

Early public engagement



Merri-bek
City Council

This guide helps planning permit applicants to communicate with their neighbours.

Standard Public Notice Process

When applying for a planning permit, Council may notify those impacted, providing the community a chance to express support or objection.

This process is called '**Public Notification**' and typically involves letters to impacted properties and on-site signs.

Considerations for early public engagement

Consider talking with your neighbours before submitting a planning application, instead of waiting for the official Public Notification period.

Benefits of this include:

- ✓ Preventing neighbours from being surprised by Council's Public Notification.
- ✓ Knowing neighbours' concerns before submitting the application.
- ✓ Having the opportunity to make changes addressing neighbours' concerns.

How should I approach neighbours?

Consider whether you have a pre-existing relationship with them.

I know this neighbour



Talk through your plans with them and respond to any of their questions or concerns early in the process.

Try popping around for a chat.

Provide detailed information about your plan, and any reasons for it. Be open-minded to their concerns and potential solutions.

I don't know this neighbour



The decision depends on your own comfort level when it comes to communicating with people you don't know.

Try putting a letter in their letter box to inform them of your plan.

Include detailed information about the plan and an invitation to discuss the plan further and any concerns the neighbour may have.

Tips when talking neighbours

- ✓ Communicate that plans are preliminary and may change.
- ✓ Explain the reasons behind your design.
- ✓ Stay open-minded about making changes to address concerns.
- ✓ Avoid pressuring someone to support your proposal.

What kinds of things might concern them?

Community members may raise concerns about planning applications, and some could be valid objections. Everyone has a right to submit an objection to a planning permit application.

Consider these concerns and use them as a reference when discussing your proposal's impact on someone.

Common concerns generally not considered valid grounds for objection:



- Loss of property value
- Impacts on views
- Commercial competition
- Who will live in the development
- Increased vehicle pollution
- Asbestos removal
- Boundary fencing between private properties (covered by the Fences Act)
- Construction process impact (addressed at the building permit stage)

Who else should I approach?

The number of people notified about a planning application depends on the location and proposal type.

It's important to engage with immediate neighbours early, as they are likely to be most impacted.

Contact Council to know who might receive a letter during Public Notification. Personal information about neighbours cannot be shared.

Applications for the Design Excellence Scorecard **must** undertake pre-lodgement consultation with surrounding properties and key stakeholders. Contact an Urban Planner for details.

Call us 9240 1111

Common objection concerns open for discussion:



- Impact on the character of the neighbourhood and heritage controls
- Overlooking (e.g. balconies/windows that can look into a backyard)
- Overshadowing (casting shadows over backyards)
- Insufficient car parking (only if seeking a reduction)
- Noise related to the proposed use
- Removal of significant trees and tree impacts
- Building scale and visual bulk.

Note: Neighbours can contact Council if they have concerns about any of these issues

Speak with us in your language



For more information visit merri-bek.vic.gov.au/your-language

Per maggiori informazioni nella tua lingua, chiama il numero **9280 1911**

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