

# Government's new housing rules:

## What it means for Auckland

Feedback must be received by **Monday 9 May 2022**

Over the past few years, central government has taken a much stronger role in planning for the growth of New Zealand's largest and fastest growing cities. This means new rules enabling more higher-density housing.

These are directed by the government's National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 (NPS-UD) and the Resource Management (Enabling Housing Supply and Other Matters) Amendment Act 2021 (the Act).

These government requirements will enable taller and more higher-density housing, such as apartments, terraced housing and townhouses across our city, with the highest densities in areas close to public transport and centres with shops, jobs and community services.

While the NPS-UD focuses on housing of six storeys or more in and around our largest urban centres (including the city centre) and around rapid transit stops (like train and busway stations), the Act requires Medium Density Residential Standards (MDRS) that enable housing of up to three storeys to be built on most residential sites across the city.

The NPS-UD also allows us to limit intensification where there are features or constraints to enabling the scale of development that would normally be allowed on properties or across particular areas. These are called qualifying matters.

The requirements from the NPS-UD and the MDRS combined will mean medium and high-density housing can be built across much of Auckland's urban area. This means there will be changes to the rules in the Auckland Unitary Plan (our planning rulebook) for how properties can be developed.

The changes set out in the NPS-UD and the Act are not optional. By law, we must change the Auckland Unitary Plan to put these new rules in place. However, the NPS-UD allows us to make a limited number of decisions to help shape the future of our city such as:

- The distances of 'walkable catchments' where buildings of six storeys or more are required
- The size of the areas around our suburban town and local centres where additional height and density of buildings can occur, and what the building heights and density limits are
- Additional 'qualifying matters' (a feature or characteristic which can reduce the three-storey and six-storey building height limits) that will apply in Auckland.

We have prepared a preliminary response to the NPS-UD and the Act, that shows how we think they could apply to Auckland. A summary of this preliminary response is explained in our consultation document available on [akhaveyoursay.nz/housing](https://akhaveyoursay.nz/housing), and the planning maps are shown in the draft NPS-UD map viewer (link to map viewer available on [akhaveyoursay.nz/housing](https://akhaveyoursay.nz/housing))

We want your feedback on the parts of the preliminary response listed above. Your feedback will help inform a plan change. We are required to publicly notify this plan change by 20 August 2022. You can then make a submission on the plan change, so that your views are considered during the statutory decision-making process.

We strongly encourage you to read the consultation document and supporting information before answering the following questions. For more details, go to [akhaveyoursay.nz/housing](http://akhaveyoursay.nz/housing).

We encourage you to give feedback online at [akhaveyoursay.nz/housing](http://akhaveyoursay.nz/housing) or you can:

**Scan and Email your completed form to:**

[unitaryplan@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](mailto:unitaryplan@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz)

**Post your completed form to:**

Unitary Plan Team  
Freepost Authority Number 190197  
Auckland Council  
Private Bag 92300, Victoria Street West  
Auckland, 1142

**Your details**

**Your name and feedback will be included in public documents. All other personal details will be kept private.**

First name:

Last name:

Email address or postal address:

Your local board:

Is your feedback on behalf of an organisation or business? (If yes, this confirms you have authority to submit on the organisation's behalf)

☐

Yes

☐

No

Name of organisation/business:

**These questions are optional but will help us understand which groups of the community are engaging with us.**

What gender are you?

☐

Male

☐

Female

☐

Another gender (please specify):

What age group do you belong to?

☐

Under 15

☐

15-17

☐

18-24

☐

25-34

☐

35-44

☐

45-54

☐

55-64

☐

65-74

☐

75+

Which ethnic group(s) do you feel you belong to? (Please select as many as apply)

☐

Pākehā/NZ European

☐

Other European

☐

Māori

☐

Cook Islands Māori

☐

Samoa

☐

Tongan

☐

Indian

☐

Chinese

☐

Southeast Asian

☐

Other (please specify):

## **Your feedback** (all questions are optional)

### **Requirements for intensification**

#### **Intensification inside walkable catchments**

A walkable catchment (required by the NPS-UD) is the area around a train or busway station, or a large urban centre within which an average person will walk to that location.

The government requires councils to identify walkable catchments around the city centre, metropolitan centres and rapid transit stops (train or busway stations) where buildings of six storeys or more must be enabled.

We are proposing:

- a 15-minute walk (around 1200 metres) from the edge of the city centre.
- a 10-minute walk (around 800 metres) from the edge of the metropolitan centres and around rapid transit stops, such as a train station or stop along the Northern and Eastern Busways.

These are subject to modifying factors such as landscape, for example steep hills, and physical barriers including motorways.

#### **1. What do you think of our proposed walkable catchment of 1200 metres from the edge of the city centre?**

- ☐ Support
- ☐ Do not support – I think it should be further
- ☐ Do not support – I think it should be closer
- ☐ Other
- ☐ I don't know

Tell us why

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**2. What do you think of our proposed walkable catchment of 800 metres from the edge of the metropolitan centres?**

- ☐ Support
- ☐ Do not support – I think it should be further
- ☐ Do not support – I think it should be closer
- ☐ Other
- ☐ I don't know

Tell us why

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**3. What do you think of our proposed walkable catchment of 800 metres around rapid transit stops?**

- ☐ Support
- ☐ Do not support – I think it should be further
- ☐ Do not support – I think it should be closer
- ☐ Other
- ☐ I don't know

Tell us why

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**Intensification around town and local centres**

Central government has told us that we need to enable building height and density (for example terrace housing and apartment buildings) in and around our neighbourhood, local and town

centres that matches the level of commercial activity and community services in each centre (such as jobs, shops and businesses). This is achieved by applying the Residential – Terrace Housing and Apartment Buildings Zone.

Town centres are larger suburban centres in Auckland that provide for a wide range of shops, services and activities for their surrounding districts. They are often spread across a couple of city blocks, and along main roads. Some examples are Glenfield, Glen Eden, Parnell and Papatoetoe town centres.

Local centres include a larger number of smaller suburban centres that serve local areas and neighbourhoods. Local centres might have 20 or 30 shops and some small offices.

**4. What do you think of our proposal to apply the Terrace Housing and Apartment Buildings Zone to residential areas up to around 400 metres from large town centres with high accessibility?**

- ☐ Support
- ☐ Do not support – I think it should be further
- ☐ Do not support – I think it should be closer
- ☐ Other
- ☐ I don't know

Tell us why

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**5. What do you think of our proposal to apply the Terrace Housing and Apartment Buildings zone to residential areas up to around 200 metres from small town centres or large local centres with high accessibility?**

- ☐ Support
- ☐ Do not support – I think it should be further
- ☐ Do not support – I think it should be closer
- ☐ Other
- ☐ I don't know

Tell us why

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## **Qualifying matters**

The government allows for some qualifying matters - exemptions to modify three-storey and six-storey building heights. Qualifying matters are a characteristic which can be used to protect sites of cultural, historic, or ecological significance or to avoid development in areas with natural hazards.

The government has already identified a number of qualifying matters and allows us to include other qualifying matters relevant to our city.

To include our own qualifying matters, we must provide robust evidence to justify why it should reduce building heights and density in a particular area in light of the government's direction to enable more housing.

## **Special Character Areas**

'Special character areas' are older parts of the city that have special architectural or other built character value. They are covered by the Special Character Area Overlay in the Auckland Unitary Plan.

Many of Auckland's older residential suburbs were built around the early public transport network and emerging town centres. This is where our special character areas are located. The government is now directing us to enable increased housing density (e.g. buildings of six-storeys or more) within walkable catchments of town centres and public transport networks, and up to three storey buildings elsewhere.

The government has not included special character areas as a qualifying matter. However, we are proposing to include identified areas of special character as a qualifying matter that reduces limits on building heights and density to ensure the character values of these areas are retained.

**6. What do you think of our proposal to include identified special character areas as a qualifying matter?**

- ☐ Support
- ☐ Do not support – I think all existing special character areas should be a qualifying matter
- ☐ Do not support – I do not think special character areas should be a qualifying matter
- ☐ Other
- ☐ I don't know

Tell us why

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To answer the next two questions, you will need to view the draft planning maps shown in the NPS-UD map viewer. The maps show areas of special character that are identified as a qualifying matter (in blue) and that are not a qualifying matter (in red). You can find a link to the map viewer on [akhaveyoursay.nz/housing](http://akhaveyoursay.nz/housing)

**7. What do you think of the proposed residential special character areas that we have identified?**

- ☐ Support
- ☐ Do not support – I think there are further areas of that should be identified as a qualifying matter
- ☐ Do not support – I think there are areas identified that should not be a qualifying matter
- ☐ Do not support – I think no special character areas should be identified as a qualifying matter
- ☐ Other
- ☐ I don't know

Tell us why

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**8. What do you think of the proposed business special character areas that we have identified?**

- ☐ Support
- ☐ Do not support – I think more areas or parts of areas should be identified as a qualifying matter
- ☐ Do not support – I think less areas should be identified as a qualifying matter
- ☐ Do not support – I think no areas should be identified as a qualifying matter
- ☐ Other
- ☐ I don't know

Tell us why

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**Infrastructure constraints**

We are looking to identify areas in Auckland with long-term significant infrastructure constraints as a qualifying matter. As with special character areas , this is not a qualifying matter that is listed in the NPS-UD or the Act.

This may include areas where water supply and wastewater networks may not be adequate to cope with more growth and are very costly and/or difficult to upgrade, or stormwater infrastructure is not adequate and very costly and/or difficult to provide, or where access to transport infrastructure is not adequate and very costly and/or difficult to provide.

By including this as a qualifying matter, it would reduce the limit on building heights and density that would otherwise be enabled.

We have not yet determined how we would apply this qualifying matter as the NPS-UD and the Act do not provide any specific support. At this stage, we want feedback on whether to consider this as a qualifying matter or not. If we include it as a qualifying matter, we will show the extent and location of any changes to height and density requirements in our plan change in August 2022.



**9. What do you think of our proposal to include areas in Auckland with long-term significant infrastructure constraints as a qualifying matter?**

- ☐ Support
- ☐ Do not support
- ☐ Other
- ☐ I don't know

Tell us why

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**Other qualifying matters**

We are also proposing to include a number of other overlays and controls in the Auckland Unitary Plan as qualifying matters that limit the height and density of development on sites or across areas to retain the values they reflect. A description of these proposed qualifying matters and how they are proposed to be protected or kept is shown in the consultation document and information sheets available on [akhaveyoursay.nz/housing](http://akhaveyoursay.nz/housing).

These additional qualifying matters include:

- Ridgeline Protection Overlay
- Local Public Views Overlay
- Auckland War Memorial Museum Viewshaft
- Stockade Hill Viewshaft
- Character buildings in City Centre zone and Queen Street Valley Precinct
- Some of the existing built form controls in City Centre (e.g. allowing sunlight into public places, Aotea Square height control).

**10. Do you have feedback on any other qualifying matters? (please be clear which proposal you are talking about)**

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- ☐ OurAuckland – your weekly guide to what's happening in Auckland
- ☐ Auckland Conversations - free public events, offering ideas, inspiration and action for world-class cities

You can also visit AK Have Your Say at [akhaveyoursay.nz](https://www.akhaveyoursay.nz) to find out about, or register to receive regular updates on, consultation activities happening across Auckland

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