



BEST PRACTICES GUIDE FOR PRE-CONSULTATION

For

**Official Plan Amendment Applications
Zoning By-law Amendment Applications
Draft Plan of Subdivision Applications
Draft Plan of Condominium Applications
Site Plan Approval Applications
Consent Applications**

Dated: June 2020

1. Purpose

The purpose of pre-consultation is two-fold:

(a) For The Applicant

Pre-consultation saves time, money and resources for the applicant wanting to develop land since *all* of the information required to make intelligent investment decisions is provided up front, before significant dollars are spent on plans, studies and various supporting documentation required to submit a complete application. After pre-consultation, the applicant should have a very clear understanding of the documentation required to submit an application, the approval process and the anticipated time line, the potential obstacles that may arise, the public participation process, (if any), the variables that may impact the information provided to the applicant, the application fees and related review fees, development charges, building permit fees and any financial incentives that the project may be eligible for.

The applicant should have enough information to make a sound judgment regarding the proposal to proceed, to revise it in accordance with the information provided, or to abandon the project altogether. As long as these decisions are based on complete, sound and accurate information and advice, provided by the City, Region and Agencies involved, the applicant will have benefitted from the pre-consultation process.

(b) For The City, Region and Agencies

The wise use of taxpayer dollars is always a high priority. Pre-consultation offers the City, the Region and relevant agencies the opportunity to provide input on a development proposal early in the process before the applicant starts to spend significant dollars on a project. It is the opportunity for a partnership with the applicant to collaborate, to discuss, to resolve issues, to compromise where warranted, and to result in the best possible outcome for all parties. The applicant has to be confident in the viability of a project. The City and Region have to be confident that public interests are at the forefront. Agencies have various mandates and those too must be met. Only by early discussion and openness can all parties benefit from savings in time, money and resources.

2. Pre-consultation versus Preliminary Conversation

A pre-consultation meeting is not intended to replace preliminary conversations at the planning counter, a phone inquiry or a meeting with City, Regional or Agency staff. Information gathering is a necessary due diligence step to get started. Most development proposals start with a conversation and, if they proceed, lead to a pre-consultation meeting.

3. How Does the Applicant start the Pre-consultation Process?

The applicant should begin the pre-consultation process at the earliest possible time. It is appropriate to contact the City to discuss the development proposal as soon as the specifics of the proposal are known to the applicant.

4. Planning Review

The applicant should contact Planning Staff and advise them of their desire to begin the pre-consultation process. Staff will ask the applicant a number of questions about the proposal to determine the extent of pre-consultation that will be required and what City Departments, Regional Staff or Agencies need to be in attendance. The City as a best practice will provide the applicant with a pre-consultation Request Form (**Appendix 2**) and advise of the required fee (if applicable) and the submission requirements (**Appendix 1**).

5. Pre-consultation Request Forms

The pre-consultation request form (**Appendix 2**) ensures that consistent information is provided across all municipalities in the Region and provides standardization for the applicant across all municipal jurisdictions. This form is not complicated and offers enough information to establish the proposal details for City, Regional and Agency assessment.

6. What is required for Pre-Consultation?

The applicant must submit the following information:

- The submission information (**Appendix 1**);
- The application form for pre-consultation (**Appendix 2**);
- A fee, if applicable;

If insufficient information is provided, then the pre-consultation meeting may be cancelled as the benefit of a full discussion at a pre-consultation meeting will not be fully realized. As an alternative, the applicant may choose to discuss this further with City Planning Staff who can provide clarification and explanation of why the additional information is necessary and how that benefits the applicant in the long run.

7. Who is the City point person for Pre-Consultation?

The timing of the pre-consultation meeting and agendas will be coordinated by one person to ensure that any questions with the meeting agenda can flow through one person. On the agenda, the City may identify the point person (planner) for each item to ensure that the questions of the Region, Agencies or the applicant are directed to the key planning contact.

The development community has stated on numerous occasions that a "point person" or "go to" person is preferable, rather than a multitude of contacts depending on what information is required. A point person is not only beneficial to the applicant, but it also permits the City to better coordinate the details of the proposal with each of its Departments, the Region and Agencies. This function will be assigned to the applicable planner in the City, depending on the type of planning application required. The point person for each submission will take responsibility for ensuring appropriate information is submitted, who needs to review the plans, how much time is required to review the plans, who needs to attend the pre-consultation meeting and any follow up required from the pre-consultation meeting. The City's contact planner will be identified, however due to the need to ensure equitable distribution of work load; applications may be assigned to a different planner at time of submission of the formal application.

8. Adequate time to Comment

In order to allow adequate time for review, it is recommended internal departments and external agencies reviewing the submission be given a minimum of 3 weeks to review the proposal prior to the pre-consultation meeting date.

9. Number and Timing of Agenda Items

The City will use its best judgement in scheduling the number and timing of agenda items which will vary depending on the complexity of the application. It is always a good business practice to be respectful of everyone's time by minimizing wait times and to come to pre-consultation meetings prepared and on time to discuss the proposals.

10. Cancellation Policies

Every effort should be made to attend the scheduled pre-consultation date and time. Should unforeseen circumstances prevent attendance, the earliest notification of that circumstance should be provided to all participants and a determination made regarding whether to reschedule the meeting, use an alternative format or proceed in the absence of all participants.

11. Emergency Agenda Items

Emergency agenda items are sometimes added at the last minute to a meeting agenda. If the development timeline is crucial, alternative dates can be considered by contacting internal departments, the Region and Agencies to discuss alternative options. For example, time sensitive proposals could be discussed through a conference call.

12. Advance Pre-Consultation Meeting Information

City Staff will fill out in advance, the pre-consultation meeting information form (up to the end of question 7 on **Appendix 3**) and circulate this information with the agenda to ensure that everyone has adequate information to come prepared to address the agenda items.

13. Pre-Meeting Discussion

The City contact will consider whether a discussion/meeting with internal Department Staff, the Region or an Agency is warranted to resolve any issues, prior to the proponents arriving to the pre-consultation meeting. These issues should be resolved prior to the pre-consultation meeting so the proponent knows clearly how to proceed.

14. Preparation for Meeting

All City, Regional and Agency Staff are expected to provide accurate advice and guidance to the proponent based on the information provided with the submission, including but not limited to the following:

- What planning applications are required to proceed (Regional Official Plan Amendment, Official Plan Amendment, Zoning By-law Amendment, Subdivision/Condominium, Site Plan, Consent, Minor Variance etc.);
- What studies and documentation will be required in support of the required applications and the scope of those studies;
- Potential obstacles, challenges, or road blocks that may impact the approval process;
- The public participation process, if any;
- The estimated timeframe to process the application once a complete application is received;
- All application and review fees associated with the development proposal;
- Applicable development charges, building permit fees; and
- Any financial incentives that the project may be eligible for.

The objective of pre-consultation is to provide the proponent with a full and accurate picture of how to proceed. The more information and insight the Town can provide the better.

15. Meeting Etiquette

As in all meetings, it is common courtesy to introduce the participants, the format of the meeting, what is to be accomplished from the discussion and what will result from this meeting.

16. Preparation of the Pre-Consultation Meeting Form

The Pre-consultation meeting form (**Appendix 3**) shall be filled out in draft prior to the pre-consultation meeting to save time in preparing the entire form later. As outlined in

Section 12, Questions 1 to 7 of **Appendix 3** is to be pre-circulated with the agenda. At the pre-consultation meeting, the City contact can fill out the remaining information from the City Departments of the pre-consultation meeting.

In addition to the pre-consultation form, the City will prepare more detailed comments for complex applications within 1 week of the pre-consultation meeting.

**APPENDIX 1
PRE-CONSULTATION SUBMISSION AND
FEE
REQUIREMENTS**

For applications for **Official Plan Amendments, Zoning By-law Amendments, Draft Plan of Subdivision/Condominium and Site Plan Approval** the following information must be submitted:

Required Information	Number of Copies
Survey Sketch by a qualified Ontario Land Surveyor showing the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location of existing and proposed land uses; • Location of existing and proposed buildings and structures; • Location of any significant features on the site or adjacent to the site (i.e. wetlands, hazard lands, watercourses, drainage ditches, woodlands, wells, septic tanks, etc.; • Location of proposed buildings and structures on lands without environmental constraints; • Existing and proposed lot fabric (as appropriate) on lands without environmental constraints; and • Proposed development concept, including setbacks from lot lines and significant features. 	3 hard copies and 1 digital (pdf)
Pre-Consultation Request Form	1 copy

For Applications for Consent, the following information is required:

Required Information	Number of Copies
1) Survey Sketch prepared by a qualified Ontario Land Surveyor (Please see Appendix 1A and the sample sketch. 2) Building elevations	3 hard copies and 1 digital (pdf)
Pre-Consultation Request Form	1 copy

Pre-Consultation Fee

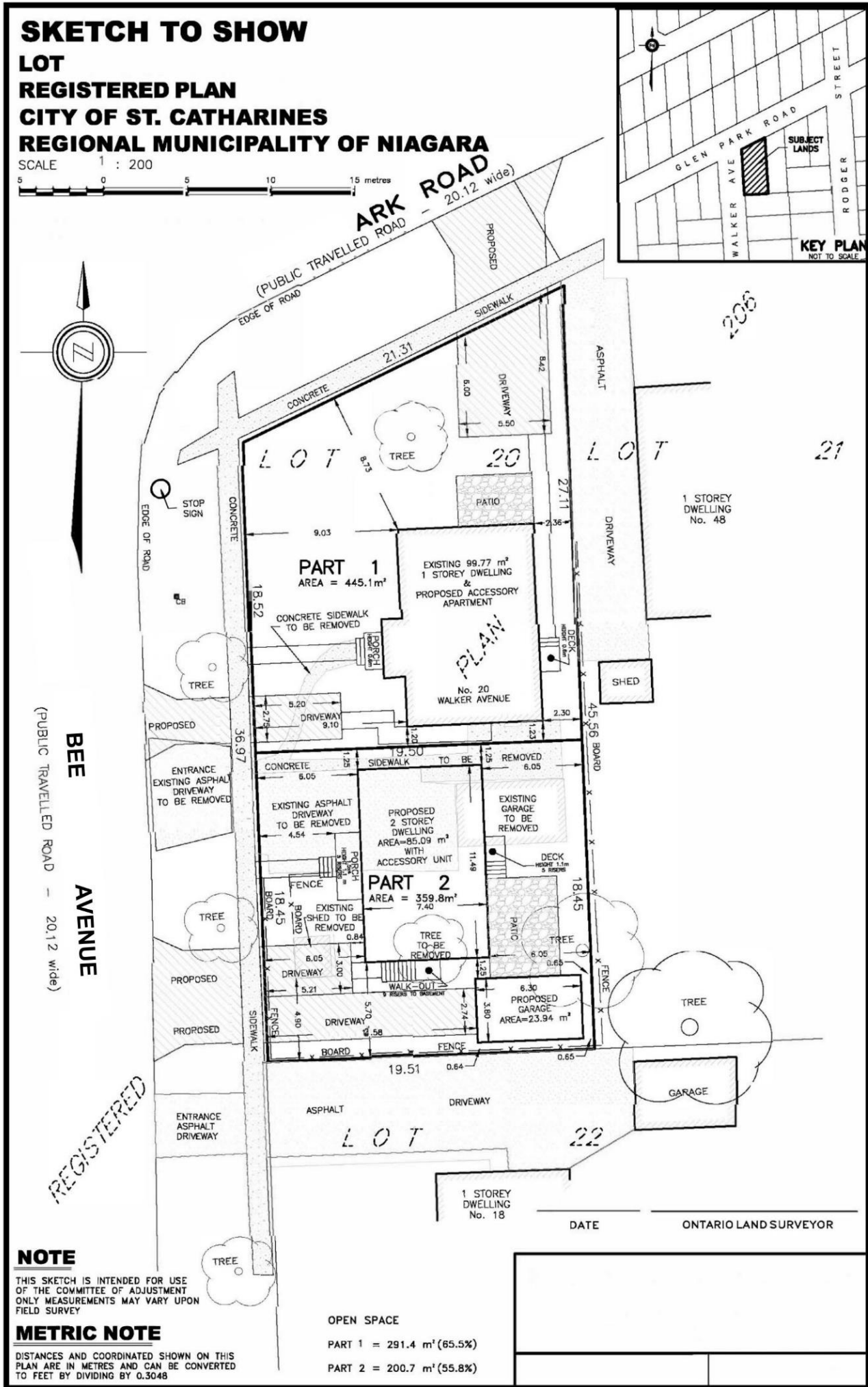
The first pre-consultation fee will be discounted from the full application fee provided the applicant submits the application within one year of the pre-consultation follow-up letter.

APPENDIX 1 A
PRE-CONSULTATION CONSENT SKETCH
REQUIREMENTS

An application **must** be accompanied by three (3) copies of a preliminary sketch prepared in **metric units**, signed and dated by an Ontario Land Surveyor showing the following information set out below. An elevation sketch with dimensions in metric units is also required.

- the boundaries and dimensions of any land abutting the subject land that is owned by the owner of the subject land;
- the approximate distance between the subject land and the nearest city lot line or landmark, such as a bridge or railway crossing;
- the boundaries and dimensions of the subject land, the part that is intended to be severed and the part that is intended to be retained, in **metric** units;
- the location of all land previously severed from the parcel originally acquired by the current owner of the subject land;
- the approximate location of all natural and artificial features (e.g, buildings, railways, roads, watercourses, drainage ditches, banks of rivers or streams, wetlands, wooded areas, wells, pools, fences, driveways, porches/decks, sheds, hydro poles and septic tanks) that;
 - (i) are located on the subject land and on the land that is adjacent to it, and
 - (ii) in the applicant's opinion, may affect the application;
- Lot frontage is measured 6 metres from the front lot line, or 6 metres from the chord and parallel to the chord if the front lot line is a curve;
- the current uses of land that is adjacent to the subject land (*e.g., residential, agricultural or commercial*);
- the location, width and name of any roads within or abutting the subject land, indicating whether it is an unopened road allowance, public travelled road, a private road or a right of way;
- the existing front yard setback or exterior yard setback (or both if applicable) for buildings on lots abutting the subject lot.
- the location and nature of any easement affecting the subject land;
- a proposed building envelope together with the location, width and length of existing and proposed driveways or parking areas and the height of all decks or porches from grade, proposed and existing;
- key map indicating the location of the property;
- height for the elevation sketch is measured to the mid-point of the roof.

Please refer to the attached example sketch.



TYPE OF APPLICATION

**APPENDIX 2
PRE-CONSULTATION REQUEST FORM**

<input type="checkbox"/> Official Plan Amendment	<input type="checkbox"/> Plan of Subdivision	<input type="checkbox"/> Site Plan Approval
<input type="checkbox"/> Zoning By-law Amendment	<input type="checkbox"/> Plan of Condominium	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent

1. Applicant Information

Applicant: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Contact person if a numbered Company: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Email: _____

Agent Information

Agent: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Email: _____

Who is the Principal Contact: _____

2. Municipal Address and Legal Description (i.e. Lot and Registered Plan)

3. Dimension of subject property in hectares/square metres

i) Lot (Street) frontage _____

ii) Depth _____

iii) Area _____

4. Existing Regional Official Plan Designation

5. Existing Garden City Official Plan Designation

6. Existing Zoning

7. Are there any encumbrances on the property? (e.g., easements)

Yes No

If yes, please list encumbrances:

8. What is the current use of the subject property?

13. DECLARATION

I, _____ of the City of _____, solemnly declare that:

All statements contained in this application are true, and I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing it to be true and knowing that it is of the same force and effect as it made under oath and by virtue of the Canada Evidence Act.

For the purposes of the FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY ACT, I authorize and consent to the use by or the disclosure to any person or public body of any personal information that is collected under the authority of the PLANNING ACT for the purposes of processing this application and correspondence purposes. Questions about this collection should be directed to The City Clerk, City of St. Catharines, 50 Church Street, St. Catharines, Ontario L2R 7C2, telephone 905-688-5600.

Declared before me at the _____ of _____)
 _____)
 _____)
 in the _____)
 _____)
 of _____)
 _____)
 this _____ day of _____, 20____)

 Signature of Owner,
 Applicant or Authorized Agent

 A Commissioner

 Name of Owner or Authorized Agent

 Position/Title

 Signature

 Date



Pre-Consultation Meeting Form

Persons intending to make an application for a proposed development are required to consult with planning staff prior to submitting an application. A pre-consultation meeting will identify what is required to be submitted for a complete application and will provide the opportunity to discuss:

- The nature of the application;
- Development and planning issues;
- Fees;
- The need for information and/or reports to be submitted with the application;
- The planning approval process; and
- Other matters, as determined.

Pre-Consultation Meeting Date: _____

Municipal Address: _____ **Approximate Land Area (metric):** _____

Municipal Legal Description: _____

Owner Contact Information:

Name of Owner: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Principal Contact: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Application Type:

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Regional Official Plan Amendment | <input type="checkbox"/> Draft Plan of Condominium | <input type="checkbox"/> Zoning By-Law Amendment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local Official Plan Amendment | <input type="checkbox"/> Vacant Land & Common Element | <input type="checkbox"/> NEC Application |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Draft Plan of Subdivision | <input type="checkbox"/> Conversion | <input type="checkbox"/> Amendment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Consent (Land Severance) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> Development Permit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Site Plan Approval | | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

Local City Contact: _____ **Phone:** _____

Email _____

1. Brief description of proposed development:

2. Type of road access, (Check applicable field):
Regional City

3. Provincial Policy Check. Check all applicable fields:
PPS Place to Grow NEC Greenbelt Plan
Proposal comply or not comply? _____

4. Existing Regional Policy Plan Designations: _____
Conformity with Regional Policy Plan land use designation and policies?
Yes No Unknown

If 'No', what is the nature of the amendment needed? _____

5. Existing Garden City Official Plan Designation: _____

Conformity with Official Plan land use designations and policies?

Yes No Unknown

If 'No', what is the nature of the amendment needed? _____

6. Existing Zoning: _____

Conformity with existing zoning? Yes No Unknown

Copy of Zone check attached: Yes

7. Is Site Plan approval required? Yes No

8. Fees Required at time of Submission of the Application

Application	City of St. Catharines	Region of Niagara	Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority	Other Fees
Regional Official Plan Amendment				
Local Official Plan Amendment				
Zoning By-law Amendment				
Plan of subdivision				
Plan of Condominium				
Consent				
Site Plan Approval or Amendment				
Other				
Total				

Notes:

- Notwithstanding the fees noted above, all fees are payable based upon the rate in the fee schedule by-law in effect on the date the application is received.
- Further fees may be required at a later date as per the fee schedule by-law.
- Separate cheques shall be made payable to the appropriate agency.

9. Additional Agencies to be contacted if applicable:

CN __, Trillium __, MTO __, Hydro/Alectra __, Cogeco __, Enbridge __, Bell __,
 NEC __, Pipelines __, Other _____

10. Required Information and Studies to be submitted with the Application(s).

Required by			Reports, Studies, Plans <i>(See Notes for additional details)</i>	No. of Copies	Applicable Application
City	Region	NPCA			
			Planning Justification Report		
			Conceptual Site Plan		
			Draft Regional Policy Plan Amendment		
			Draft Local Official Plan Amendment		
			Land Use/Market Needs Assessment		

Required by			Reports, Studies, Plans (See Notes for additional details)	No. of Copies	Applicable Application
City	Region	NPCA			
			Urban Design/Landscape Plans		
			Archaeology Assessment		
			Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment		
			Environmental Impact Study		
			Environmental Planning Study/ Sub-Watershed Study		
			Tree Inventory Preservation Plan		
			Floodplain and Hazard Lands Boundary Plan		
			Geotechnical		
			Environmental Site Assessment		
			Air Quality/Noise & Vibration Study		
			Agricultural Impact Assessment & Alternative Sites for Non-Agricultural Uses		
			Archaeological Impact Assessment		
			Minimum Distance Separation I & II		
			Transportation Impact Study		
			Functional Servicing Report		
			Phasing Plan		
			Sensitive Land Use Report		
			Slope Stability Report		
			Stormwater Management Plan		
			Traffic/Parking Impact Analysis		
			Hydrogeological Study and Private Servicing Plans		
			Soil, environmental audit, report of site condition		
			Shadow Analysis		
			Shoreline Study/Dynamic Beach		
			Environmental Risk Management Study		
			Active Transportation Circulation Plan		
			Wind Study		
			Grading & Drainage Plan		
			Building Elevations		
			Any other study deemed pertinent to the application		

Notes:

1. The purpose of this document is to identify the information required to commence processing a complete application as set out in the Planning Act and the City's Official Plan.
2. Pre-consultation does not imply or suggest any decision whatsoever on behalf of staff or the City to either support or refuse the application.
3. The applicant should be aware that the information provided is accurate as of the date of the pre-consultation meeting. Should an application not be submitted in the near future, and should other policies, by-laws or procedures be approved by the Province, City, Region or other agencies prior to the submission of a formal application, the applicant will be subject to any new policies, by-laws or procedures that are in effect at the time of the submission of a formal application. If an application is not submitted within 1 year, it is advisable that the applicant confirm with the City the need for another Pre-Consultation process.
4. It is hereby understood that during the review of the application additional studies or information may be required as a result of issues arising during the processing of the application or the review of the submitted studies.
5. If the City or Region does not have sufficient expertise to review and determine that a study is acceptable, the City may require a peer review. The Terms of Reference for a peer review is determined by the City or Region and paid for by the applicant.
6. All plans and statistics must be submitted in metric.

Signature:

Planning Staff

Planning Staff (signature)

Date