

2.50 Retirement villages - section 32 evaluation for the Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan

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1 Overview and Purpose

The Retirement Village zone has been developed in response to the industry requirements and reflects the fact that the standard residential zones are not necessarily the “best fit” for this type of specialist activity. It has some similarities to hospitals and schools that have specialist land use and built form needs.

1.1 Subject Matter of this Section

Retirement villages have changed over the last 15-20 years in response to changing demographics and requirements of older adults. Many older adults expect to have an active retirement and wish to move to a retirement village that allows them to “age in place”. Modern retirement villages generally offer a range of housing from independent living units through to increasing levels of care as peoples health requirements change. From a planning perspective, this means that most retirement villages will offer a range of facilities from villas, apartments and town houses through to shared facilities for recreation and leisure activities, a chapel, libraries and hospital level care.

Most legacy plans provide for rest homes but the concept is only one segment of what is currently provided.

1.2 Resource Management Issue to be Addressed

Existing legacy plans do not provide the flexibility required by retirement villages to construct buildings that are ‘fit for purpose’ in terms of providing for a range of housing and care choices for older people and those requiring care or assisted living. As Auckland’s population continues to grow, it is important that a choice of housing is provided for older people, particularly in locations that provide good amenity and access to community services and facilities.

The controls and assessment criteria seek to achieve quality design outcomes with a focus on the management of the interfaces with adjoining sites. The definition of retirement villages includes accessory activities such as administration offices and medical services. The zone has been applied to existing retirement villages. The zone provides for development that complies with an incorporated concept plans as a permitted activity. The zone has development controls that are appropriate for the types of

1.3 Significance of this Subject

Auckland’s population is changing and there is a growing need for retirement villages. As society’s attitudes to aging have changed over the last couple of decades, more people expect to be living independently, albeit in low maintenance properties and enjoying an active retirement. Retirement villages often incorporate a range of on-site facilities for residents and have a range of housing available from independent living through to full care.

The Retirement Village zone has been developed to fill a specialist niche for housing choice. The zone provides fulfils a social need of housing older adults with community facilities generally available on-site or in close proximity. It also makes efficient use of land, infrastructure and provides a compact, built form. As people move through different life stages, their housing requirements change and this zone provides for that.

1.4 Auckland Plan

Chapter 11 of the Auckland Plan – Priority 2 is “increase housing choice to meet diverse preferences and needs”. Auckland’s households, families and communities are increasingly diverse. Housing must cater for different life stages, cultures and families/whanau of different sizes and types. Ideally, the mix of housing in a neighbourhood should allow people the choice of a suitable dwelling within the same community as they move through different life stages.

1.5 Current Objectives, Policies, Rules and Methods

Most legacy plans have definitions of retirement villages, aged care facilities, or rest homes and are referenced in activity tables. The table below shows how retirement villages are currently dealt with in legacy plans:

Legacy Plan	How retirement villages are dealt with
North Shore	Chapter 16: Residential- Objective 16.3.5 – housing choice Policy 7 “By providing opportunities for elderly persons’ housing in all its forms, including units, minor residential units, complexes, rest-homes and retirement villages, by the inclusion of these activities within the Permitted, Controlled and Discretionary activities.” - Detail in activity tables, assessment criteria
Manukau	No mention in objectives or policies, detail in definitions and activity tables only.
Rodney	No mention in objectives or policies, detail in definitions and activity tables only.
Franklin	No mention in objectives or policies, detail in definitions and activity tables only.
Papakura	No mention in objectives and policies, detail in definitions and activity tables only.
Waitakere	Rest homes are mentioned once in the policy section under policy 10.25 but nowhere else. The policy is not typical. “The adverse effects of aircraft noise arising from existing use of the runways and helicopter landing areas at RNZAF Base Auckland on the people’s health and safety in existing and future residential areas of the City should be avoided, remedied or mitigated. Explanation: The adverse effects of flying activity in association with RNZAF Base Auckland can be avoided by limiting the location of sensitive activities in areas of high cumulative noise. Activities which are sensitive to high cumulative levels of aircraft noise are residential activities, hospitals, educational institutions, and rest homes.”

1.6 Information and Analysis

Auckland Council staff met with representatives from the retirement village sector in 2012 to discuss the structure of the new Unitary Plan and to get feedback on how the legacy plan provisions worked for the sector. A workshop was held with industry representatives late last year to obtain feedback on an early draft of the retirement village zone.

The industry was represented by Metlifecare, Ryman Group, Selwyn Foundation, Oceania, and the Retirement Villages Association. The Retirement Villages Association represents the interests of owners, developers and managers of retirement villages throughout New Zealand. Its members operate more than 21,000 dwelling units housing around 24,000 residents(villas and apartments) which are estimated to be about 92% of the total retirement village dwellings.

A consistent message from the sector was that they undertake high levels of site analysis and planning in developing their sites to meet the needs of the community. Some of the providers were also exceeding industry standards in terms of buildings insulation and green

star ratings ahead of any central or local government regulation. They were particularly supportive of:

- Ensuring a consistent, targeted approach to planning for retirement villages and their attributes
- Recognition that retirement village activities are different from typical residential activities
- Providing mechanisms to enable the well-planned development of a variety of accommodation and supporting care facility opportunities for the elderly in Auckland.

Retirement village owners and operator submitted plans to Auckland council to be incorporated into the Unitary Plan and were assessed by council planners. In all cases, these plans were supported by detailed assessments of the existing legacy plan provisions and indicated where expansion of sites was planned, together with landscape and urban design assessments.

1.7 Consultation Undertaken

Council has consulted with the Auckland Plan Committee, industry sector and local boards in developing the Retirement Villages zone. There is variation in the scale and intensity of retirement villages, and planned future development.

The public had its opportunity to review the zone through the release of the March draft in 2013. A summary of the feedback received is outlined below:

- Acknowledge the inherently residential nature of retirement villages and suggest they should be a permitted or restricted discretionary activity in appropriate residential and business zones
- Proposed that the special purpose zone be converted into a precinct and apply the underlying zone to each site
- General support to incorporate concept plans into the zone to enable mater planned development
- Twelve requests from operators to incorporate concept plans, most seeking moderate to significant increases in building height
- Seeking more enabling land use and development controls
- Requesting application of the Retirement Village zone (core precinct) in a range of locations, including suburban areas and adjacent to the RUB.

It is fair to say that some surrounding residential landowners do not agree with a new specific zone. The Council's role is to strike a balance between allowing for a specialist activity to operate with an appropriate level of checks and balances.

1.8 Decision-Making

The Political Working Party received presentations on the development of the zone in 2012 and in 2013 the Auckland Plan Committee received a presentation on the retirement villages zone in July and again in August and September. All of these presentations were aimed at refining the purpose of the zone, its extent and level of regulation.

1.9 Proposed Provisions

The table below shows a summary of the land use and development controls

Permitted activities	Retirement villages, any development complying with an incorporated concept plan, alterations, additions and demolition unless otherwise specified in an incorporated concept plan, demolition of buildings
Density	No density limits apply where the site has a minimum net site area of 1200m ² and is at least 25m wide at the road boundary for at

	least 80% of the length of its side boundaries.
Incorporated concept plans	The development controls in an incorporated concept plan will apply in place of any of the development controls specified below where relevant
Building Height	Buildings must not exceed 11m in height
Height in relation to boundary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where a site in the Retirement Village zone directly adjoins a site in another zone, the height in relation to boundary control that applies in the adjoining zone applies to the adjoining boundary in the Retirement Village zone. • Where the adjoining zone does not specify a height in relation to boundary control the yard and or setback controls in the adjoining zone applies to the boundary directly adjoining the Retirement Village zone.
Maximum impervious area	60% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum impervious area within a riparian yard: 10%
Building coverage	40%
Landscaping	40%
Yards	Front 2.5m, side and rear 1m, riparian 10m, lake 30m, coastal protection yard 10m
Outlook	<p>An outlook space must be provided from the face of a building containing windows or balconies to a habitable room. Where the room has two or more external faces with windows or balconies the outlook space must be provided from the face with the largest balcony or largest area of glazing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The minimum dimensions for a required outlook space are: • Principal living room- 6m in depth and 4m in width • Principal bedroom- 3m in depth and 3m in width • All other habitable rooms- 1m in depth and 1m in width <p>There are other particular requirements about how the space is measured and whether the outlook may be within the site etc.</p>
Outdoor living space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where a dwelling has the principal living room at ground level, it must have an outdoor living space measuring at least 20m² that: • Is free of buildings, car parking, servicing or manoeuvring areas • Has no dimension less than 3m • Is directly accessible from the principal living room • Has a gradient not exceeding 1 in 20 • Where a dwelling has the principal living room above ground level, part of the required outdoor living space must include a balcony or roof terrace that has a minimum area of 8m² and a minimum depth of 2.4m.
Communal open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be provided at a rate of 8m² per dwelling • Ground floor dwellings are exempt from this requirement where the 8m² is provided as additional outdoor living space for the dwelling.
Daylight to dwellings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principal living room must have external glazing that is at least 40% of the floor area of that space. • Bedrooms must have external glazing that is at least 20% of the floor area of that space
Minimum dwelling size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dwellings must have a minimum net internal floor area of 45m²

Minimum dimension of principal living rooms and principal bedrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principal living room within a dwelling must have no dimension less than 3m, measured perpendicular from the internal walls of the room • The principal bedroom within a dwelling must be at least 3m in width and 3.5m in length including cupboards and other storage space, measured perpendicular from the internal walls of the room.
Minimum floor to ceiling height	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The finished floor to finished ceiling height of new buildings above ground floor must be at least 2.55m where those floors accommodate dwellings
Servicing and waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A building or development containing 10 or more dwellings must provide a communal storage area for waste. The size of the communal storage area must be an aggregate of certain specified minimum areas outlined in the rule.

The areas where the zone is applied are shown in the maps section.

1.10 Reference to other Evaluations

This evaluation should be read in conjunction with:

- 2.3 Residential zones
- 2.5 Building heights
- 2.7 Design statements
- 2.8 Sustainable design
- 2.9 Accessory parking
- 2.12 Pre-1944 demolition
- 2.31 Earthworks

2 Objectives, Policies and Rules

2.1 Objective

The following objectives 8.7.1-3 are proposed:-

1. *Retirement villages make efficient use of land and infrastructure within the RUB.*
2. *Retirement villages provide for a range of accommodation options and accessory activities, including healthcare and recreation facilities.*
3. *Developments are well-designed and provide high-quality on-site amenity.*

Appropriateness of the Objective(s)

The objectives are appropriate because both residents living within the proposed zone and those adjoining it need to have certainty about the zone outcomes. The objectives provide the basis for policies and rules relating to built form, quality, and bulk and location controls. The zone aims to make efficient use of land and infrastructure as outlined in s5 of the RMA. A quality built form is outlined in s7 of the RMA. The Council has the functions and powers under s31 to create a new zone to manage the development, use and ongoing management of retirement villages.

2.1.1 Policies

The following policies 8.7.1-6 are proposed:-

1. *Enable the development or retirement villages to provide the accommodation and care required for older people*
2. *Enable a range of accessory activities to support residents and staff.*
3. *Provide for the detailed site-specific planning of retirement villages while ensuring any adverse effects on the character and amenity of the neighbourhood and neighbouring sites are managed.*

4. *Manage the location of noise-generating equipment and activities to provide for on-site amenity and avoid adverse effects on adjoining residential sites.*
5. *Graduate building heights so higher buildings are located away from the zone boundary when the site adjoins open space or a residential zone to avoid significant over-shadowing and visual dominance, (except adjoining the Terrace Housing and Apartment Buildings zone where building height may be at a greater scale at the zone interface).*
6. *Require buildings to provide good levels of outlook and privacy for residents, and encourage buildings to maximise sunlight access to principal living rooms, outdoor living spaces and communal open spaces and make the best use of views from the site.*

2.1.2 Rules and other methods

The proposed provisions are summarised in 1.9 above. Many of the standards selected for the zone rely on similar provisions that exist either in the Mixed Housing Urban zone or Terrace Housing and Apartment Buildings zone e.g. relaxed density provisions, servicing and waste, minimum floor to ceiling height, daylight to dwellings, minimum dimension of principal living rooms and principal bedrooms, minimum dwelling size. These are considered appropriate as there should be consistency in terms of these kinds of standards. The maximum height was selected to allow for three storey development, understanding that 11m gives the potential to allow for buildings that have particular air conditioning and ducting requirements.

Most of these sites are large enough to contain their effects on-site and the rules have been developed to apply generally across the board unless an incorporated plan allows for some different built form outcome.

All of the rules can be related back to the objectives and policies for the zone.

2.1.3 Costs and Benefits of Proposed Policies and Rules

The benefits associated with the proposed policies and rules are:

- Greater housing choice for older adults
- A quality built form
- Certainty of what can be built on these sites
- Development controls tailored to a particular industry
- Environmental benefits of using existing infrastructure and land efficiently
- Economic benefits associated with the construction, maintenance and ongoing operation of retirement villages (materials, staff, ongoing employment opportunities)
- These sites are often on public transport routes enabling residents good access to other facilities and services

The costs associated with the proposed policies and rules are:

- There are likely to be costs associated with future plan changes to incorporate more plans
- A retirement village land use tends to “lock up” land use for decades
- Additional traffic may be generated to and from the site
- There is no specific mention of universal design in either the rules or assessment criteria, although industry takes this into account in designing sites given the age demographic and range of impairments.

There has been no specific cost-benefit analysis.

2.1.4 Adequacy of Information and Risk of Not Acting

It is considered that there is sufficient information on which to base the proposed policies and methods.

2.1.5

3 Alternatives

The proposed preferred alternative is discussed in 2.0 above. The status quo alternative is outlined in 1.5 above.

Alternatives are:

1. Preferred – introduction of the Special Purpose Retirement Village zone
2. Status quo- leave retirement villages in the residential chapter
3. Retain a residential underlying zone with a retirement village precinct

	Status Quo Alternative	Alternative 1 - Preferred approach	Alternative 2 – retain an underlying zone with a retirement village precinct
Appropriateness	The status quo does not adequately deal with the complexity of how these sites operate. Many retirement village sites have their own leisure spaces, library, chapel, mini-hospital, apartments and villas. Most legacy plans are now over 20 years old and inadequate to deal with the nature of these consents.	The Retirement Village zone provides for housing choice for older adults and some specific industry requirements.	An underlying zoning with a retirement village precinct would alter the activity status of some key residential controls and save repetition. It would mean that consents planners would need to assess all layers as a result.
Effectiveness	Only one legacy plan specifically mentions retirement villages. This shows the low value previously placed on this form of housing despite Auckland's increasing number of older people.	The provisions are more design focussed and will create more consistency in built form outcomes between this zone and the Mixed Housing Urban and Terrace Housing and Apartment Buildings zone. This zone provides for a range of housing and supported living options.	This approach would be effective but would require some additional work to assign an underlying zoning as well as applying a precinct. The final effect would be no different to the creation of a zone.
Efficiency	The legacy plans were relatively inefficient at dealing with retirement villages as they vary considerably in what they assess. This largely reflects the context in which they were developed.	The Retirement Village zone will create more efficient use of land, as these sites should be developed at a range of intensities, depending on their location, setting and market segment.	This method would be less efficient than the preferred approach.
Costs	The costs associated with continuing with a legacy approach are: A complex regulatory environment across Auckland, lack of consistency in administration of plans i.e. some require more up front information and design assessment. The costs and delays in obtaining resource consent for development and re-development increases the cost of the product to the eventual consumer.	The costs associated with the development of the Retirement Village zone are the costs of notification, hearings and administration of the Unitary Plan. Retirement Village Operators will continue to have to assess applications under two rules until the new plan is made operative.	There would be little difference in cost between this method and the preferred approach.
Benefits	The benefits of the legacy approach are that it is well understood.	The benefits of the new zone are that its controls enable more intensive housing to occur, manage edge effects and provide certainty to the community.	There would be no additional benefit to this method and it may take more time for consultants to prepare applications as they would need to consider zones policies and objectives as well as a precinct.
Risks	The risks are that the existing provisions are no longer "fit for purpose" with how retirement villages are now developed.	The risks associated with a new zone are that any discrepancies need to be ironed out through the process. This is a manageable risk.	The risks would be the same as for the preferred option.

4 Conclusion

The Retirement Village zone has been written to enable the development of new purpose-built retirement villages within urban areas and re-development of existing retirement villages. The zone is designed to provide housing and care choices for older people and those requiring care or assisted living.

The controls and assessment criteria aim to achieve a quality built form and manage the interfaces with adjoining sites. A number of incorporated concept plans are in the notified version of the Unitary Plan, providing the community with certainty about what may occur on specific sites. Overall, it is considered that the development of the zone is similar to providing for the specific requirements of health and education providers. Retirement villages are important for providing a range of housing in Auckland.

5 Record of Development of Provisions

5.1 Information and Analysis

- Retirement Villages Act 2003.

5.2 Consultation Undertaken

- Consultation with major operators in the Auckland region including Metlifecare, Ryman Group, Selwyn Foundation, Oceania, and the Retirement Villages Association, and their representative planning companies
- November 2012 – workshop undertaken with major operators
- Public release of draft provisions for feedback.

5.3 Decision-Making

- 2012 – March 2013 – Consultation with key stakeholders and development of draft Retirement Village zone provisions
- March 2013 – Provisions for Draft Unitary Plan finalised
- May 2013 – Decision made to create a retirement village precinct
- June 2013 – Precinct decision reversed, special purpose zone retained
- 29th August 2013 - APC approves Special Purpose Retirement Village zone provisions, and four concept plans:
 - 10 Ranfurly Rd
 - 142 Shakespeare Rd
 - 42 Herd Rd
 - 43 Target St.