



**August
2022**



Proposed Plan Change 78 Information Sheet #10

The City Centre 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 council’s plan change response to enabling development in Auckland’s city centre.

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.

Auckland's City Centre

The city centre is Auckland's largest centre. It contains the most accessible and sought-after land in Auckland and acts as an international gateway and important economic driver for New Zealand.

The city centre also has the most transport trips by both private and public transport. It is expected that this will further increase once major projects, such as the City Rail Link (CRL), are completed. It also provides a high concentration of jobs which makes it a key destination for people travelling to and from employment.

The City Centre Zone allows for the greatest amount of development through enabling tall buildings and high densities. Having this form of development enables the city centre to perform economically while having spaces for workers, visitors and inner-city residents.

The NPS-UD requires the council to enable as much development capacity as possible in the city centre in order to maximise the benefits of intensification. We propose to keep some controls that maintain the values that Aucklanders like about the city centre, while removing constraints on intensification.

Our approach to change

While we want to ensure that the AUP provides flexibility and opportunity for developers in the city centre, we also need to maintain and enhance the things that residents, workers and visitors to our city centre love. That includes making sure our open spaces and streets have enough daylight, sunlight and sky views to make them pleasant places to be.

This means keeping our local views linking the city with the harbour and protecting our views to the maunga. While we do this, we need to protect our heritage, including the sites of significance to mana whenua, and recognise the role of the city centre in providing high-density residential living opportunities.

If we keep the good things, while enabling growth, we can ensure our city centre works efficiently as a major hub with its multiple roles in the wider economy.

Changes to the City Centre Zone

What is proposed to change?

- Removal of the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) standards. These standards currently manage site intensity and the scale of development in the city centre. FAR varies throughout the city centre but typically allows for greater development capacity in key areas. Removing the standards will provide developers with more flexibility in building design but still

within the constraints of other standards such as tower dimensions and set back controls.

- Amendment of the general height control. This will enable:
 - unlimited building heights in the core city centre except where special height controls apply;
 - heights up to 72.5 metres across the city centre, except where special height controls or other qualifying matters apply.
- Changes to current standards (and some new standards) to ensure that tall buildings are of a form that fits the context of our city.
- Removal of the FAR bonus standards. These standards allow transfer of additional floor space between sites and buildings. However, all sites will have greater height and/or development capacity and so the transfer of floor space is no longer needed.

What is proposed to stay?

- The need for all new buildings in the city centre to go through the resource consent process. This process enables good design outcomes to be achieved for city centre buildings.
- The special height controls. These controls are important for limiting building height where certain things need to be protected. For example, a special height control is in place around Albert Park to ensure sunlight into the park.
- Controls that set minimum dwelling size and minimum floor to ceiling ratio. It is important that we maintain these controls to ensure that dwellings are of an acceptable size for residents.
- The outlook control, to ensure light, outlook and privacy for dwellings.
- The maximum tower dimension, setbacks from the street, and tower separation distances are being kept and extended.
- City centre precincts will continue to manage area specific outcomes, including height and development capacity.

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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