

Communication about a planning application may require registration

Unless an exemption applies, an applicant or their representative must be registered with the lobbyist registry to communicate with public office holders such as City employees and Council Members when that communication is defined as lobbying under Municipal Code Chapter 140, Lobbying.

General exemption to communicate with employees assigned to review the application

An applicant may contact planning staff who have a role in processing a particular planning application (planners, support staff and the managerial line up to and including the Chief Planner) for pre-application consultation, to file an application, or during the application review process. Employees from other City divisions or local boards who have a role in providing input to the review of the application may also be contacted about the application by the applicant during the review process. These communications do not require registration.

Communicating with other public office holders requires registration

If an applicant or their representative communicates privately about a planning application or a pending application including pre-consultation with a Council Member, a member of a local board (restricted definition) or an employee who does not have a role in reviewing their application, those communications must be registered unless a specific exemption applies. An applicant must register a private meeting with a Councillor on a planning matter even if they invite the planner to attend.

Some communications about a planning application are exempt from registration

- **Public meetings:** Registration is not required for an applicant or their representative to speak or make a submission at an open public meeting or at a meeting of a Committee or Community Council.
- **General information:** Registration is not required to communicate about general information (e.g., information required as part of the application, related factual information or information about the review process). However, this exemption does not apply to communication to promote the merits of an application or advocate for approval or the terms of approval if the communication with a public office holder is outside of the application review process.
- **Response to a written request:** Communication in direct response to a written request from a Council Member or an employee is exempt from registration if it only concerns *general information*. This exemption only applies in the case of a genuine request for information.
- **Technical information:** Planning applicants may engage planning consultants, architects, engineers, interpreters and other experts. These experts may participate in meetings and communications to provide technical information or translation services without registering. However, these experts must register if they promote the merits of a planning application or advocate for approval or the terms of approval with a public office holder outside of the application review process.
- **Primary residence:** An applicant is exempt from the registration requirement when communicating about a planning matter concerning a primary residence (e.g., with no residential-based business or business interest). If the individual hires a person to communicate for them, that person must register.