

Preliminary Planning Application Procedure

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What is a Preliminary Application?

Owners of properties often request District staff to provide an indication of the development potential of their properties, or an indication of whether approval is likely for their proposal. These questions require research of current plans, bylaws and policies, as well as a site review and discussion with various District departments. In response to such inquiries, the District has developed a ***“Preliminary Application”*** process. While staff cannot predict whether Council will support any proposal, staff can identify key issues the applicant should address and assess whether the overall intent of the proposal fits with adopted long-term planning policies. The preliminary application also provides an opportunity for the applicant to obtain community feedback at an early stage.

Development of properties may involve one or more of the following planning procedures, including:

- Official Community Plan Amendment
- Rezoning
- Subdivision
- Development Permit
- Development Variance Permit

The preliminary application process will clearly indicate to the applicant whether the proposal is in line with current planning policy and which planning procedures are required to complete the development. The process will also provide the applicant with a summary of District requirements, identify any technical requirements (such as traffic studies or environmental requirements), identify design objectives and highlight Community Association concerns that will need to be addressed in a detailed proposal. This information is intended to provide direction and assist the applicant in determining whether it is feasible to proceed with the detailed application.

Submission Requirements

Submission requirements for the preliminary application are nominal, and are intended to allow applicants to briefly describe their proposal, without incurring the costs of professionally prepared plans at this early stage. Application requirements are indicated on the application form (obtainable from the Community Planning Department counter), and include the following. **Incomplete applications cannot be accepted.**

- ☐ Preliminary application fee;
- ☐ Written authorization from the registered land owner(s) of the subject property or authority for an agent to act on their behalf;
- ☐ Current title search for each parcel including all charges (covenants, right of ways, easements & applicable legal notices) dated within 14 days of application or payment of title search fee;
- ☐ Written outline of the proposed development, including a description of the present and intended use of the site. Outline should indicate the rationale for the project and indicate impacts and benefits to the community (10 copies);
- ☐ A site plan and/or other supporting plans or photographs which indicate the intent of the proposal. (Detailed architectural or landscape plans are not necessary at the preliminary application stage.) (10 copies submitted in 11"x17" and full size.);
- ☐ The site plan/sketch should indicate any existing trees and natural features that might affect the proposal, including areas of steep slope or watercourses;
- ☐ For projects located within a town or village centre or fronting on an arterial or collector road (other than single-family uses) include at a minimum a statistics sheet, proposed density, number of storeys, parking access location, precedent images, and a preliminary construction strategy indicating the way in which the project is proposed to be built (truck access, staging locations, co-ordination with other area projects, construction schedule, etc.)

Preliminary Planning Applications Procedure

- ☐ For projects requiring a rezoning that would result in the demolition of a building or combination of buildings containing five or more rental dwelling units, include a summary of the number of existing residential rental units and copies of any communication materials that have been provided to existing tenants. (For more information, please review the [Residential Tenant Relocation Assistance Policy](#).);
- ☐ A copy of the plan/sketch reduced to 8 1/2" x 11". The plan must be readable at this scale for distribution to neighbours;
- ☐ Site Profile (for properties where commercial/ industrial activity may have occurred);
- ☐ For applications where an air space parcel subdivision is contemplated, a written description of intentions, a compelling rationale regarding the need for an airspace parcel, and a conceptual airspace parcel subdivision layout (prepared by an architect or registered surveyor).
- ☐ Electronic submission in PDF format, of all plans and reports is encouraged (by means of CD or USB device with individual file size not to exceed 200mb). This does not eliminate the need for paper copies listed above.

Title Search

All Preliminary Applications must be accompanied by a title search dated no more than 14 days prior to the date of the application except where a change of ownership or title information has occurred more recently, in which case the new title search is required. Title searches may be obtained in person for a fee from The Land Title Office, 88-6th Street, New Westminster, B.C. V3L 5B3 (Search and Information Counter). Alternatively, title searches may be obtained from the Community Planning Department as part of the application submission for a fee.

Processing Procedures

Following submission of the preliminary application, the following steps take place:

- **Department Review** - The Community Planning Department coordinates the review of the application with the Environment, Engineering, Building, Land and Bylaw Services, Transportation, Fire and Parks Departments (as appropriate to the application). The departmental review will provide preliminary comments on

policy issues and identify design criteria. Additional information or revisions that will be required if the application proceeds to the detailed stage will also be identified.

- **Public Art Consultation** – All preliminary applications for rezoning and development permits are referred to the Tourism, Arts and Culture Department for early discussion regarding public art for the project.
- **Referral to other agencies** – Depending on the complexity of the application and the level of design development provided, the application may be presented to the Advisory Design Panel or other agencies for comment and direction at an early stage.
- **Community Review** – Public input is part of all applications in the DNV and will be done in accordance with the DNV Public Notification Policy (#8-3060-3). For rezoning proposals, the applicant is encouraged to present their proposal at a Community Association meeting to discuss the preliminary concept.
- **Summary Letter to Applicant** – The applicant will be provided with a summary letter which outlines all District requirements and community issues. Applicants can then decide whether to proceed with the detailed application. Typically, the following will be included in the summary letter:
 - ☒ An indication from staff whether the application appears feasible, whether it may or may not receive staff support, and the conditions and/or design objectives that need to be satisfied to receive staff support.
 - ☒ A list of the planning procedures needed to complete the development proposal.
 - ☒ The recommended sequence of development approvals will be outlined, with a general indication of the timeframe required.
 - ☒ Servicing requirements for the development will be noted.
 - ☒ Any technical issues requiring resolution will be noted. For example, if the site is indicated as a geotechnical hazard area, the requirements for a Development Permit will be noted.

Preliminary Planning Applications Procedure

- ☒ Any community issues that are identified by the community association or affected neighbours.
- ☒ Any comments from the advisory bodies.

Preliminary Application Timeline

The preliminary application process requires approximately one to eight months to complete. This amount of time is required for staff analysis, site visit, agency and neighbour referrals, and preparation of the summary report to the applicant. At the end of this process, applicants should have a clear indication of the steps needed to complete their detailed application. If any significant policy, design or technical issues are apparent, these will be clearly identified.