



**August  
2022**



## **Proposed Plan Change 78 Information Sheet #1**

# **Walkable catchments**

**In August and September 2022, Auckland Council is inviting submissions on changes to the Auckland Unitary Plan (AUP) – our city’s planning rulebook – to allow for greater building heights and densities in urban Auckland. This is known as Proposed Plan Change 78 - Intensification.**

**This information sheet explains the council’s plan change proposals regarding the identification of ‘walkable catchments’.**

**Submissions are now invited on the proposed plan change. The period for submissions closes on 29 September 2022.**

### **The government’s approach to more housing**

The government’s National Policy Statement on Urban Development (NPS-UD) came into force in August 2020 and was updated in May 2022. 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. The NPS-UD also requires more building height and housing density within and around neighbourhood, local and town centres.

In December 2021, the government also made amendments to the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA). The RMA now requires the councils of New Zealand’s largest and rapidly growing cities – Auckland, Hamilton, Tauranga, Wellington and Christchurch – to incorporate new Medium Density Residential Standards (MDRS) in relevant residential zones.

Through the use of MDRS the government requires the council to enable medium-density housing across most of Auckland’s residential suburbs. Three dwellings of up to three storeys, including terrace housing and low-rise apartments, are to be permitted on most residential properties unless a ‘qualifying matter’ applies (see information sheets #7 and #8). Four or more dwellings are to 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.

## Identifying walkable catchments

The NPS-UD requires Auckland Council to identify walkable catchments around the city centre, metropolitan centres and existing and planned rapid transit stops, and enable buildings of at least six storeys within these areas.

The council has proposed walkable catchments that represent the distance an average person is likely to walk to the city centre, metropolitan centres or a rapid transit stop. Through Proposed Plan Change 78, the council has applied two walkable catchment distances:

- a 15-minute walk (around 1200 metres) from the edge of the City Centre Zone
- a 10-minute walk (around 800 metres) from the edge of the metropolitan centres and around existing and planned rapid transit stops, such as a train station entrance point or a stop along the Northern Busway.

A larger walkable catchment for the city centre is proposed because it has the greatest number of jobs and the greatest concentration of activities and amenities.

The walkable catchments are identified through a spatially demarcated layer on the planning maps called 'Walkable Catchments'. Chapter G in the Auckland Unitary Plan text has been amended to be called '*Chapter G – Rural Urban Boundary (RUB) and Walkable Catchments*'. Walkable catchments are proposed to be a District Plan method (rather than in the Regional Policy Statement).

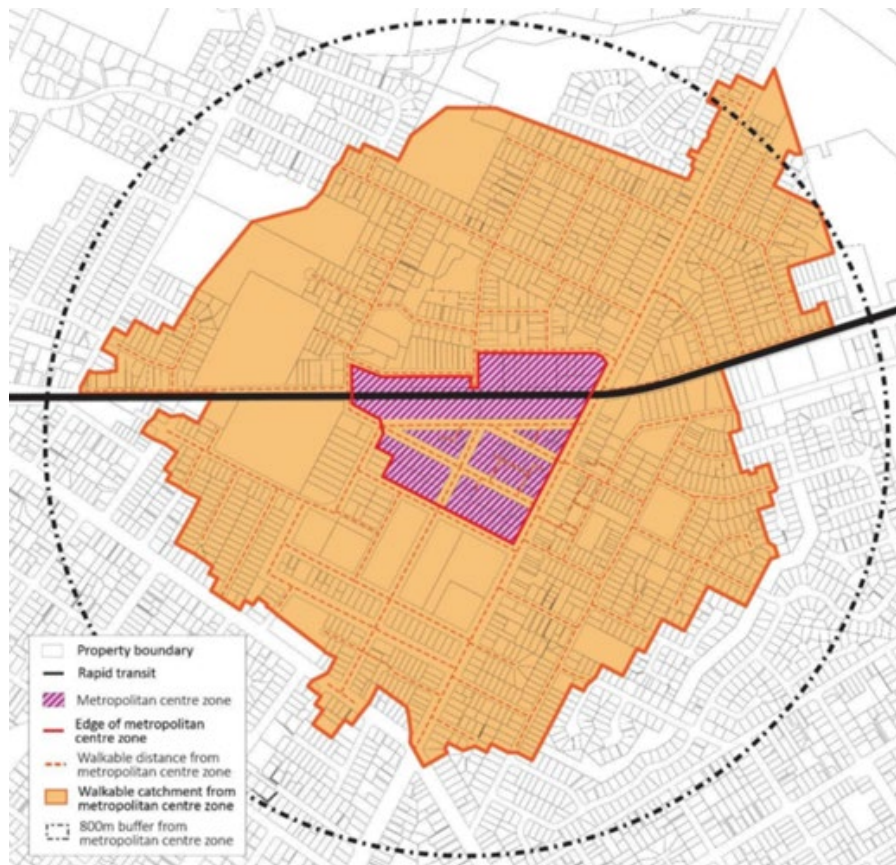
## How were walkable catchments identified?

The measurement of walkable catchments reflects the actual routes and distances people walk rather than direct distances 'as-the-crow-flies'. This means that each walkable catchment has a different shape.

Distances have been applied on a case-by-case basis, taking into account location-specific factors. These factors could include steep streets, which may limit the distance people can walk in 10 or 15 minutes, and barriers such as wide arterials which are unpleasant, difficult, or even impossible for pedestrians to cross.

**Figure 1** over the page shows a generic example of how a walkable catchment around a metropolitan centre is defined. The outer dashed circle is a 10-minute walk or 800 metres 'as-the-crow-flies' from the edge of the centre. This is merely a theoretical line and therefore the council has not used this line.

Rather, a GIS mapping analysis using the actual walking network (roads, pathways, tracks) has been calculated, using an 800 metres distance (the orange outlined area). Then the edges of this walkable catchment have been manually refined to take account of various location-specific factors such as topography.



**Figure 1** shows a walkable catchment around a metropolitan centre

## Identifying our existing and planned rapid transit stops

The government requires the council to consider both existing and planned rapid transit stops when defining walkable catchments where greater intensification can occur.

The rapid transit network includes stops on a dedicated busway or rail network where a bus or train arrives at least every 15 minutes or where they are planned to have this frequency in the future.

Ferry services are excluded as this mode of public transport does not meet the government’s definition of rapid transit. The Onehunga Branch Line is not considered rapid transit as it is not planned to reach a 15-minute service frequency.

### Existing rapid transit stops

For Proposed Plan Change 78, the existing stops associated with the rapid transit network include those on the rail network (excluding the Onehunga Branch Line), along the Northern Busway and the stop on the Eastern Busway between Panmure and Pakuranga.

### Planned rapid transit stops

The stops and stations associated with planned projects have only been included in Proposed Plan Change 78 if there is enough information to know with certainty where the stops and stations are going to be. This is crucial as the walkable catchments are measured using a GIS

analysis from the pedestrian entrances to the stops or stations. Without certainty about the station location, the walkable catchments cannot be accurately determined.

The point at which the council considers that there is enough certainty about the exact location of a planned station is when a 'notice of requirement' to designate the station is publicly notified. For example:

- In the case of the City Rail Link, all the associated stations have been included as their locations have been confirmed through designations and are currently under construction.
- In the case of the Eastern Busway, only the stop on the Panmure to Pakuranga section has been included, as it is in operation. The other stops or stations associated with the extension to Botany have not yet had notices of requirement to designate them publicly notified.
- In the case of City Centre to Māngere (Auckland Light Rail), Northwest Rapid Transit and SH18 Rapid Transit, no stops have been included as the routes and the specific locations of stops are not yet confirmed (notices of requirement for designations are some time away).
- The locations for the new stations at Drury Central (Maketuu Station) and Paerata (Paeraataa Station) have been confirmed through designations. The location for the station at Drury West (Ngaakooroa Station) has not been confirmed as while a notice of requirement has been lodged with the council it has not yet been publicly notified. However, the full extent of the walkable catchments for the planned Maketuu and Paeraataa Stations has not been determined. This is due to the land surrounding these stations being Future Urban zoned land and the lack of certainty about the future road and walking networks in these areas. The full extent of these walkable catchments will be determined at a later stage when the land surrounding the stations is rezoned to an urban zoning and there is more certainty about the future walking network.

Any planned rapid transit stops not included as part of Proposed Plan Change 78 will have a walkable catchment identified for it at a later stage once there is certainty about the location of the stops or stations.

## 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. 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 #7 and #8.

## Further information

- To learn more about how Auckland Council is planning for growth and development, visit [ourauckland.nz/growingtogether](https://ourauckland.nz/growingtogether)
- For detailed information about the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 (NPS-UD) visit the [Ministry for the Environment website](#).
- For more information on the RMA and the amendments made to it in 2021 including the MDRS requirements visit the [Ministry of Housing and Urban Development website](#).

### **Please note:**

**This information sheet is a summary document to assist with understanding Proposed Plan Change 78 - Intensification, the Council's intensification planning instrument, which gives effect to Policies 3 and 4 of the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 and incorporates the medium density residential standards into relevant residential zones as required by the Resource Management Act 1991.**

The proposed plan change to the Auckland Unitary Plan was publicly notified by Auckland Council on 18 August 2022.

All information provided in this information sheet should be considered as being illustrative and indicative only. Users should take specific advice from qualified professional people before undertaking any action as a result of information obtained from this information sheet. The user waives and releases Auckland Council from any claims arising from use of the information provided in this information sheet.