



# PLANNING APPLICATION PROCESS

Below is a handy guide to understanding the sometimes lengthy process to getting town planning approval for your project. At Change of Plan we believe the key to a successful and speedy outcome is in the planning or Pre-Application phase. While we can't change the regulated steps an application goes through (as mandated by the State Government), a well planned application will experience less bumps during the process.

## PRE-APPLICATION

This phase of the process is your best opportunity to influence the speed and likelihood of a successful outcome of your planning application. During this phase, you will learn the constraints and opportunities for your site. Experienced Town Planners like those from Change Of Plan who have worked within Councils can provide valuable insight here. Often a pre-application meeting with the Council during this stage is useful in obtaining further information on Council's likely position on your project. Armed with this information Change of Plan can make a strong outline of your vision for the project.

Prior to the final submission to Council any significant issues will be identified and discussed, and include advice as to possible outcomes (such as possible permit conditions or a chance of refusal).

Once the final plans have been prepared, the application material will be collated and lodged at the Council.

## COUNCIL APPLICATION PROCESS

The actual process through Council is simple, but often lengthy and frustrating. There are several points where the application can stall, and unfortunately many of these queues are outside of your control. These stem from the Council or from external stakeholders such as referral authorities and neighbours.

Good Town Planning firms like Change Of Plan understand the town planning process and use that knowledge to provide the information the Council is after, in the language and format that they understand. Providing the necessary information is key in minimising the time spent in the queues.

## DECISION

There are three decisions that Council may make:

### Planning Permit

If Council supports your project they will issue you with a planning permit. The permit contains a number of conditions that you must abide by, and may include some changes that are required before you can commence. If these conditions are unworkable there is the option of getting them reviewed at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT).

### Notice of Decision

If Council supports your application, but there are objectors, Council must go through a preliminary step prior to issuing a permit. Council will first issue a Notice of Decision. Objectors now have an opportunity to request a review of Council's decision at VCAT.

### Refusal

If Council refuses your application, you have an opportunity to appeal that decision at VCAT, 60 days from when the Refusal was issued to lodge an appeal.