

# 4 EASY STEPS

## TO GETTING RESOURCE CONSENT



## Need a resource consent and don't know where to start?

It's definitely a journey, and a confusing one sometimes if you don't know what you're doing. Our team is a hive of technical skills, extensive knowledge, and practical experience. With over 60 years of resource consent experience, and over 35 years processing resource consents for the Council, we fully understand all sides of the process.

Let us simplify the complex consent process for you. We aren't going to explain the legal process of getting a resource consent, but what is actually involved for you as a "developer".

The lists in our guide can be used as checklists, so you can print this out and tick away as you get all the information together.



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# STEP 1: Investigate! Investigate!

## Investigate!

When you are applying for a resource consent, it is more important than ever that you do your homework thoroughly. Know what you're required to do, and how to make the process cheaper and faster. Gone are the days of simply filling out forms, drawing plans on a piece of paper and hoping for the best!

**W**hen you're first thinking about doing a development of any scale, your first step is research, research, research! You need to find out as much information about your property, its limitations, the planning rules affecting your site as you can, and if you'll be required to pay any development or financial contributions to the Council. This will lead the initial phases of your investigations and help you answer the questions on our checklist.

We can't stress enough the importance of thorough investigations at the start of the process. There is no point spending money on getting plans drawn up if the project is not located in the correct zone or could never be built due to physical restrictions with the land.

### Checklist

- ☐ Is my site in the right location for what I want to do? Check the zoning maps on the Council's website, and the related rules. Discuss this with your planner.
- ☐ Are there any restrictions on the Record of Title that I need to factor in? This could include a consent notice, easement or land covenant for example. You can get a copy of your title from [www.linz.govt.nz](http://www.linz.govt.nz).
- ☐ Can it be serviced with water? Is there a way to manage wastewater and stormwater? Check the Council's GIS plans online.
- ☐ Are my neighbours or other people likely to be affected? Remember this doesn't need to be people you can see from your property. For example, there may be iwi groups to consider. You may need to consult with NZTA or Transpower.
- ☐ What are the physical limitations on my site? Is there a watercourse, an overland flow path, or unstable area?
- ☐ What specialists do I need to engage to investigate these for me? An experienced planner can help you with this.
- ☐ How much will development or financial contributions cost? If your site's in Auckland, you can get an estimate [here](#).



**WANT ADVICE ON THE FEASIBILITY OF YOUR PROJECT?**



## STEP 2: Pre- application

These days it is common for most Councils to offer a service called a ‘pre-application meeting.’ This is where you can meet with Council Officers and talk through your proposal and discuss any specific issues or information the Council may require for your application. Check if your project is eligible for the pre-application guidance [here](#).

**W**hile there is usually a fee for using this service, it really is worth it. The benefits to having this meeting are:

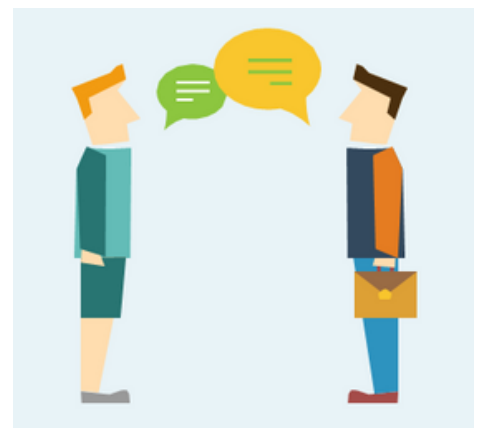
- discussing and resolving concerns the Council may have before the design is too far advanced,
- discussing any unusual or specialist reports that the Council may require,
- discussing if Council expects you to get written approval from certain people or groups,
- determining if other specialist assessments are required,
- identifying where you can find information you might need,
- getting a handle on the main costs involved.

You also get the benefit of meeting Council staff who are likely to be involved in processing your application. Developing a constructive working relationship in the early stages can assist in helping the process run smoothly.

You do need to remember this is preliminary advice and shouldn’t substitute for you getting your own professional advice.

At this meeting the Council gains an early insight into ‘where you are coming from’ with your proposal and what your objectives are. It is useful for your planner to attend this meeting as they can:

- ☐ Identify areas of your application that might be more problematic and discuss those with Council at an early stage.
- ☐ Put questions to Council about technical issues and suggest solutions for resolving Council concerns.
- ☐ Help co-ordinate the project and provide early advice to help avoid expensive re-designs.
- ☐ Help to ensure that Council’s approach and responses to your proposal are reasonable and in accordance with the planning provisions that apply.



### Consultation

While there isn’t a formal duty to consult your neighbours and other interested groups, depending on your proposal, consultation can be a worthwhile exercise. Especially in the early planning stages, so you can make changes to accommodate any reasonable concerns raised. When you consult it’s best to be proactive; if they express no concern and are in support for your project get their written approval at this stage. Most Council’s will have a standard form you can use for this. This means you may be able to submit your application with the written approvals attached, putting you one step ahead.



## STEP 3: What's involved in assessing a development and putting together a resource consent application?

This is the stage where Steps 1 and 2 really come to the fore. The more time you have spent on initial investigations and discussing issues and solutions, the better you can address all the relevant issues in your application.

**T**he detail of your assessment can vary depending on the complexity of your proposal. It's important to get the right person to assist you with the assessments. The better your resource consent application is, the less time it will take for the Council to process and the cheaper the processing fees should be. That is because most Councils allow planners to adopt parts of application assessments if they agree with it. This makes the processing faster and as less time is required for the Council assessment, it's generally cheaper for you. It also means your landholding costs are reduced.

### Getting The Right Help

Selecting the right help can be a bit of a "trap" for some people. If the price seems too good to be true, then it probably is. Accepting a markedly cheaper quote will likely mean that the service you receive will be cheap too. It is also dangerous to try and save money by attempting an application by yourself.



In reality the Council costs end up being higher because a substandard application is submitted and Council have to do a lot of the assessment themselves. These applications also take longer to process, which increases your landholding costs and means you can lose key contractors.

**We can manage detailed investigations on your behalf, making the process easier for you.**

At Planning Plus we have over 60 years of resource consent experience and have a wide network of high-quality specialists, including engineers, surveyors, and ecologists. We can manage these specialist inputs on your behalf, simplifying the consent process for you and achieving the best outcome for your project.

### GET IN TOUCH WITH US

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# What Should You Include In Your Application?

What is included in a resource consent application? This can vary from Council to Council and depends on the type of application you're making. In general terms, an application should include:

## Application Checklist

- ☐ Assessment of Environmental Effects report (AEE). This is the central part of your application. We'll discuss this a bit more below.
- ☐ Resource Consent Declaration Form. This is required if you are not an approved credit account customer.
- ☐ Plans. These don't need to be detailed plans that you would submit with a building consent application but should clearly show what you propose, where on the site it's located and any site features (such as watercourses etc.). Ideally they should be prepared by a professional such as a surveyor, architect or architectural designer.
- ☐ Current Record of Title and any relevant Instruments.
- ☐ Any relevant supporting reports, such as a geotechnical report.
- ☐ Any specific information/ assessment that the relevant Regional or District Plan identifies. This could include a heritage assessment or cultural impact assessment.
- ☐ Details of any consultation or written approval from neighbours you've obtained. A Written Approvals Form should be filled out and signed.

## The Assessment Of Environmental Effects Report (AEE)

The AEE is the central part of a resource consent application. This is where you actually assess the proposal and it's typically written by a planner. The Resource Management Act (RMA) sets out the matters the application should include in Schedule 4. This includes:

### Checklist

- ☐ A description of the site and surrounding environment.
- ☐ A description of what's proposed.
- ☐ Identification of what resource consents are being sought/ what rules are infringed.
- ☐ Confirmation that other aspects of the proposal are permitted and why.
- ☐ An assessment of actual and potential environmental effects, including effects on people (such as neighbours).
- ☐ An assessment against the relevant objectives and policies of the plans (and higher order planning documents if necessary, such as National Policy Statements).
- ☐ An assessment against the relevant parts of the RMA.

**This isn't an exhaustive list but provides guidance on the general issues that should be assessed in the AEE.**

### The AEE Content

The above list may seem a little daunting, but for a small project Councils will usually accept a more basic AEE. Every AEE should, however, address the above matters to some extent. Failing to do so runs the risk that Council will reject the application documents before they even start assessing your proposal. This happens when the application is deemed to be "incomplete".

*This wastes everyone's time and money. This point is so important, that we will note it again: the better the application, the less time it should take to process and the less money you should spend in Council fees. Submitting a poor application will take longer to process and cost you more.*

# STEP 4: Assessment of Applications- What happens?

So you've submitted your resource consent application and you're on the edge of your seat waiting to hear if it has been accepted or not. When you're excited to get started on your project, it can sometimes feel like the decision takes forever to arrive (even if it's only a few weeks!)

Once your resource consent has been lodged with the Council, it will be allocated to a Council planner. The Council planner will review the application and providing sufficient information and assessment has been supplied, the application will be 'accepted' (under s88 of the RMA) for processing.

The Council has 20 working days to make a decision on your resource consent (from the date it was lodged). Depending on the type of resource consent, specialists may assist the planner in reviewing your application, for example engineers, surveyors or ecologists.

## What If I Get a Request for Further Information (RFI)?

The Council planner may request further information (RFI) (under s92 of the RMA) and place your application 'on hold' (stopping the 20 working-day clock) until the requested information has been provided and accepted. If you have engaged a planner to prepare your application, the s92 request from Council will likely relate to simple clarification, or minor changes to the proposal. When an application is prepared by experienced professionals they can identify and assess the same issues that Council

are assessing. Often these issues will be addressed at project design stage, or well assessed in the AEE. This means that the Council don't have to ask so many questions.

If you have not engaged a planner, the s92 request may be more time-consuming and costly, and identify issues you hadn't thought of before.

## Considering The Effects Of Your Application

The Council will make a decision regarding the overall scale of the environmental effects of your proposal, and who may be adversely affected. The Council may consider the adverse effects of your application on adjoining properties or the wider environment to be minor or more than minor, in which case the application may be notified (or limited notified to specific groups/people). This is again where your pre-application consultation, investigations and advice comes to the fore; there should be no surprises with this decision if you've done your homework properly and used experienced professionals.

## Will My Consent Be Granted?

Once the processing planner has completed their assessment, the report will then be reviewed by a senior council officer and a decision granting (or declining) your consent will be issued. Again, your planner should have advised you early on,

and provided you with an indication as to the likelihood of your consent being granted.

Once you receive the decision, check the conditions carefully. You are required to meet these; if anything's unclear ask the Council planner about it as soon as possible.

## Where to from here?

Do you have a development in mind or know you need a resource consent and aren't sure about the next steps to take? We are a friendly team of well qualified and experienced professionals who have over 60 years experience under our collective belts! Our goal is to take the guesswork out of resource consents for each and every one of our clients. We love to see our client's journey from confusion, to success.

But why chose us? Because we know what we're doing! In over 13 years, we've had a 100% success rate.

We use our 35 years of combined Council experience to give reliable advice, find solutions and provide excellent assessment. Resource consents is what we do, and we now them inside out.

Get in contact to discuss your goals and how we can help you achieve them.

[CHECK OUT OUR RECENT BLOG POST](#)



## Let's work together

We are excited about the prospect of working with you on your project. If you have any queries at all, please do not hesitate to contact us.

**09 427 9966**

**[hello@planningplus.co.nz](mailto:hello@planningplus.co.nz)**

We look forward to helping you succeed with your project.

