



**April
2022**



Information Sheet #8

The City Centre Zone

During April and May 2022, Auckland Council is asking Aucklanders for their feedback on potential changes to the Auckland Unitary Plan (AUP) – our city’s planning rulebook – to allow for more housing at greater heights and density.

This information sheet explains the council’s preliminary response to intensification in Auckland’s city centre.

The government’s approach to more housing

The government’s National Policy Statement on Urban Development (NPS-UD) came into force in August 2020. 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.

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

Through the use of MDRS the government requires the council to enable medium-density housing across most of Auckland’s suburbs. Three dwellings of up to three-storeys, including terrace housing and low-rise apartments, must be permitted on most residential properties. Four dwellings or more dwellings must 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 Gross Floor Area (GFA) standard. The GFA standard currently manages the scale of development in the city centre. It varies throughout the city centre but typically allows for greater building height in key areas. Removing the standard 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.
- Removal of the general height control. This will enable unlimited building heights in the city centre except where special height controls apply. We will be looking to change our

current rules or create new rules to ensure that tall buildings are of a form and scale that fits the context of our city.

- Removal of the GFA bonus standards. These standards allow transfer of additional floor space between sites and buildings. However, all buildings will have greater height and so the transfer of floor space is no longer needed.
- The outlook space control is proposed to be extended. This will ensure that there is enough privacy between buildings and access to both sunlight and daylight for residents.

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, special height controls are in place around Albert Park to ensure that the park is not shaded from sunlight and daylight.
- 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 maximum tower dimension, setbacks from the street, and tower separation distances are being kept and potentially extended.
- City centre precincts will continue to manage area specific outcomes, including height and density.

Further information

- To read more about the consultation on the council's preliminary response to NPS-UD and the changes to the Resource Management, and to give feedback, visit [akhaveyoursay.nz/housing](https://www.akhaveyoursay.nz/housing)
- To learn more about how Auckland Council is planning for growth and development, visit [ourauckland.nz/growingtogether](https://www.ourauckland.nz/growingtogether)
- For detailed information about the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 (NPS-UD) visit the [Ministry for the Environment website](https://www.ministryofenvironment.govt.nz/).
- For more information on the Resource Management (Enabling Housing Supply and Other Matters) Amendment Act 2021 and the Medium Density Residential Standards visit the [Ministry of Housing and Urban Development website](https://www.ministryofhousingandurbandevelopment.govt.nz/).
- Visit the council's NPS-UD and MDRS preliminary response map viewer at [akhaveyoursay.nz/housing](https://www.akhaveyoursay.nz/housing) to view the proposed planning maps.

Please note:

This information sheet is a summary document to assist with consultation during April and May 2022 on the council's preliminary response to the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 and the Resource Management Act as amended.

The proposed plan change to the Auckland Unitary Plan to be publicly notified by Auckland Council on or before 20 August 2022 may contain information that is different to or inconsistent with council's preliminary response. This may be for a number of reasons, including to address feedback received through consultation.

All information provided in this information sheet should be considered as being illustrative and indicative only.

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