



**April
2022**



Information Sheet #1

Overview of the council's preliminary response for intensification

The government requires councils for New Zealand's biggest cities to enable more housing supply. In April 2022, Auckland Council will be asking Aucklanders for feedback on potential changes to the Auckland Unitary Plan (AUP) – our city's planning rulebook – to allow for more housing at greater heights and densities.

This information sheet provides an overview of the government's requirements set out in the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 (NPS-UD) and changes to the Resource Management Act.

What are the changes?

The government's National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 (NPS-UD) requires the council to enable buildings of at least six storeys within 'walkable catchments', being walkable distances from rapid transit stops, the city centre, and our 10 large metropolitan centres (Newmarket, Manukau, New Lynn, Sylvia Park, Botany, Papakura, Takapuna, Henderson, Albany and Westgate).

The council's proposed walkable catchment distances are around 1200 metres (a 15-minute walk) from the edge of the city centre and 800 metres (a 10-minute walk) from the edge of the metropolitan centres and around train stations and rapid busway stops such as the Northern Busway.

The government also requires the council to enable greater building heights and housing densities in and around our neighbourhood, local and town centres. The heights and densities

we enable are required to match the level of commercial activity and community services in each centre (such as jobs, shops and businesses).

This could be achieved by increasing the amount of land zoned Residential – Terrace Housing and Apartment Buildings Zone (which enables five-storey buildings) around some centres and applying it around others.

What are the Medium Density Residential Standards (MDRS)?

The council must also change the Auckland Unitary Plan to enable intensification in other residential areas across the city. The council must change a number of existing rules to the government's Medium Density Residential Standards (MDRS) instead.

Through the use of MDRS the government requires the council to enable medium-density housing across most of Auckland's suburbs. Three dwellings of up to three-storeys, including terrace housing and low-rise apartments, must be permitted on most residential properties. Four dwellings or more dwellings must be enabled through a non-notified resource consent.

MDRS are the development rules that the government decided must be applied to all relevant existing residential zones (the Single House Zone, the Mixed Housing Suburban Zone, the Mixed Housing Urban Zone and the Terrace Housing and Apartment Buildings Zone) to enable more housing to be built.

MDRS control aspects of development like maximum building height and building coverage, and allow three houses on a site, each up to three storeys. The MDRS allow standalone houses, terrace houses and low-rise apartment buildings. The MDRS are explained further in Information Sheet #5, where examples of MDRS-compliant development are shown.

Are there any exemptions to intensification in and around centres, stations, or the MDRS?

The council may exempt some areas and properties from the intensification rules including the six-storey walkable catchment and three-storey MDRS building heights. Called 'qualifying matters', they are characteristics where intensification standards may be reduced to protect or recognise a particular feature or quality, such as protecting sites of cultural, historic, or ecological significance or to avoid development in areas with significant natural hazards.

Qualifying matters are in most cases dealt with by existing controls or mapped overlays in the Auckland Unitary Plan.

The government has identified a number of qualifying matters that we must protect and recognise. The council can also identify other qualifying matters that are important for Auckland. We can only identify the additional qualifying matters if we can provide strong evidence on a property-by-property basis to justify reducing the height and density standards for those properties or in those areas.

Amongst other additional qualifying matters, the council is proposing to include identified Special Character Areas as a qualifying matter, to continue protecting many of the city's older built character areas. This is balanced with the government's overall direction to enable more housing.

Some other residential land in Auckland will also be exempt from the MDRS. This includes land in the Residential – Large Lot Zone, small settlements in rural and coastal locations, and islands like Waiheke and Aotea Great Barrier.

What is the council doing between now and August?

From 19 April to 9 May 2022 the council is asking Aucklanders for their feedback on proposals that it has some ability to make its own decisions on. These include the extent of the walkable catchments around centres and rapid transit stops, and the extent of areas around local and town centres where more intensification should be enabled. And how and where the additional qualifying matters should reduce building height and housing density otherwise required by the government through the NPS-UD and changes to the Resource Management Act.

The council will consider the feedback received and prepare a proposed plan change to the Auckland Unitary Plan, for public notification by 20 August 2022.

Aucklanders will then have an opportunity to make a submission on the publicly notified changes to the Auckland Unitary Plan, so that their views can be considered during the statutory decision-making process. This will involve hearings by an independent panel, who will make recommendations to the council in 2023 or 2024.

Further information

- To read more about the consultation on the council's preliminary response to NPS-UD and the changes to the Resource Management Act, and to give feedback, visit [akhaveyoursay.nz/housing](https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/your-voice/akhaveyoursay/housing)
- To learn more about how Auckland Council is planning for growth and development, visit [ourauckland.nz/growingtogether](https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/your-voice/ourauckland/growingtogether)
- For detailed information about the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 (NPS-UD) visit the [Ministry for the Environment website](https://www.mta.govt.nz/urban-development).
- For more information on the Resource Management (Enabling Housing Supply and Other Matters) Amendment Act 2021 and the Medium Density Residential Standards visit the [Ministry of Housing and Urban Development website](https://www.mta.govt.nz/housing).
- Visit the council's NPS-UD and MDRS preliminary response map viewer at [akhaveyoursay.nz/housing](https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/your-voice/akhaveyoursay/housing) to view the proposed planning maps.

Please note:

This information sheet is a summary document to assist with consultation during April and May 2022 on the council's preliminary response to the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 and the Resource Management Act as amended.

The proposed plan change to the Auckland Unitary Plan to be publicly notified by Auckland Council on or before 20 August 2022 may contain information that is different to or inconsistent with council's preliminary response. This may be for a number of reasons, including to address feedback received through consultation.

All information provided in this information sheet should be considered as being illustrative and indicative only.

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