



**August
2022**



Proposed Plan Change 78 Information Sheet #6 The Residential – Low Density Residential Zone

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 reasons for, and the standards contained in, a new zone called the Residential – Low Density Residential (LDR) Zone.

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.

A new low-density residential zone

Auckland Council is proposing a new zone – the Residential - Low Density Residential (LDR) Zone. The purpose of the LDR zone is to reduce the level of development enabled by the MDRS to accommodate the values of certain qualifying matters. MDRS are applied in the LDR zone as far as possible, while accommodating the qualifying matters.

The LDR zone will only apply within the urban environment and will apply to qualifying matters that require a low-density zoning response. For example, reducing the number of houses allowed on a site reduces the number of people being exposed to risks of coastal erosion.

The LDR zone is proposed to be applied to the following qualifying matters:

- neighbourhoods where the special character overlays are a qualifying matter and special character is being retained
- coastal sites where there is the risk of coastal erosion
- sites that are subject to significant risks from natural hazards (such as flooding and/or coastal inundation)
- sites containing significant ecological areas (SEAs)
- sites subject to outstanding natural features, outstanding natural landscapes and high natural character areas
- properties in the Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area Overlay that are within the Rural Urban Boundary (RUB)
- sites subject to identified cultural values and sites of significance to Māori.

Why do we need a new zone?

The AUP currently manages the effect of some qualifying matters through a combination of overlays and the Residential - Single House (SH) Zone. The SH zone is only to apply in settlements of less than 5000 people in rural or coastal locations, where MDRS do not apply.

The LDR zone was developed to control development intensity within the urban environment while ensuring the council is consistent with the zoning requirements allowed in the National Planning Standards and applying MDRS as far as possible while accommodating qualifying matters.

How the Low Density Residential zone modifies the Medium Density Residential Standards

The table below summarises the key differences between the MDRS and the proposed LDR zone.

Table 1 below comparison between Medium Density Residential Standards and the proposed LDR zone.

Medium Density Residential Standards		Proposed Residential - Low Density Residential Zone standards
Number of residential units per site	3 houses per site are permitted (more than 3 houses require resource consent)	One house per site is permitted (two or more require resource consent). On sites with outstanding natural features, outstanding natural landscapes and high natural character, any new houses will require a resource consent.
Building height	Maximum building height of up to 12 metres (3 storeys)	Maximum building height of up to 9m (2 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.	Same requirement as the MDRS. For sites with high natural character or inside the Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area, a 45° recession plane measured from a point 2.5 metres vertically above ground level along side and rear boundaries.
Minimum setbacks	Front yard: 1.5m Side and rear yard: 1m	Front yard: 3m Side and rear yard: 1m
Building coverage	Maximum building coverage of 50% of the net site area.	Maximum building coverage of 35% of the net site area.
Outlook space	Minimum outlook spaces: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4m x 4m from principal living area 1m x 1m from all other habitable rooms 	Same requirement as the MDRS. No changes are considered necessary to accommodate the relevant qualifying matters.
Outdoor living space	Ground floor units <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	Same requirement as the MDRS. No changes are considered necessary to accommodate the relevant qualifying matters.

Medium Density Residential Standards		Proposed Residential - Low Density Residential Zone standards
Windows to the street	Minimum 20% glazing on street-facing frontage	Same requirement as the MDRS. No changes are considered necessary to accommodate the relevant qualifying matters.
Landscaped area	Minimum landscaped area of 20%	Same requirement as the MDRS. No changes are considered necessary to accommodate the relevant qualifying matters.
Other	There are other government standards, for example relating to subdivision	Same requirement as the MDRS. No changes are considered necessary to accommodate the relevant qualifying matters.

Further information

- To learn more about how Auckland Council is planning for growth and development, visit 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.

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