



**August  
2022**



# **Proposed Plan Change 78 – Intensification: Explanatory note<sup>1</sup>**

## **Proposed ‘Intensification Planning Instrument’ (IPI) Plan Change 78 to the Auckland Unitary Plan (Operative in part)**

### **About the plan change**

This proposed plan change responds to the government’s National Policy Statement on Urban Development and requirements of the Resource Management Act. These mean the council must:

- enable more development in the city centre and at least six-storey buildings within walking distance of the City Centre, Metropolitan Centres and Rapid Transit Stops
- enable more intensive development in and around neighbourhood, local and town centres
- incorporate Medium Density Residential Standards that enable three storey housing in most residential areas
- implement qualifying matters that reduce the required height and density of development where there is a feature or value that should be protected or avoided.

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<sup>1</sup> Not part of proposed plan change

## Introduction

Over the past few years, central government has taken a much stronger role in planning for the growth of New Zealand's largest and fastest growing cities. This means new rules for enabling more building height and housing density.

These are directed by the government's National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 (NPS-UD) updated in May 2022 and amendments to the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) arising from the Resource Management (Enabling Housing Supply and Other Matters) Amendment Act 2021.

The council already enables over 900,000 new homes to be built in residential areas alone (i.e. not including places such as the city centre), with higher-density housing, such as apartments, terrace housing and townhouses, enabled close to public transport and centres with shops, jobs and community services. These government requirements will significantly increase the amount of housing enabled close to public transport and centres with shops, jobs and community services and across most suburbs.

We prepared a preliminary response to the NPS-UD and the RMA amendments earlier in 2022, that showed how we thought they could apply to Auckland. We consulted Aucklanders on the preliminary response from 19 April to 9 May 2022, asking for feedback that would be considered towards preparing a proposed plan change to the Auckland Unitary Plan to be publicly notified for submissions by 20 August 2022.

## Information sheets and FAQs

This summary of the proposed plan change is explained in more detail in the supporting information sheets listed below.

Information sheet #1: Walkable catchments

Information sheet #2: Residential intensification in walkable catchments and the Terrace Housing and Apartment Buildings Zone

Information sheet #3: Intensification around suburban centres

Information sheet #4: Medium Density Residential Standards (MDRS)

Information sheet #5: Updates to the Residential – Mixed Housing Urban Zone

Information sheet #6: The Residential – Low Density Residential Zone

Information sheet #7: Qualifying matters (Part 1)

Information sheet #8: Qualifying matters (Part 2)

Information sheet #9: Special character areas

Information sheet #10: The City Centre Zone

Information sheet #11: Updates to precincts

Information sheet #12: Future Coastal Hazards Plan Change

Information sheet #13: Plan Change 78 and the Auckland Light Rail corridor

For more description and information about how to use the Plan Change 78 map viewer please see information sheet 'Plan Change 78 map viewer user guide'. Also see the video user guide.

A list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) with answers has been compiled to assist with understanding the proposed plan change and how it affects Aucklanders and the Auckland Unitary Plan.

## Requirements for intensification

The NPS-UD focuses on housing of six storeys or more in and around our largest urban centres (including the city centre) and around rapid transit stops (like Auckland's train stations and busway stops). The amended RMA requires Medium Density Residential Standards (MDRS) that enable housing of up to three storeys to be built on most residential sites across the city.

The requirements from the NPS-UD and the amended RMA mean we have to change the rules in the Auckland Unitary Plan for how properties can be developed.

How the proposals described here apply to different places in Auckland is shown on the Plan Change 78 map viewer.

## Intensification inside walkable catchments

A walkable catchment (required by the NPS-UD) is the area around a train station or busway stop, or a large urban (the city centre and metropolitan centres) within which an average person would walk to that location.

The government requires councils to identify walkable catchments around the city centre, metropolitan centres and rapid transit stops where buildings of six storeys or more must be enabled. This is proposed to be achieved by modifying the existing Residential – Terrace Housing and Apartment Buildings Zone and some business zones to enable buildings of at least six storeys.

We are proposing walkable catchments as:

- a 15-minute walk (around 1200 metres) from the edge of the city centre.
- a 10-minute walk (around 800 metres) from the edge of the metropolitan centres and around rapid transit stops, such as a train station or stop along the Northern Busway.

These are subject to modifying factors such as the topography, for example steep hills, and physical barriers including motorways.

The zoning proposal shown in the Plan Change 78 map viewer to enable intensification inside walkable catchments is a modified Residential – Terrace Housing and Apartment Buildings Zone that enables up to six storey buildings.

For more description and information about walkable catchments please see information sheet #1 Walkable catchments.

For more description and information about intensification in walkable catchments and the Terrace Housing and Apartment Buildings Zone please see information sheet #2 Residential intensification in walkable catchments and the Terrace Housing and Apartment Buildings Zone.

## **Intensification around town and local centres**

The government has also required us to enable greater building heights and housing densities in and around our neighbourhood, local and town centres.

The height and housing 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 is proposed to be achieved by increasing the amount of land zoned Residential – Terrace Housing and Apartment Buildings Zone around some centres and newly applying it around others.

Town centres are larger suburban centres in Auckland that provide for a wide range of shops, services and activities for their surrounding neighbourhoods. They are often spread across a couple of city blocks, and along main roads. Some examples are Glenfield, Glen Eden, Parnell and Papatoetoe town centres.

Local centres are smaller suburban centres that serve local areas and neighbourhoods. Local centres might have 20 or 30 shops and some small offices.

We are not proposing to introduce more intensive residential zoning around neighbourhood centres than already provided for in this plan change. These are very small groups of shops and businesses that serve their immediate neighbourhood.

For more description and information about intensification around suburban centres please see information sheet #3 Intensification around suburban centres.

## **Medium Density Residential Standards (MDRS)**

We are required by the amended RMA to allow medium-density housing across most of Auckland's residential areas. These are the suburban areas in the urban environment of Auckland outside of the walkable catchments and the areas around centres talked about above.

This is proposed to be achieved by a modified Residential – Mixed Housing Urban Zone to enable MDRS to apply. This is shown in the Proposed Plan Change 78 map viewer.

This will allow housing of up to three storeys (including terrace housing and low-rise apartments). The MDRS also allows three houses on a site without the need for a resource consent.

The amended RMA also requires the council to replace its housing design standards for things like the amount of a property that buildings can cover, the size of outdoor spaces and how much of property can be landscaped.

For more description and information about MDRS requirements and the modified Mixed Housing Urban zone please see information sheet #4 Medium Density Residential Standards (MDRS) and information sheet #5: Updates to the Residential – Mixed Housing Urban Zone.

## **The Residential – Low Density Residential Zone**

In the proposed plan change we are proposing a new ‘Residential – Low Density Residential Zone’. The purpose of this zone is to reduce the level of development enabled by the Medium Density Residential Standards (MDRS), to limit required building heights and density in areas where some qualifying matters apply.

For example, to minimise the number of people being exposed to risks of coastal erosion through reducing the number of houses allowed to be developed on a site without a resource consent. The Low Density Residential zone will provide for a lower level of development to a maximum of up to two storeys and one house per site, with two or more houses requiring a resource consent.

For more description and information about the Low Density Residential zone please see information sheet #6 The Residential – Low Density Residential Zone.

## **Qualifying matters**

The government allows for some qualifying matters, or exemptions, to modify the three-storey and six-storey building height being enabled. Qualifying matters are a characteristic or feature that can be used to protect sites of cultural, historic, or ecological significance or to avoid development in areas with natural hazards.

The government has identified a number of qualifying matters and allows the council to identify other qualifying matters relevant and important to Aucklanders.

### **Qualifying matters identified by the government**

The government has already identified a number of qualifying matters, that must be protected and reflected in proposals for intensification. They include:

- (a) a matter of national importance under section 6 of the RMA
- (b) a matter required by any other National Policy Statement
- (c) a matter required to give effect to Te Ture Whaimana o Te Awa o Waikato – the Vision and Strategy for the Waikato River
- (d) a matter required to give effect to the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act 2000 or the Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area Act 2008
- (e) any matter that ensures the safe or efficient operation of nationally significant infrastructure

- (f) open space provided for public use
- (g) an area subject to a designation or heritage order
- (h) a matter that implements or ensures consistency with iwi participation legislation
- (i) the requirement to provide sufficient business land suitable for low-density uses.

We have identified the map overlays and rules in the Auckland Unitary Plan that deal with these matters and have proposed an appropriate way to protect them in our proposed plan change.

The zoning proposal shown in the Proposed Plan Change 78 map viewer to respond to some of these qualifying matters is the new Residential – Low Density Residential Zone.

For more description and information about government-identified qualifying matters please see information sheet #7 Qualifying matters (Part 1).

### **Qualifying matters identified by the council**

The government allows us to identify additional qualifying matters relevant and important to Aucklanders. To include our own qualifying matters, we must provide strong evidence to justify why they should reduce the required building heights and housing density in a particular area taking into account the government's strong direction to enable more housing.

The additional qualifying matters the council thinks are important for Auckland include:

- Identified Special Character Areas – older established areas of special architectural or other built character value
- Ridgeline Protection Overlay – prominent ridges in Auckland that add scenic character
- Local Public Views Overlay including Stockade Hill Viewshaft – views that contribute to neighbourhood character
- Auckland War Memorial Museum Viewshaft – a popular viewing point from a landmark building
- Character buildings in City Centre Zone and Queen Street Valley Precinct – pre-1940's buildings that add to the character of the Queen Street Valley and other parts of the city centre
- Some of the existing built form controls in the city centre (e.g. allowing sunlight into public places)
- Māori Cultural Heritage - Pukekiwiriki Pā and Pararēkau Island
- Areas with significant infrastructure constraints – for example water and wastewater
- Transport constraints in Beachlands
- Qualifying matters within specific precincts

The zoning proposal shown in the Proposed Plan Change 78 map viewer to respond to some of these qualifying matters is the Residential – Low Density Residential Zone. Other approaches are also proposed.

For more description and information about the qualifying matters the council is proposing please see information sheet #8 Qualifying matters (Part 2). For more description and information about special character areas see information sheet #9 Special character areas. For more description and information about proposed changes to the City Centre Zone please see information sheet #10 The City Centre Zone.

## Updates to precincts

Precincts in the Auckland Unitary Plan enable local differences to be recognised by providing detailed place-based provisions which can vary the outcomes sought by the zone or Auckland-wide provisions and can be more restrictive or more enabling.

There are 67 precincts in the Auckland Unitary Plan proposed to be amended by Proposed Plan Change 78. The approach to updating precincts in the proposed plan change is dependent on the precinct location.

For more description and information about updates to precincts please see information sheet #11 Updates to precincts.

## Future Coastal Hazards Plan Change

Coastal hazards such as coastal erosion and coastal inundation are identified as matters of national importance under section 6(h) of the RMA which requires the management of significant risks from natural hazards.

The Auckland Unitary Plan acknowledges and manages these hazards but relies on information that does not fully align with recently released international studies and projections on the impacts of climate change. Proposed Plan Change 78 incorporates some of these matters but a future separate plan change will be needed to update the AUP to be more aligned with this information.

For more description and information about coastal hazards please see information sheet #12 Future Coastal Hazards Plan Change.

## Plan Change 78 and the Auckland Light Rail corridor

The Auckland Light Rail project will see new rapid transit stations introduced in the Auckland isthmus, Māngere and airport areas. The implications of light rail in terms of the council's response to the National Policy Statement on Urban Development are significant.

At this point in time, the specific route and stations for light rail have not been confirmed. More work is required within the corridor to confirm the route and stations, and therefore this area has not been included in Proposed Plan Change 78 at this stage.

The specific route and stops are expected to be engaged upon and confirmed as part of the Auckland Light Rail project in 2023. When that work is finalised, the council will complete the proposed plan change in 2023 by notifying for submissions what is known as a 'variation' to

Proposed Plan Change 78 for the ALR corridor. In the meantime, the rules and zones of the Auckland Unitary Plan continue to apply to the corridor shown 'whited-out' in the Proposed Plan Change 78 map viewer.

For more description and information about the light rail corridor see information sheet #13 Plan Change 78 and the Auckland Light Rail corridor.

## How you can have your say

You may make a submission on the proposed plan change by sending an electronic or a written submission to:

- Auckland Council, Unitary Plan Private Bag 92300, Auckland 1142, Attention: Planning Technician; or
- By using the electronic form on the Auckland Council website at [www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/planchanges](http://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/planchanges); or
- By email to: [unitaryplan@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](mailto:unitaryplan@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz); or
- Lodging your submission in person at Auckland Council libraries or offices.

The submission must be in form 5 and must state whether or not you wish to be heard in relation to your submission. Copies of this form are available at [www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/planchanges](http://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/planchanges) or can be collected from any Library or Council Office.

**Submissions must be received by 29 September 2022.**