

What zones have apartment projects?

By Tamba Carleton, Zoltan Moricz

The nature of Auckland’s housing stock is changing. Population growth is being accommodated through a combination of ‘up and out’ housing development which has been enabled by the Auckland Unitary Plan. This region wide planning document was proposed in 2013 and became operative in 2016, having a transformative effect on the density of housing supply in Auckland. This research brief takes a closer look at the Unitary Plan zones that apartment projects are located in.

Current pipeline

93 projects

THAB is the most popular zone for projects

47% of apartment projects are located within the Terrace House and Apartment Building zone. This is a zone that is not especially widespread in Auckland region when compared to Mixed Housing Urban and Mixed Housing Suburban, but it is one that is well suited to mid-rise apartments. The next most popular zone for projects is Mixed Housing Urban at 19% of projects. This zone suits the low-rise walk-up typology of up to three storeys.

Most popular zone

THAB

FIGURE 1: Summary of Unitary Plan Zones with Active Apartment Projects

General Use	Unitary Plan Zone	Height Limit	Approximate Max. Number of Levels	Average Levels per Project	Total Hectares	Number of Pipeline Apartment Projects
Residential	Terrace House and Apartment Building	16m	5-6	5.0	2,485	44
Residential	Mixed Housing Urban	11m	3	3.2	7,531	18
Business	Mixed Use	16m	4-5	7.9	984	16
Business	Neighbourhood Centre	11m	3	3.8	132	4
Residential	Mixed Housing Suburban	8m	2	3.0	14,969	2
Business	Local Centre	16m	4-5	4.5	246	2
Business	Town Centre	up to 25m	4-8	4.5	442	2
Business	Metropolitan Centre	72.5m	18-20	15.5	382	2
Business	City Centre	varies	varies	46.0	261	2
Residential	Single House	8m	2	2.0	8,539	1

Source: Auckland Council, CBRE

Different zones have different capacities in terms of what can be done, both on individual sites and as a collective impact on the built form of Auckland. The most widespread residential zones are Mixed Housing Suburban and Mixed Housing Urban which together comprise 22,500 hectares, followed by Terrace House and Apartment Building at 2,500 hectares. There are only two active projects in the City Centre zone currently, however during the peak in 2016-2017 there were over 30. Apartment development in Single House zones is rare.

THAB capacity utilisation

83%

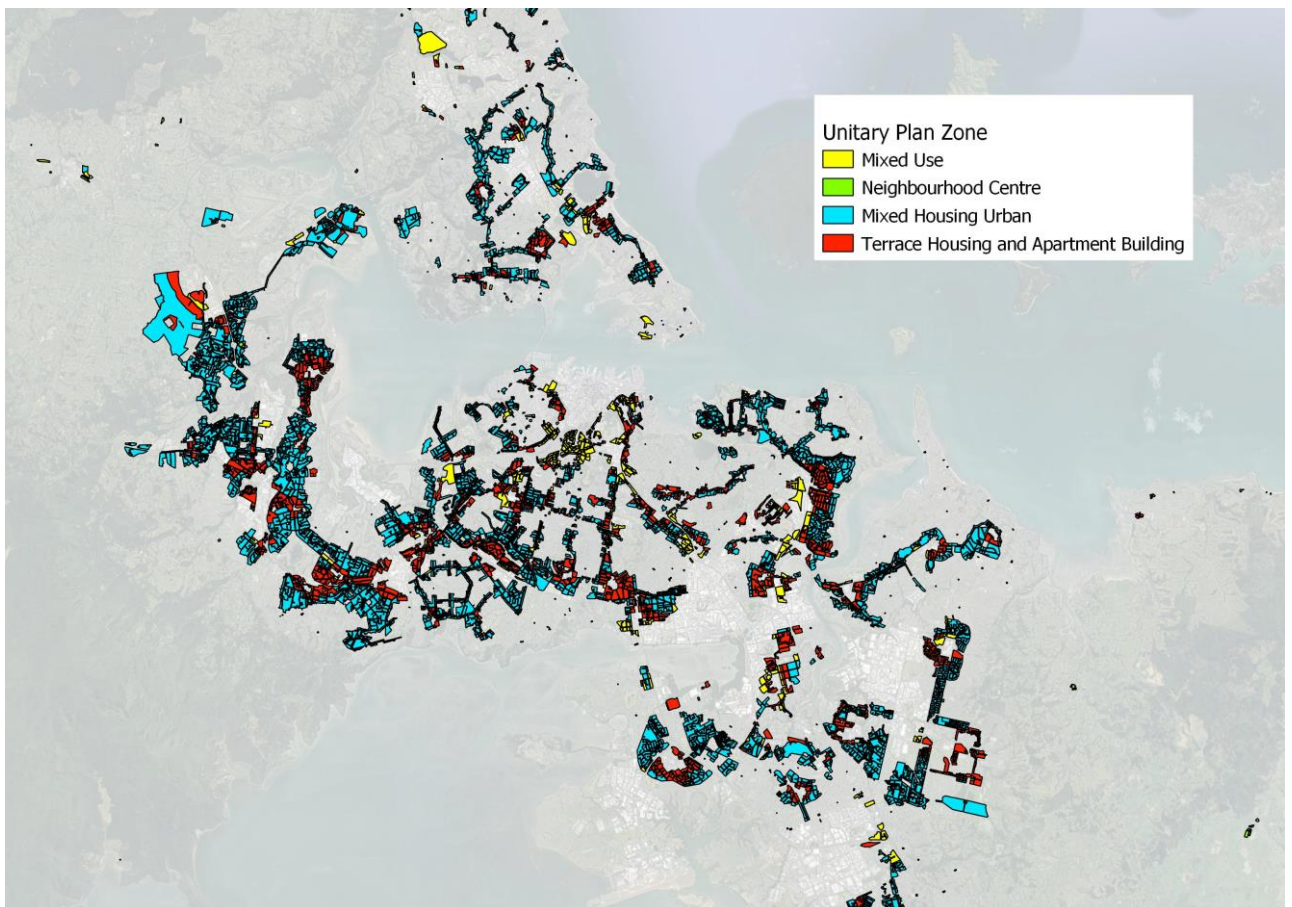
Although THAB zone allows up to 5-6 storeys, there are almost as many 3 storey projects in THAB zone as 5 storey projects. Conversely, there are seven projects that are 10-12 storeys in the Mixed Use zone which generally allows 4-5 storeys.

High density (4+ lvd) projects

68

Only THAB, Mixed Housing Urban, Mixed Use, and Neighbourhood Centre zones have more than four current projects. The other six zones in Figure 1 have either one or two. Figure 2 maps the areas of the zones with four or more projects, showing that the zones are spread across the urban area. Wide geographic variation has contributed to a rise in the suburban apartment pipeline since the Unitary Plan became operative. Of the 93 pipeline projects, 79 are suburban.

FIGURE 2: Unitary Plan Zones That Have Four or More Apartment Projects Currently



Source: Auckland Council, CBRE

Building consent data shows that over the past ten years medium and high density typologies such as apartments and terrace houses have increasingly dominated the consenting landscape. During the year the Unitary Plan became operative, standalone dwellings comprised 56% of residential consents, however by 2023 this proportion has declined to 27%. Apartment and terrace developers have increased market share from 38% to 69% over the same timeframe. A total of 18,400 apartment units have been built in the past eight years, lifting total Auckland supply to 45,000 units.

Proposed Plan Change 78 housing supply legislation that will double down on intensification means that this trend of medium and high-density typologies dominating is likely to continue. While uncertainty exists around what a recent change in government means for MDRS and the Light Rail corridor, the NPS-UD allows for more apartments in certain locations. There is also new potential for apartment development in the Single House zone. This zone comprises 8,500 hectares, second only to Mixed Housing Suburban at 15,000 hectares, greatly increasing the range of locations available to apartment developers.

UP operative

Nov 2016

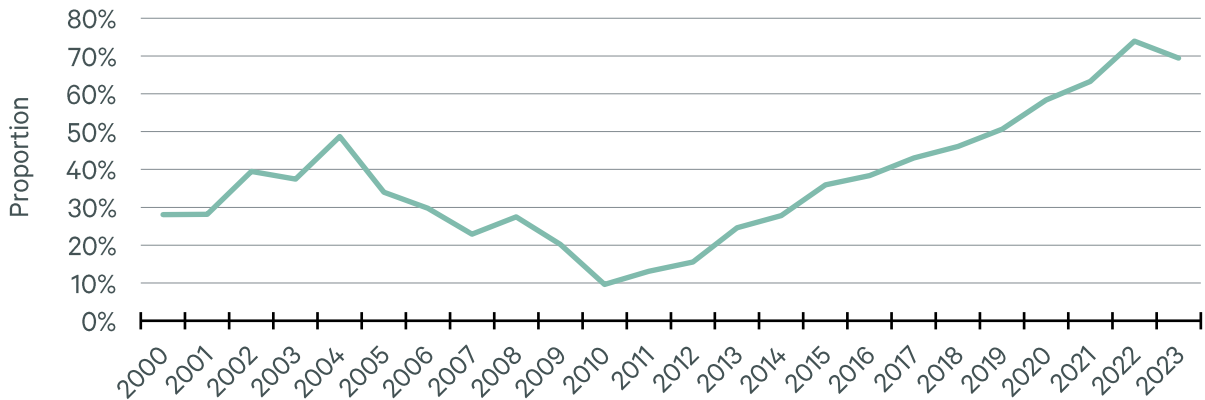
PC 78 notified

Aug 2022

Apts built since 2016

18,400

FIGURE 3: Apartment and Terrace Proportion of Auckland Residential Dwelling Consents



Source: Statistics NZ

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