



Planning Department
Practice Note for Professional Persons
No. 2/2002

**Guidelines for Enquiries
on Development Submissions to
the Town Planning Board**

Introduction

1. One of the roles of the Planning Department (the Department) is to serve the Town Planning Board (the Board) in processing submissions of planning applications and requests for amendment to statutory plans (rezoning request).
2. An applicant is welcome to contact professional staff of the Department for information before/after submitting his/her planning application or rezoning request.
3. The purpose of the guidelines is to indicate how an applicant can make enquiries on such submissions.

Guidelines on Making Enquiries

Pre-submissions

4. An applicant can always make enquiries to the Department on whether planning application/rezoning request is required for a proposed development and, if required, the procedure involved for making a submission to the Board. This can be done through the Department's enquiry hotline at Tel No. 2231 5000; Fax No. 2877 0389; or enquiry e-mail enquire@pland.gov.hk. If an applicant wants to make an enquiry in person, he/she can visit the Planning Enquiry Counter (the Counter) located at 17/floor, North Point Government Offices, 333 Java Road, North Point. An applicant for planning application is also invited to make reference to the Guidance Notes for Application for Permission under Section 16 of the Town Planning Ordinance which can be obtained at the Counter or from the Board's Homepage

(address:<http://www.info.gov.hk/tpb>).

5. For site-specific information and general exchange of views about the proposed development, the applicant is welcome to contact the appropriate officer at the relevant District Planning Office¹ direct. Meetings with the applicant can be held on request with a view to identifying the key issues that need to be addressed in the submission.
6. To facilitate more fruitful discussion, it would be advisable if the applicant could set out clearly in writing the issues of concern before the scheduled meeting. In case that the issues fall entirely within the purview of other concerned Government department(s), the applicant will be advised to contact the concerned department(s) direct. If the issues are of concern to both the Planning Department and other Government department(s), representatives of the concerned department(s) will be invited to attend the meeting. In the event that the concerned Government department(s) cannot attend the meeting, the applicant will be so informed and asked to advise whether the meeting should still proceed as scheduled. Alternatively, the applicant can separately contact the concerned Government departments for the required information.
7. It is, however, always important to bear in mind that all discussions and all views expressed at these meetings represent solely the views of the officers concerned. The applicant should not interpret these views as those of the Board. Neither the views of the Department nor those of the other concerned Government departments can pre-empt the decisions of the Board, which is an independent statutory body, in considering and deciding on planning applications and rezoning requests.

Post-submissions

8. After a submission has been made to the Board, the applicant is welcome to make enquiry to the responsible Senior Town Planner (STP), whose name will be provided in the acknowledgment letter, on the proposed development under application that is being circulated for comments by concerned Government departments. To facilitate the early resolution of technical issues, comments made to the submission by relevant Government departments can be released to the applicant or his/her authorized representative upon request.
9. For some complicated cases which involve conflicting views and/or unresolved issues, the responsible District Planning Officer (DPO)¹

will take proactive actions, including, as necessary, convening meetings with concerned departments and those who have made the submissions, facilitating exchange of views and resolving conflicts as far as possible. If a case is to be deliberated at the District Planning Conference (DipCon), the responsible DPO¹ will ensure that representatives from the concerned departments are invited to attend the said DipCon. The one who has made the submission or the proponent of the development proposal will be given the opportunity to make representations and have direct dialogue with representatives of the concerned departments at the DipCon. The DipCon Chairman will act as facilitator and coordinator to iron out any disagreement or conflicts with a view to identifying solutions as far as possible. If acceptable solutions cannot be found at the DipCon, the DipCon Chairman may direct the responsible DPO¹ to report the case to the Board and/or the Committee on Planning and Land Development, as the case may be, for a decision.

10. The general guidelines set out in paras. 6 and 7 above should apply in all such meetings convened in accordance with para. 9 above. To make sure that the submission can be considered by the Board or its Planning Committees as scheduled without undue delay, the applicant should allow the staff of the Department reasonably sufficient time to make necessary meeting arrangements. If necessary, the applicant can request for deferment of consideration of his/her application or rezoning request by writing with justifications to the Secretary of the Board, but this should preferably be before the issue of agenda (normally 7 days before the scheduled day of meeting).

After consideration by the Board

11. An applicant will be notified in writing of the Board's decision on his/her application or rezoning request after confirmation of the minutes of the meeting in which the decision was made.
12. Pending written notification of the Board's decision, an applicant can make verbal enquiry on the result of his/her application or rezoning request from the Secretary of the Board (Tel. No. 2231 4810 or 2231 4809) immediately after the meeting. Alternatively, an applicant can make reference to the Gist of Decisions which is available on the Board's Homepage shortly after the meeting on the same day.
13. For submissions that are not approved by the Board, the Secretary of the Board will set out the reasons for rejection/disapproval/deferral in the written notifications, together with the relevant Board/Planning

Committees' papers and minutes, to the applicants. An applicant can contact the responsible STP, whose telephone number will be included in the written notification, to clarify issues of concern of the Board. Should a meeting with the Department (and other concerned Government department(s)) be considered useful to help take the matter forward, an applicant is welcome to contact the responsible STP for necessary arrangement. The general guidelines set out in paras. 6 and 7 above should also apply in all such meetings.

14 This Practice Note supersedes PlanD Practice Note for Professional Persons No. 1/2000.

(B C K Fung)
Director of Planning
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Note: ¹ Submissions in relation to Urban Renewal Authority Schemes would be processed by Chief Town Planner/Urban Renewal.