

Pre-application common questions

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| [**Implementation note**: Include your council’s branding and delete these notes prior to publishing this solution] |

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| [**Implementation note**: The process described, and timeframes given will need to be tailored to your councils’ specific process] |

What is the purpose of the pre-application process?

The pre-application process is a two-way conversation between you (the permit applicant) and council’s planning officers. This discussion is intended to provide you with a better understanding of council policy and officer’s views. This process also provides our officers with a better understanding of your proposal. After the pre-application process, you should be clear on what council expects and the upcoming planning process. We look forward to meeting with you to discuss your proposal.

What are the benefits to the applicant of the pre-application process?

From the pre-application process, you will receive:

* A clearer understanding of relevant planning policies and guidelines.
* Clarification on the planning assessment process.
* Merits-based advice to help refine your proposal prior to applying for a planning permit.
* A point of contact within the Statutory Planning team.

How does the pre-application process work?

This diagram explains the steps and timelines for the pre-application process [insert link to, or direct users to the pre-application process map also available in this suite of solutions]

Who is likely to benefit from a pre-application meeting?

If you **have no or limited experience with the planning system**, a pre-application may assist with a better understanding of the planning process. Please get in touch with the Statutory Planning team – planning can be complicated but we are here to help (refer Question 7 below). If you are a more experienced applicant, a pre-application meeting may still be helpful, depending on the scale and complexity of the application.

A meeting will typically be required for these application types:

* [insert application types in your council that should be referred to a pre-application meeting]
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Upon reviewing your request for a pre-application meeting, planning officers will advise of next steps and take the following action:

* For more straight forward matters you should expect a call [and/or] follow-up email with some simple comments.
* For more complex matters, a meeting will be arranged, and meeting notes reflecting the conversation will then be issued to you. [remember to amend this to reflect your councils specific process]

Where a meeting is required, to make sure we have enough information and that the meeting maximises benefit; we prefer to receive these documents ahead of the meeting:

* A brief written summary of your proposal.
* A plan showing all relevant site opportunities and constraints.
* Planning drawings, including floor plans and elevations (as necessary).
* Where relevant, details of the current use of the land as well as the proposed use. This may include:
  + The nature of the use(s)
  + Operating hours
  + Number of employees
  + The anticipated car parking requirements and vehicle movements generated by the use/development. This includes staff and visitor parking, waste collection and delivery arrangements
* The ESD/sustainability credentials of the use/development. This might include solar devices, water harvesting measures and bicycle parking facilities.
* Any other technical information relevant to your proposal. This might include the preliminary advice of a heritage, acoustic or land contamination consultant, for example.

How long will the pre-application process take?

Where you don’t need a meeting, a call and follow-up email or written response is provided within [insert timeframe] of your request. The complexity of your request will determine the type of response provided.

Where a meeting is necessary, we will send an invite within [insert timeframe] of your request. Meetings will be held within [insert timeframe] of your request. A written response, setting out the key matters discussed, will then be provided within [insert timeframe] of the meeting. The total process takes about [insert timeframe] (But has the potential to save significant time during the application process).

What should I do to prepare for the pre-application process?

To help us give you the best advice, we encourage you to:

* Generate a Planning Property Report for your site (refer https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/schemes-and-amendments/planning-report-search). This shows all relevant planning controls
* With reference to the Planning Property Report, review the [insert your council's name] Planning Scheme, including all relevant controls and policies that apply [insert link to your council’s planning scheme]
  + The [insert your council's name] Planning Scheme has Local and State policies that our planning officers will discuss with you – they might be important for your proposal.
* Obtain a current copy of title for the land (refer www.landata.vic.gov.au). [you may also want to link the ‘obtaining a title instruction video’ which is another solution in this suite] This will assist in understanding if encumbrances outside the planning process exist. These encumbrances could affect your proposal.
* Have a conversation with your neighbours – they will likely receive notice of the assessment later in the application process, so it can help to gauge their thoughts early on. They might provide feedback on the impact to them, trees they like protected, or other things you hadn’t considered.

Where do I start the pre-application process?

[Insert council specific process here for lodging a pre-app request or getting prepared to lodge one. You may have this built into your website, for example.]

Who can I contact to find out more?

If this all sounds a bit scary, don’t worry, our friendly staff can assist. Planning officers are available at the Statutory Planning counter [insert address here] during business hours.

If you are not able to visit our offices, planning advice can also be obtained by calling [insert phone number] or emailing [insert email here]. We look forward to hearing from you.