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2025**



Proposed Plan Change 120 Information Sheet #9 Updates to the Residential – Terrace Housing and Apartment Buildings Zone

From 3 November to 19 December 2025, Auckland Council invites submissions on Proposed Plan Change 120: Housing Intensification and Resilience (PC120) - a change to the Auckland Unitary Plan (AUP) (our city's planning rulebook) that proposes to rezone areas of residential land for greater intensification, to enable greater building heights and densities in many parts of urban Auckland, and to strengthen management of natural hazard risks.

Submissions are now open until 5pm on Friday 19 December 2025.

This information sheet explains the council's plan change proposal to modify the Residential – Terrace Housing and Apartment Buildings (THAB) Zone.

Background to Proposed Plan Change 120

PC78 was Auckland's former intensification plan change as required by the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 (NPS-UD). It incorporated the Medium Density Residential Standards (MDRS) which was legally required at the time. This generally allowed three dwellings of up to three storeys to be built on most residential sites without resource consent.

In August 2025, the government amended the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) which enabled PC78 to be withdrawn. Auckland Council withdrew PC78 (in part) and notified PC120 to improve Auckland's resilience to natural hazards and focus intensification around centres and transport nodes.

PC78 was withdrawn in part from 5pm on 9 October 2025, and included withdrawal of the MDRS in PC78.

PC120 addresses central government requirements to:

- contribute to the same level of housing capacity in the AUP as was to be enabled by PC78
- enable building heights and densities within and around town and local centres which reflect the level of commercial and community activity these centres offer
- enable building heights of at least 6-storeys within walkable catchments from the edge of the city centre zone, the edge of metropolitan centre zones and around existing and planned rapid transit stops (train and busway stations) and
- enable building heights of at least 10- and 15- storeys around certain train stations listed in the RMA.

These heights and densities must be enabled unless a ‘qualifying matter’ applies to a site (see Information Sheet #13) which makes that level of development inappropriate.

PC120 also strengthens provisions that manage natural hazard risks. Areas potentially affected by flooding, land instability, coastal erosion or coastal inundation now and in the future are targeted with stronger rules and other planning measures. This approach is to improve Auckland’s resilience to severe weather events and natural hazards, following the storms in early 2023 which resulted in widespread flooding, landslips, and coastal inundation across the region.

What is the Terrace Housing and Apartment Buildings Zone

The purpose of the Residential – Terrace Housing and Apartment Buildings (THAB) zone is to make efficient use of land and infrastructure, increase the capacity of housing and ensure that residents have convenient access to services, employment, education facilities, retail and entertainment opportunities, public open space and public transport.

The zone provides for the greatest density, height, and scale of development of all the residential zones and provides for urban residential living in the form of terrace housing and apartments. Different built form outcomes are anticipated depending on whether the area is within walkable catchments with a range of building heights applied and in accordance with an area’s strategic importance including proximity to a centre and the role and function of that centre; accessibility including access to the rapid transit network; concentration of amenities; and, residential demand.

Building heights in some walkable catchments is 6 storeys (22m) and is proposed to be raised to 10 storeys (34.5m) and 15 storeys (50m), in selected areas, unless heights are moderated due to qualifying matters like Maunga viewshafts and/or Special Character areas. Outside walkable catchments the THAB Zone is generally proposed to be 6 storeys (22m).

Where does the Terrace Housing and Apartment Buildings Zone Apply

The extent of the THAB zone is proposed to increase near high-frequency public transport and centres. This provides more housing opportunities in highly accessible locations. Refer to the PC120 maps for more information.

The zone is predominantly located around metropolitan, town and local centres and the public transport network, and in the Frequent Transit Network corridor intensification areas to support the highest levels of intensification.

Proposed Changes to the Terrace Housing and Apartment Buildings Zone provisions

The council is seeking to achieve the following outcomes for the THAB zone:



The THAB zone standards are also proposed to be changed. The proposed changes to the standards are for two purposes:

- provide additional housing capacity
- good liveable environments

What is changing

Table 1 below summarises the proposed key changes to standards in the THAB zone.

Modified or new standard	Proposed change	Outcome
All standards	It's proposed that all standards would apply to all dwellings.	With higher densities good outcomes are required on all sites, and resource consents are required where the standards aren't complied with.
Amended height standard.	The standard zone height is proposed to change from 5 storeys (16m) to 6 storeys (22m). Additional heights of either 10 storeys (34.5m) or 15 storeys (50m) apply in some walkable catchments shown by height variation controls on the maps.	To increase housing capacity, particularly in locations with access to good public transport and centres.

Amended height in relation to boundary	The height in relation to boundary standard is proposed to increase. Generally, the recession plane starts at 20m height for the first 21.5m of the site side boundary and thereafter starts at 8m. The recession plane is 60 degrees. However, where a height variation control allows more than 22m building height (as shown in the maps), the recession plane starts at 20m for the entire length of the side and rear boundary and is 60 degrees.	This allows more dwelling capacity through enabling 6 storeys on typical sites while managing dominance and shading effects on adjoining sites.
New building set back at upper floors	It's proposed to include a standard requiring a building setback 6m from boundaries for parts of buildings above 22m in height. Where lower density zones adjoin walkable catchment edges, the setback is proposed to be 18m above 22m.	Manages the effects on bulk, visual dominance and amenity for neighbours and the public street and lower density zones on the edges of walkable catchments.
New maximum tower dimension	It's proposed that buildings more than 22m high must have a maximum tower dimension of 38m.	Limits the bulkiness of tall buildings and allows sunlight and daylight access.
Amended landscaped area	The area of landscaping required is not proposed to be changed (30% net site area). However, changes are proposed to require landscaped areas to comprise of natural grass, plants or trees.	Provides for better quality living environments and a vegetated urban streetscape character.
Amended outlook	It's proposed that where ground floor outlook is defined by a boundary fence, outlook depth may be reduced to 5m. Also, outlook from living rooms on ground floors cannot be over parking, vehicle access and manoeuvring areas. A specific set of outlook controls applies to taller buildings which increases the amount of outlook required with increasing building height.	Maintains privacy and a sense of space for residents onsite and on adjoining sites while allowing more dwelling capacity on typical sites. It's also customised to provide light and air between taller buildings.
Amended outdoor living	An additional communal outdoor space requirement for 20+ dwellings is proposed.	To provide communal spaces for residents in larger developments.
New windows to street and private vehicle and pedestrian accessways	A requirement for 20% glazing required facing the street, public spaces or private vehicle/pedestrian access is proposed.	To improve the safety and attractiveness of streets, public spaces and private accessways.
New deep soil and canopy tree	It's proposed that at least 10% net site area is used to provide for deep soil and tree plantings. This can overlap with landscaped areas and communal outdoor living space.	To increase resilience to climate change by providing sufficient soil volumes to support trees that form a canopy, store carbon, reduce urban heat island effects and increase stormwater infiltration.

New safety and privacy buffer to private pedestrian and vehicle accesses	It's proposed that a 1m space is required between dwellings and the access.	To provide separation between dwellings and vehicle or pedestrian access to provide for onsite safety and privacy.
New residential waste management	Onsite waste storage and collection space requirements are proposed.	To provide adequate waste storage and collection space.
New combined wastewater network control	It's proposed that a connection to a separated stormwater pipe must be available, and the confirmation of wastewater capacity is required. Only applies in relatively small, mapped locations.	To manage effects on the environment and the network.

The new wastewater combined network control standard is proposed to be applied to the following permitted activities:

- conversion of an existing dwelling into two
- supported residential care for up to 10 people
- boarding houses for up to 10 people
- visitor accommodation for up to 10 people
- care centres for up to 10 people
- restaurants, cafes, offices, community facilities or healthcare facilities up to 200m² gross floor area per site.

Development (construction of buildings) is proposed to have same standards as the underlying activity.

It's proposed to increase the permitted area of offices, restaurants, cafes and community facilities to up to 200m². This provides for a better mix of uses available to communities living in THAB areas, while still retaining a focus on centres for large scale commercial and community facilities.

What is not changing

Table 2 below summarises existing standards that are proposed to be retained with no changes to achieve good design outcomes in the THAB zone:

Existing standard	Outcome
Home occupations	To enable people to work from home at a scale consistent with residential amenity.
Conversion of an existing dwelling into two dwellings	Provides for more efficient use of existing dwellings with adequate outdoor living space.

Yards	Manages effects between sites and to streets and riparian areas.
Building coverage	To manage the extent of buildings on a site to maintain open areas around buildings (50% of the net site area).
Maximum impervious area	To manage stormwater runoff and support ecology.
Daylight	To ensure adequate daylight for living areas and bedrooms.
Front, side and rear fences and walls	To allow for privacy while enabling eyes on streets and reduce large blank faces for neighbours and the street.
Minimum dwelling size	To ensure development meet the day-to-day needs of residents.
Rainwater tanks	To enable rainwater tank installation and maintain amenity values.

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.

For more information on qualifying matters, refer to information sheet #13 Qualifying Matters.

Further information

- 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 amendments to the RMA [visit the Ministry for the Environment website.](#)

Please note:

This information sheet is a summary document to assist with understanding Proposed Plan Change 120 – Housing Intensification and Resilience, which gives effect to Policies 3 and 4 of the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 and addresses the requirements of Schedule 3C of the Resource Management Act 1991.

Proposed Plan Change 120 to the Auckland Unitary Plan was publicly notified by Auckland Council on 3 November 2025.

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.