



**April
2022**



Information Sheet #5

Medium Density Residential Standards (MDRS)

During April and May 2022, Auckland Council is asking Aucklanders for their feedback on potential changes to the Auckland Unitary Plan (AUP) – our city’s planning rulebook – to allow for more housing at greater heights and density.

This information sheet provides an overview of the government’s Medium Density Residential Standards (MDRS) and what they will mean for Auckland.

The government’s approach to more housing

The government’s National Policy Statement on Urban Development (NPS-UD) came into force in August 2020. The NPS-UD directs Auckland Council to enable more building height and housing density within and around Auckland’s city centre, metropolitan centres and rapid transit stops such as train and busway stations.

In December 2021, the government also made amendments to the Resource Management Act. The legislation now requires the councils of New Zealand’s largest and rapidly growing cities – Auckland, Hamilton, Tauranga, Wellington and Christchurch – to apply new Medium Density Residential Standards (MDRS).

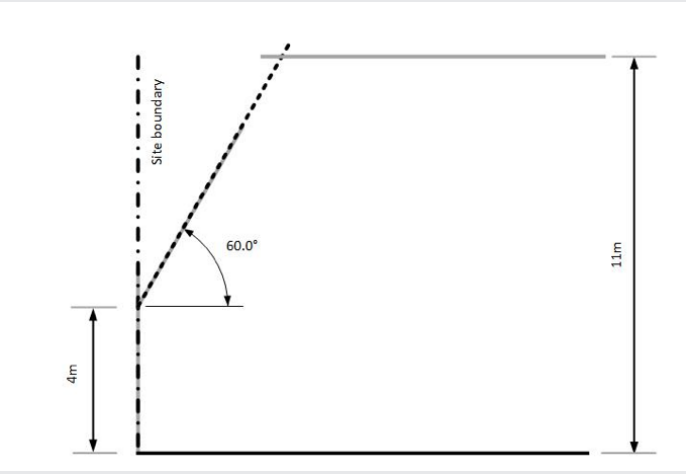
Through the use of MDRS the government requires the council to enable medium-density housing across most of Auckland’s suburbs. Three dwellings of up to three-storeys, including terrace housing and low-rise apartments, must be permitted on most residential properties. Four dwellings or more dwellings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

To deliver the NPS-UD and the MDRS, the council is required to publicly notify changes to the AUP by 20 August 2022.

What are the Medium Density Residential Standards?

MDRS are a government requirement and include objectives, policies, and the new standards (rules) that replace existing rules in the Auckland Unitary Plan. The key standards are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Medium Density Residential Standards

Number of residential units per site	3 houses per site are permitted (more than 3 houses require resource consent)
Building height	Maximum building height of up to 12 metres (3 storeys)
Height in relation to boundary	Buildings must not project beyond a 60° recession plane measured from a point 4 metres vertically above ground level along all boundaries. 
Minimum setbacks	Front yard: 1.5m Side and rear yard: 1m
Building coverage	Maximum building coverage of 50% of the net site area.
Outlook space	Minimum outlook spaces: • 4m x 4m from principal living area • 1m x 1m from all other habitable rooms
Outdoor living space	Ground floor units • Minimum outdoor living space of 20m², containing an area of at least 3m x 3m. • Ground floor, balcony, patio or roof terrace • Can be grouped together as a communal space Above ground units • Minimum outdoor living space of 8m² (minimum 1.8m dimension) • Balcony, patio or roof terrace • Can be grouped together as an accessible communal space, which may be at ground floor
Windows to the street	Minimum 20% glazing on street-facing frontage
Landscaped area	Minimum landscaped area of 20%
Other	There are other government standards, for example relating to subdivision

Where will the MDRS apply?

Most of Auckland's residential areas and zones will have the MDRS applied to them. This does not include areas where the Residential - Terrace Housing and Apartment Buildings Zone enables greater building height and density, particularly inside walkable catchments.

Some residential land is exempt from MDRS:

- small settlements of less than 5000 people
- islands, like Waiheke
- Large Lot Residential zone areas, and Rural and Coastal Settlement zone areas

When do the new standards apply?

The council is required to publicly notify its plan change to the AUP by 20 August 2022 to bring in the new standards and to remove many of the existing standards.

The rules that include the government's MDRS will have immediate legal effect from notification where:

- land is within an existing residential zone in the AUP - Single House zone, Mixed Housing Suburban zone, Mixed Housing Urban, or Terrace Housing and Apartment Buildings zone
- land is not within an area where qualifying matters apply
- land is to be used for up to three houses, and
- no additional or more lenient rules are proposed by the council

Nothing applying to business land will have immediate legal effect from public notification of the council's proposed plan change, such as within city centre, metropolitan centre, or other centres.

Aucklanders can submit on the plan change but because the government's standards are mandatory there are some parts of the plan change the council cannot change.

What changes can the council make to MDRS?

It is mandatory for the council to include MDRS in the AUP. In its proposed plan change required to be notified by August 2022, the council may only propose changing the MDRS to:

- enable more development than MDRS, such as by allowing more height, or
- reduce the height and density of buildings on identified sites are areas if a qualifying matter applies

Qualifying matters

The government has provided for building heights and housing density to be reduced from what would normally apply, where there is a qualifying matter. Qualifying matters can result in

rules that do things such as limit building heights and densities, or require a resource consent to build within an area, or demolish or remove buildings or vegetation.

While buildings of at least six storeys must be enabled within walkable catchments around city centres, metropolitan centres and rapid transit stops, this scale of intensification may be changed if a qualifying matter applies. For more information on qualifying matters, refer to Information Sheets #6 and #7.

What might MDRS development look like?

The following images provide examples of the types and densities of development that will be enabled under the MDRS.

Image 1 (below) shows a maximum development possible on a typical site under MDRS with no on-site car parking provided. Key elements include:

- 3 terrace houses on one site
- 3 storey height
- Complies with height in relation to boundary standards
- Complies with outdoor living and landscaping areas standards
- Complies with maximum building coverage (50 per cent)
- Complies with front, side and rear yards standards.





Image 2 (above) shows what a range of possible MDRS developments can look like along a single street



Image 3 (above) shows Image 2 from a street level point of view

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.akhaveyoursay.nz/housing)
- To learn more about how Auckland Council is planning for growth and development, visit [ourauckland.nz/growingtogether](https://www.ourauckland.nz/growingtogether)
- For detailed information about the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 (NPS-UD) visit the [Ministry for the Environment website](https://www.mfe.govt.nz/policy/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.mhuds.govt.nz/).
- Visit the council's NPS-UD and MDRS preliminary response map viewer at [akhaveyoursay.nz/housing](https://www.akhaveyoursay.nz/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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