



# HUME CITY COUNCIL KEY ISSUES FOR PROPERTY OWNERS FACT SHEET

The purpose of this fact sheet is to assist property owners in overcoming the misunderstandings and frustrations that may result from the process of a permit application.

The most common concern is time delays, so it is important to understand the process:

- The most important first step is to take advantage of pre-application discussions. Many misunderstandings that may occur can be prevented by this cost free utilisation of Planning Officer's expertise.
- Applications must be fully documented on lodgement. Officers need to have all the relevant information to make a proper assessment of the proposal.
- You should also consider consulting with your neighbours if they might in any way be impacted by your development proposal. Refer to the planning application checklist relevant to the particular proposal being applied for.
- If you use a consultant, they will become the applicant with whom Council will communicate. This often leads to owner's frustration as you don't know what is going on. Ensure your communication with your consultant/ applicant is regular to ensure you are kept fully informed of the status of your application.
- Planning Scheme Controls are complex. Council Officers are required by law to comply with a number of planning controls, which inevitably impact on the information we need from you. These controls may relate to (amongst other things)
  - Site contamination from previous uses (e.g. former industrial activities)
  - Conservation and heritage
  - Council managed infrastructure requirements related to roads, drainage and footpaths
  - The requirements of statutory authorities e.g. Melbourne Water, VicRoads and EPA.

It is often the case that Council may request from the applicant further information to assist in the proper consideration and assessment of the application. The applicants may take some additional time to satisfy Council's request for further information. Council does actively encourage prospective applicants to undertake pre-application consultation with Council Officers to minimise the need to request further information.

Each of these planning considerations demand that an appropriately qualified Council employee (including engineers, landscape architects, environmental planners as required) must have input and report on aspects of the planning application.

Referral authorities such as Melbourne Water and VicRoads may be consulted prior to further progression of the application.

- Referral authorities: These bodies have authority over their aspect of the application and their determinations must be heeded. We must await their response before proceeding to the next step.
- The application may need to be advertised and neighbours advised in accordance with the ***Planning and Environment Act 1987***. A fixed time to respond prior to Council making a decision is mandatory, and must be 14 days minimum.

Please turn over for more requirements

- There may be objectors to your application. In some cases officers may liaise with objectors to see if there is any opportunity to overcome objections by requiring changes to the plan. Where there are more than 10 objections there may be a consultation meeting called to enable a better understanding of key issues and concerns. It may also lead to compromises acceptable to all parties and even in some cases a withdrawal of objections. If the objection remains after consultation, a further delay is often incurred. If Council's decision in relation to granting a permit is appealed at Victorian Civil Administrative Tribunal a further delay of several months will be incurred.

(A Council document entitled "Decision Timelines for Town Planning Applications" is available which gives you specific details regarding the processes that affect the timeline of an application).

Two significant causes of delays within your (or your applicant's) ability to control are:

- When we list the information we seek from you or your applicant, not responding fully to all issues will inevitably cause delays.
- If you decide to alter your plans part way through the process, you may cause several of the above requirements such as advertising, to be revisited. For these reasons Council recommends you talk to your neighbours about your plans prior to lodging an application.

Many of the problems outlined may be lessened or avoided during the process by keeping in touch with your nominated planning officer if you are the applicant or your consultant if you are not the applicant.