



Medium Density Housing: Applying For Resource Consent

What Is Medium Density Housing?

Medium density housing is a relatively new approach to housing in Waitakere City. It is defined as buildings for residential purposes up to 11 metres or three storeys in height. The common forms are terrace housing and duplex, which are usually two storeys. The medium density provisions apply to comprehensive developments located on sites of no less than 2000 square metres (half an acre). There is no upper limit to the size of sites where medium density housing can be built. There is also no set minimum size for each house within a medium density housing development. However, the houses must be designed to meet the Operative District Plan's medium density housing assessment criteria. (Note, the District Plan also makes provision for the Council to consider this type of development on sites that are less than 2000 square metres, if you have the surrounding neighbours' consents or through a publicly notified process).

Other examples of medium density housing are apartment or townhouse style homes generally up to three storeys. These could fit into larger sites near main roads, railway stations, public transport routes and existing town centres such as Henderson, Glen Eden, New Lynn and Westgate.

Medium density housing may appeal to older adults, single people or couples who want to:

- Live in a small home on a low-maintenance property;
- Live in safe surroundings that are near to neighbours;
- Live where open space is a key part of the design; and/or
- Be close to work, public transport facilities, shops, community centres, cafes and cinemas.

All medium density housing developments require a resource consent. The assessment criteria for these has been specially tailored to ensure that the design of buildings doesn't compromise internal or external amenity values. Important aspects of the Council's approach to processing medium density housing applications are detailed below.

Pre-Application

At the beginning of the development process, the Council strongly encourages applicants for medium density housing to meet with Council Resource Planners who will be involved with processing their application. There is a cost associated with these meetings. However, savings are made as a result of having such meetings, especially as reworking plans at later stages can cause both time delays and increase costs. This pre-application meeting has many benefits, including:

- An opportunity for a general discussion of the proposed development and the Council's strategic approach to medium density housing;
- An opportunity to identify and discuss what information will be required;
- An opportunity to discuss the Proposed District Plan's requirements and medium density housing design criteria by which the application will be assessed, and initial feedback on schematic plans;
- An opportunity to discuss the Council's requirements should any public road be less than eight metres in width, or if the proposal anticipates that footpaths will not be provided on both sides of all new public roads;
- An opportunity to identify any development constraints (i.e. infrastructure capacity issues, engineering issues, public access and any reserves requirements) that will need to be discussed with particular Council staff;
- An opportunity to ascertain the likely level of any financial contributions;
- An opportunity to discuss the requirements when a joint subdivision and resource consent application is being prepared; and
- An opportunity to discuss the method that will be used to process the application, and arrange a site visit.

Application Forms

These are available from the main counter at the Council. The Council can also post these forms out to you. When lodging an application, please provide five copies of all documents.

Information Required

The application forms provided by the Council sets out the basic information that will be required to process the resource consent application.

In addition there will be a lot of design information required to accurately assess the environmental effects of your development proposal. This is listed in the Medium Density Housing Criteria in the Living Environment Rules.

If you don't provide all information in the first instance, your application will be put on hold and the Council will request further information under section 92 of the Resource Management Act 1991. Design And Assessment Criteria.

To meet design and assessment criteria your application will have to provide information that includes the following:

- Written discussion on the proposed development in terms of the Medium Density Housing Criteria.
- Written discussion on the relationship of the development to the surrounding neighbourhood and streetscape.
- Site layout plans, building elevations, building setbacks, floor plans, building coverage calculations and unit area calculations.
- Outdoor space calculations which show both private outdoor space for each unit and any communal outdoor space. Minimum areas are recommended in the District Plan's medium density housing assessment criteria.
- Impermeable coverage calculations – the Council encourages the avoidance of large areas of impermeable surfaces (any building or surface that creates a physical barrier to water entering the ground), and allows a maximum of 65 percent of the site to be covered by impermeable surfaces.
- Comprehensive landscape treatment plans (LTPs) are required. A typical unit landscape plan may also be provided. The Council needs to be satisfied that the denser development of medium density housing will still provide adequate amenity.
- LTP details are provided in another District Plan brochure. The LTP must be approved prior to granting of the resource consent. This should be a complete plan that can be monitored, not a "concept plan". It is desirable that the LTP is prepared once the medium density housing development layout has the Council's support. The LTP should then be finalised at the same time as the resource consent is approved. If a LTP is submitted for the first time with a resource consent application, particularly where there has been no previous dialogue with Council Resource Planners, changes may be required rendering the initial LTP obsolete or needing major rework.

- Earthwork details (area and volume of cuts and fill), existing and final contours of the site (earthworks can change the contours of a site), details of the location, height and extent of all proposed retaining walls, and whether soil from earthworks will be disposed of on the site.
- Car and truck tracking curves within the development, driveway and parking layout, paving details and garage door widths. In some instances the Council may require the provision of a traffic engineers report.
- Details of the proposed materials that will be used on the exteriors of all buildings.
Site facilities details such as rubbish bin hard standing areas, letter boxes, exterior taps, meter boxes, lockable outdoor storage, including vehicle access and tracking curves for rubbish trucks.
- Preliminary infrastructure services layout plan – this should include road cross-sections and longitudinal sections, infrastructure corridors, and service connection points. In some instances specific engineering design or analysis may be required prior to consent approval.

Further Information

Further information can be found in the Policy, Living Environment Rules, Medium Density Housing Criteria (includes illustrations), and Map Sections of the Operative District Plan.

Applicants should also refer to Waitakere City Council's "Code of Practice for City Infrastructure and Land Development", which details Councils engineering requirements for infrastructure, roading, parking and access, and other public works (i.e. reserves facilities).

The Council has also produced "The Developers' Design Guide for Residential Subdivision and Medium Density Housing" which outlines further design options.

Other information brochures are also available from the Council on medium density housing, landscape treatment plans and proposed planting plans.

This brochure is only a guide to Medium Density Housing. If you have any queries, or require further information, please ask the Civic Centre Counter Staff or telephone the Council Call Centre on (09) 839 0400.