



**November
2025**



Proposed Plan Change 120 – Housing Intensification and Resilience: Explanatory Note

Proposed Plan Change 120 to the Auckland Unitary Plan (Operative in part)

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.

What is covered in this explanatory note

This explanatory note gives an overview of PC120. You can find out more in the additional PC120 information sheets at aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/planchanges

This explanatory note covers:

- How you can have your say
- Information sheets and FAQs
- Withdrawal of Plan Change 78 in part
- Housing capacity requirements
- Requirements for intensification

- Qualifying matters
- Updates to precincts
- Strengthening of natural hazards provisions

This explanatory note is not part of Plan Change 120.

How you can have your say on Proposed Plan Change 120

To make a submission, it must be made in the proper format - form 5 of the Resource Management (Forms, Fees, and Procedure) Regulations 2003, and it must state whether you wish to be heard in relation to your submission.

Copies of this form are available at www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/planchanges or can be collected from any Auckland Council library or office.

You may make a submission on PC120 by:

- sending a written submission to Auckland Council, Unitary Plan Private Bag 92300, Auckland 1142, Attention: Planning Technician; or
- using the electronic form on the Auckland Council website at www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/planchanges; or
- sending a PDF form 5 or a written submission by email to: unitaryplan@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz; or
- Lodging your submission in person at Auckland Council libraries or office.

Support with making your submission

If you are unsure how to make a submission, or how your property may be affected by PC120, you can use the free 'Friend of Submitter' service. Please see information sheet #2: Friend of Submitter for more details.

Submissions must be received by the Council by 5pm on Friday, 19 December 2025.

Information sheets and FAQs

Information sheets have been prepared to explain key changes proposed through PC120. This includes information sheets for the following topics:

Information Sheet #1 Streamlined Planning Process

Information Sheet #2 Friend of Submitter

Information Sheet #3 Māori Matters

Information Sheet #4 Walkable Catchments

Information Sheet #5 Intensification in Walkable Catchments

Information Sheet #6 Intensification in and around Suburban Centres

Information Sheet #7 Intensification beyond centres and stations

Information Sheet #8 Natural Hazards

Information Sheet #9 Updates to the Terrace Housing and Apartment Buildings Zone

Information Sheet #10 Updates to the Mixed Housing Urban Zone

Information Sheet #11 Updates to the Mixed Housing Suburban Zone

Information Sheet #12 Updates to the Single House Zone

Information Sheet #13 Qualifying Matters

Information Sheet #14 Special Character Areas

Information Sheet #15 Coastal Environment Qualifying Matter

Information Sheet #16 Lake Pupuke Qualifying Matter

Information Sheet #17 Maunga Viewshafts and Height and Building Sensitive Areas Qualifying Matter

Information Sheet #18 Cohesive Zoning

Information Sheet #19 Housing Capacity

Information Sheet #20 Updates to Precincts

Information Sheet #21 PC120 Map Viewer User Guide

Information Sheet #22 Why is my site zoned Single House?

For support with using the PC120 map viewer, please see information sheet #21 Plan Change 120 map viewer user guide or the PC120 map viewer 'how-to' video.

A list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) is also available.

Withdrawal of Proposed Plan Change 78 in part

PC78 was withdrawn in part from 5pm on 9 October 2025, and included withdrawal of the Medium Density Residential Standards in PC78.

PC78 was Auckland Council's former intensification plan change, required by the government to enable more development, including housing, across urban Auckland.

Its purpose was to give effect to the intensification policies of the National Policy Statement-Urban Development 2020 (NPS-UD) and incorporate the Medium Density Residential Standards (MDRS) into all relevant residential zones. The MDRS generally allowed development of three dwellings of up to three storeys per residential site without the need for resource consent.

Following amendments to the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) in August 2025, Auckland Council decided to withdraw PC78 in part. Withdrawal triggered a new plan change requirement: PC120.

Partial withdrawal of PC78 means only changes proposed to the Metropolitan Centre Zone will continue under PC78, as the City Centre zone provisions are already operative. The PC78 hearings for the Metropolitan Centre zone are finished. Council decisions on the Independent

Hearings Panel recommendations on the Metropolitan Centre Zone are likely to be notified before the end of 2025.

No amendments are proposed to the City Centre and Metropolitan Centre Zones through PC120. The Independent Hearings Panel (SPP Panel) will not be considering and hearing submissions on these zones as part of PC120.

Housing capacity requirements

In allowing the council to partially withdraw PC78, the RMA requires the council to amend the AUP to provide at least as much housing development capacity across Auckland as would have been enabled by PC78.

PC78 would have enabled approximately 2 million homes to be developed, which therefore becomes a benchmark for PC120.

Although the council must amend the AUP to enable approximately 2 million dwellings this does not mean that all 2 million dwellings will be built. Where and when development occurs depends on many factors including market demand, infrastructure availability, and development financing and costs. Additional capacity allows for more choice in locations and housing types to meet market demand for homes over the long-term.

For more information see information sheet #19 Housing Capacity.

Requirements for intensification

PC120 responds to the government's NPS-UD and the requirements of the RMA. The council must change the AUP rules for how properties can be developed.

Changes in residential zoning and other spatial proposals are shown on the PC120 map viewer.

NPS-UD requirements mean that the council:

- must enable more intensive development and building heights of at least six-storeys within walking distance of the edge of the city centre zone, the edge of metropolitan centre zones and around existing and planned rapid transit stops.
- must enable building heights and densities in and adjacent to neighbourhood, local, and town centres that reflect the level of commercial and community activity these centres offer.
- must amend the Auckland Unitary Plan to enable at least as many dwellings to be developed across Auckland as would have been enabled by PC78.
- may implement qualifying matters that reduce the required height and/or density of development where a feature or value is incompatible with intensification, and that feature or value needs to be accommodated.

The recent RMA amendments also require that the council enables:

- building heights of at least 10-storeys within walkable catchments of the Mount Albert and Baldwin Avenue train stations.

- building heights of at least 15-storeys within walkable catchments of the Maungawhau (Mount Eden), Kingsland, and Morningside train stations.

Intensification within walkable catchments

The NPS-UD requires the council to identify walkable catchments from the edge of the city centre and metropolitan centres and around existing and planned rapid transit stops where buildings of at least 6-storeys, and in some cases at least 10- and 15-storeys, must be enabled.

The council is proposing changes to policies and rules in the existing Residential – Terrace Housing and Apartment Buildings Zone, and some other zones, to enable taller buildings.

The council proposes walkable catchments based on:

- 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 an existing rapid transit stops, such as a train station or stop along the Northern Busway and a planned rapid transit stop, such as Drury train station

For more information about walkable catchments, such as how walkable catchments are modified by the physical environment, see information sheet #4 Walkable Catchments.

For more information about intensification in walkable catchments and the Residential - Terrace Housing and Apartment Buildings Zone see:

- information sheet #5 Intensification in Walkable Catchments
- information sheet #9 Updates to the Terrace Housing and Apartment Buildings Zone

Intensification around town and local centres

The NPS-UD requires Auckland Council to enable building heights and housing densities in and around our town, local and neighbourhood centres to match the level of commercial activity and community services (such as jobs, shops and businesses).

Town centres are Auckland's larger suburban centres with a wide range of shops, services and activities, often spread across several city blocks, and along main roads. Examples include Glenfield, Glen Eden, Howick, Parnell and Papatoetoe town centres.

Local centres are smaller suburban centres serving local neighbourhoods. Local centres might have 20 or 30 shops and some small offices. Examples include Albany Village, Balmoral, Grey Lynn, Meadowbank, and Te Atatu South.

The council proposes increasing the extent of Residential – Terrace Housing and Apartment Buildings Zone around some centres, and applying this zone for the first time around some other centres. Some height limits in centres are also proposed to increase.

The council is not proposing more intensive residential zoning around neighbourhood centres, which are very small groups of businesses that serve their immediate neighbourhood (for example the local dairy and hairdresser).

For more information about intensification around suburban centres see information sheet #6 Intensification around suburban centres.

Intensification along key corridors

The council has opted to enable more housing along key bus routes, identified from the Frequent Transit Network. The council proposes applying the Residential – Terrace Housing and Apartment Buildings zoning for approximately 200m either side of corridors identified in the PC120 map viewer.

For more information about intensification along corridors, see information sheet #7 Intensification Beyond Centres and Stations.

Withdrawal of Medium Density Residential Standards

The MDRS provisions in PC78 were withdrawn when PC78 was withdrawn in part on 9 October 2025. PC120 does not include the MDRS other than where these MDRS were included through previous private plan changes. The council proposes other residential intensification options in PC120.

Other than above the MDRS do not form part of PC120.

Qualifying matters

The RMA allows qualifying matters to modify the required height and/or density of development where a feature or value is incompatible with intensification required by the NPS-UD or RMA requirements, and that feature or value needs to be accommodated.

Qualifying matters are those characteristics or values about some properties or areas that make the levels of intensification otherwise required by the NPS-UD or the RMA, inappropriate.

Qualifying matters identified by the Government

Qualifying matters include:

- (a) a matter of national importance under section 6 of the RMA
- (b) a matter required by any other National Policy Statement
- (c) a matter required to give effect to Te Ture Whaimana o Te Awa o Waikato – the Vision and Strategy for the Waikato River
- (d) a matter required to give effect to the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act 2000 or the Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area Act 2008
- (e) a matter that ensures the safe or efficient operation of nationally significant infrastructure
- (f) open space provided for public use
- (g) an area subject to a designation or heritage order
- (h) a matter that implements or ensures consistency with iwi participation legislation
- (i) the requirement to provide sufficient business land suitable for low-density use.

See the PC120 map viewer for a spatial overview of proposed qualifying matters. The council has identified the relevant rules in PC120 text chapters where intensification requirements are proposed to be modified.

In some instances, zoning is used to accommodate a qualifying matter in PC120. One example is where residential land is subject to substantial natural hazard risk, PC120 proposes that the land be re-zoned to a lower intensity residential zone.

For more information about government-identified qualifying matters see information sheet #13 Qualifying matters.

Qualifying matters identified by the council

The RMA allows additional qualifying matters to be applied where higher density is inappropriate in an area.

Many of the additional qualifying matters the council proposes come from the AUP. Examples include:

- Special Character Areas – older established areas of special architectural or other built character value (some areas are proposed to be reduced or deleted)
- Local Public Views Overlay (including the Stockade Hill Viewshaft) – views that contribute to appreciation of local landscapes and coastlines
- Combined wastewater servicing constraint – where separate wastewater and stormwater networks are not yet available
- Cohesive zoning – ‘refinements’ to zoning patterns, where proposed application of zones in PC120 could otherwise result in unusual zone anomalies or built form outcomes
- Notable trees – individual trees or groups of trees that have special value
- Qualifying matters within specific precincts.

Qualifying matters can reduce housing capacity. The government requires the council to enable the same housing capacity across Auckland as if the notified version of PC78 was made operative. PC120 is the main way to enable housing capacity, although housing capacity from the City Centre and Metropolitan Centre zones (applied through PC78) contribute as well.

For more information, see information sheet #13 Qualifying Matters.

Updates to Precincts

Precincts in the AUP enable local differences to be recognised by providing place-based provisions that vary the outcomes sought by the zone or Auckland-wide provisions.

The council proposes changes to some precincts in the AUP through PC120, depending on the precincts’ location.

For more information about changes the council is proposing to precincts see information sheet #20 Updates to precincts.

Strengthening of Natural Hazard Provisions

Managing significant risks from natural hazards is a matter of national importance under the RMA. Managing risks from coastal erosion and inundation, flooding, and land instability are important local issues in Auckland.

The council proposes a more targeted approach to managing hazard risks in areas that could be affected by flooding and coastal inundation now and in the future. This approach aims to improve Auckland's resilience to severe weather events and natural hazards, following 2023's storms which resulted in widespread flooding, landslips, and coastal inundation across the Auckland region.

The AUP currently manages natural hazard risks, but needs updating to better align with recently released international studies on matters like climate change. Therefore a key driver of PC120 is strengthening natural hazard management provisions of the AUP relating to risks to people and property.

Residential properties that are at the greatest risk from natural hazards are proposed to be re-zoned to a lower intensity residential zone, to manage risks to both people and property. See the PC120 map viewer to identify properties proposed to be re-zoned to Residential – Single House Zone and where re-zoning has immediate legal effect from 3 November 2025.

For more information about the qualifying matters the council is proposing, see information sheet #8 Natural Hazards.