reports, drawings and information submitted
- Digital copies of all reports, drawings and information submitted in unprotected PDF, document and approved CAD & GIS formats (approved CAD & GIS format requirements will be provided through the pre-lodgement meetings)



Master Plan Report

The Master Plan Report shall be in A3 landscape format and shall address the information identified in Section 4 above. The Master Plan Report shall include details of any consultation undertaken with relevant authorities and shall include any relevant data, appendices, supporting information and any written letters of no objection.

Site Analysis Plan

A site plan must be provided and should include the following information:

- a) Property address including Parcel Identification Number(s) or PIN(s)
- b) Total site area
- c) Site co-ordinates
- d) Existing contours and key spot elevations on Qatar Height Datum
- e) Existing structures and existing buildings
- f) Location and spread of all trees and existing vegetation and natural features (such as rock outcrops) on the site
- g) Adjacent land-uses and activities
- h) Potential constraints such as over-shadowing, overlooking, views, building bulk and landscaping
- i) Views to, from and through the site
- j) Sunshine, prevailing winds and other climatic conditions
- k) Visual (photographic) survey of site and adjacent areas with locations of images identified on a map
- l) Environmental features
- m) Heritage features
- n) Location of infrastructure features

Supporting Plans

The following supporting plans should also be provided:

- a) Master Plan layout
- b) Phasing Plan
- c) Elevation and sectional drawings illustrating key elements of the Master Plan
- d) Perspective drawing illustrating key elements of the Master Plan
- e) Existing and proposed road network and hierarchy
- f) Existing and proposed public open space network
- g) Existing and proposed pedestrian and cycle network
- h) Existing and proposed public transport network
- i) Existing and proposed utilities assessment layout plans
- j) Existing and proposed community facilities

All plans and drawings must contain the following minimum information:

- All dimensions to be shown in metric
- Standard metric scale shown as both a ratio and bar scale
- Plans to show true north

- Drawing or document title, drawing number, issue number and date
- Name of consultant who prepared the drawings

Pre-Lodgement Meetings

Prior to lodging an application for a Master Plan approval, a series of pre-lodgement meetings should be agreed and set between the applicant and the Urban Planning Department, who will assemble relevant stakeholders in the process..

Pre-lodgement meetings are useful to guide applicants in the preparation of the Master Plan. They help to identify key issues, identify and agree on broad outcomes and provide informal advice on elements of the draft Master Plan.

It is also recommended that a series of pre-lodgement meetings be held with the relevant Municipality and any other affected government ministries and agencies.

Lodging a Master Plan Application

Applications for a Master Plan approval must be lodged with the Urban Planning Department for assessment and determination

A Master Plan application may be approved: in whole or in part; with or without conditions; or it may be refused in part or in whole.

Once a Master Plan has been approved, subsequent development applications can be submitted with the relevant Municipality for assessment.

