



**November
2025**



Proposed Plan Change 120 Information Sheet #3

Māori Matters

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.

This information sheet explains changes proposed through PC120 which may be of particular interest to Māori.

Background to Proposed Plan Change 120

PC78 was Auckland's former intensification plan change as required by the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 (NPS-UD). It incorporated the Medium Density Residential Standards (MDRS) which was legally required at the time. This generally allowed three dwellings of up to three storeys to be built on most residential sites without resource consent.

In August 2025, the government amended the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) which enabled PC78 to be withdrawn. Auckland Council withdrew PC78 (in part) and notified PC120 to improve Auckland's resilience to natural hazards and focus intensification around centres and transport nodes.

PC78 was withdrawn in part from 5pm on 9 October 2025, and included withdrawal of the MDRS in PC78.

PC120 addresses central government requirements to:

- contribute to the same level of housing capacity in the AUP as was to be enabled by PC78

- enable building heights and densities within and around town and local centres which reflect the level of commercial and community activity these centres offer
- enable building heights of at least 6-storeys within walkable catchments from the edge of the city centre zone, the edge of metropolitan centre zones and around existing and planned rapid transit stops (train and busway stations) and
- enable building heights of at least 10- and 15- storeys around certain train stations listed in the RMA.

These heights and densities must be enabled unless a ‘qualifying matter’ applies to a site (see Information Sheet #13) which makes that level of development inappropriate.

PC120 also strengthens provisions that manage natural hazard risks. Areas potentially affected by flooding, land instability, coastal erosion or coastal inundation now and in the future are targeted with stronger rules and other planning measures. This approach is to improve Auckland’s resilience to severe weather events and natural hazards, following the storms in early 2023 which resulted in widespread flooding, landslips, and coastal inundation across the region.

The Auckland Unitary Plan

The Auckland Unitary Plan (AUP) includes a framework for recognising and providing for matters relevant to Māori under Part 2 of the RMA. Core objectives and policies are included in the Regional Policy Statement, especially Chapter B6 (Mana Whenua). These policies follow through into AUP provisions in the Auckland-wide, Overlay, Zone, and Precinct chapters. This sets up a range of triggers to require the assessment of effects on mana whenua cultural heritage and values, as well as provision for the development of Māori Land, Treaty Settlement Land, marae, papakāinga and urupā.

Māori and Urban Intensification

The AUP includes objectives, policies and rules that are specific to use and development of Māori Land, Treaty Settlement Land and marae in urban and rural zones. There is very little Māori Land left in Tāmaki Makaurau and most is located outside Auckland’s urban area. Both Māori Land and Treaty Settlement Land can be seen on Auckland Council’s Geomaps viewer.

Treaty Settlement Land includes land that has been returned for the purpose of generating a commercial return. This commercial redress land is distributed sparsely across rural and urban areas of Auckland, and includes land used for schools, government offices and development. A small amount of this land has been rezoned for more intensification under PC120.

Māori cultural heritage and values can be affected by the increased development pressure created by higher-intensity zoning. Rules that manage effects on cultural values from the effects of earthworks, discharges to water, water permits, vegetation clearance, and work in the coastal marine area are still applicable in areas where intensification is proposed.

Qualifying Matters such as Sites and Places of Significance to Mana Whenua, Historic Heritage, Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes, Volcanic Viewshafts and Height Sensitive Areas

also support the consideration of Māori cultural heritage and values. In addition, the proposed Coastal Environment Qualifying Matter is intended to limit the intensity of development in areas that are within or adjacent to the coast and works to protect cultural values associated with the coastal environment.

Māori and Natural Hazards

The AUP currently does not explicitly provide for consideration of Māori values, rights and interests when managing natural hazard risks. This has left a gap that does not address the following issues:

- Subdivision, use and development could create or exacerbate natural hazard risks for mana whenua cultural heritage and values, of which the majority are located in areas that are vulnerable to natural hazards;
- Mana whenua cultural heritage and other areas with cultural value are frequently located along waterways, coastlines and maunga. This makes them particularly vulnerable to flooding, coastal inundation, erosion, and landslides. Subdivision, use and development (including measures to mitigate risks on other properties) can make these risks worse; and
- Management of natural hazard risks has distinct implications for the development of Māori Land, Treaty Settlement Land, marae, papakāinga and urupā. Risks from natural hazards can affect access to land and hinder customary uses and the ability to exercise kaitiakitanga. Māori require support and flexibility to manage these risks.

PC120 introduces a range of policies aimed at addressing these issues:

- Proposed provisions at the Regional Policy Statement level in Chapters B9 (Rural Environment) and B10 (Environmental Risk) ensure natural hazard risks on Māori values, rights and interests are managed in accordance with te ao Māori, mātauranga and tikanga through:
 - active participation and consideration in natural hazard risk identification and assessment; and
 - supporting Māori to manage natural hazard risks, including managed retreat using a range of enabling methods.
- Provisions in Chapter E36 (Natural Hazards) that ensure natural hazard risks on Māori Land, Treaty Settlement Land, marae, urupā, mana whenua cultural heritage and values are reduced over time and not made worse by subdivision, use and development, including through:
 - Requiring natural hazard risk assessments to consider the cultural impacts of natural hazards and to assess whether natural hazard risks can be reduced for Māori Land, Treaty Settlement Land, marae, urupā, mana whenua cultural heritage and values;

- A policy that supports use and development of marae while managing natural hazard risks affecting them;
 - A policy requiring the location and design of infrastructure to consider the potential to reduce natural hazard risks for Māori Land, Treaty Settlement Land, marae, urupā, mana whenua cultural heritage and values; and
 - Matters of control and matters of discretion for key activities managed in Chapter E36 that include consideration of effects on mana whenua cultural heritage and values, and effects on Māori land and Treaty Settlement Land, marae and urupā.
- Proposed provisions in Chapter E39 (Rural Subdivision) provide for specified rural subdivision to provide for the managed retreat of specific marae and urupā.

Further information

- 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 amendments to the RMA [visit the Ministry for the Environment website.](#)

Please note:

This information sheet is a summary document to assist with understanding Proposed Plan Change 120 – Housing Intensification and Resilience, which gives effect to Policies 3 and 4 of the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 and addresses the requirements of Schedule 3C of the Resource Management Act 1991.

Proposed Plan Change 120 to the Auckland Unitary Plan was publicly notified by Auckland Council on 3 November 2025.

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