



# New rules

# for building homes in Te Puke and Ōmokoroa

Your  
place

## Your pātai/questions answered



### What are the Medium Density Residential Standards (MDRS)?

These are standards for development of residential properties that will enable more housing to be built by removing some resource consent requirements. They cover things like how high a building can be, how close to the property boundary, how much outdoor space and landscaping needs to be provided on the site.

There are nine standards with various criteria. Provided the standards are met, the development will be a 'permitted activity', which means resource consent isn't required. Building consent is still required.

### Why is this happening now?

Central government introduced new legislation at the end of 2021, requiring councils to make changes to their planning rules to enable more housing to be built. These new rules have to be notified by 20 August 2022.

Read more about the legislation on the [Ministry for the Environment website](#).

### Why is this only happening in Te Puke and Ōmokoroa?

These standards are being introduced in Te Puke and Ōmokoroa only as they are the two towns in our District that fit the brief for central government's new law.

The MDRS will only apply in urban environments, which are defined in the [legislation](#) as any area of land (regardless of size) that:

- Is, or is intended to be predominantly urban in character, and
- Is, or is intended to be part of a housing or labour market of at least 10,000 people.

### What are the nine standards?

The nine standards being introduced mean:

- Up to three homes can be built per site.
- Dwellings can be up to 11m (three storeys) high.
- Homes must be set back at least 1.5m on the front boundary and 1m on the sides and rear.
- Up to 50% of the site can be covered by buildings.
- At least 20m<sup>2</sup> of outdoor living space must be available.
- There must be at least 4m x 4m of outlook from the main living room and there must be at least 1m x 1m outlook from all other habitable rooms.
- The front of the house facing the street must have at least 20% of windows.
- At least 20% of the site must be landscaped with plants, grass, or trees.
- Height of house in relation to the boundary must not go outside an envelope that is measured from a maximum of 4m from the boundary plus a 60° recession plane.

### What can I do under these new standards that I couldn't do before?

Previously, any development on an existing residential property that already had one house on it required a resource consent, including building a minor dwelling.

Now, if your plans meet all nine standards and the site isn't being subdivided, you only need a building consent. If your site is being subdivided, or any of the nine standards are not met, a resource consent will be required.

Please check with us as early as possible to get an understanding of what's required now if you are making plans. You can email us at [info@westernbay.govt.nz](mailto:info@westernbay.govt.nz) or phone 0800 926 732.

### **How do I get the green light to build something that fits under the MDRS?**

This depends on the type of development you are hoping to do.

If the site is not being subdivided, and it meets all nine standards, please seek building consent.

However, if you are subdividing the site, or any of the nine standards are not met, you will still need resource consent as well as building consent.

If you have any pātai (questions), please get in touch with us as early as practical to check how the rules may apply to your plans. You can email us at [info@westernbay.govt.nz](mailto:info@westernbay.govt.nz) or phone 0800 926 732.

### **What are the benefits of the MDRS?**

Te Puke does not have enough affordable housing, smaller houses for single people or couples, or houses where multi-generations can live. The MDRS makes it easier to subdivide, build a secondary dwelling, or redevelop a site into townhouses. This means more housing can be provided to meet the needs of local people.

In Ōmokoroa, our community have asked for houses where elderly whānau and first home buyers can settle. The MDRS paves the way for us to create options for these groups here that meet their unique needs too.

Other benefits of the MDRS may include:

- Better affordability of homes
- Increased access to employment, transport, and community facilities such as libraries
- Less urban sprawl
- Enabling multi-generational family living
- Better use of already existing infrastructure
- More choices for housing.

### **Will I be notified if my neighbours apply to make changes to their property under these rules?**

If the building plans meet all of the nine MDRS standards you will not be notified.

### **How many new homes will the MDRS provide for in the next decade in Western Bay of Plenty?**

We expect in the order of 25 'infill' houses a year, and mostly in Te Puke. Ōmokoroa has greenfield land for housing development that is expected to enable enough housing to satisfy demand for a number of years.

### **How will Council meet other infrastructure demands in these areas, such as roading or traffic management?**

Council has checked out the capacity of all the infrastructure. Any necessary upgrades are included in the Plan Change and factored into the financial contributions which are paid for by each new development to help fund those upgrades.

### **Who has been consulted with on these standards?**

Since April 2022, we've been providing information and engaging with communities in Te Puke and Ōmokoroa, where these changes are being formally notified. We've had drop-in sessions, one-on-one sessions online, we've run a specific survey and suggestion board where any interested people could share their views. We've also engaged specifically with housing providers and property developers, and tangata whenua.

Find the summary of feedback we received from Te Puke and Ōmokoroa earlier this year at [yourplace.westernbay.govt.nz](http://yourplace.westernbay.govt.nz)

As these rules are being formally notified, there is still an opportunity for our Western Bay whānau to give feedback. Head to [westernbay.govt.nz/plan-changes](http://westernbay.govt.nz/plan-changes) before 16 September.

### **Why is there a submission process if the medium density standards have immediate legal effect from 20 August?**

Central government requires Council to incorporate the nine medium density residential standards mentioned above. However, Council is also able to introduce other supporting rules that enable the kind of quality residential outcomes we want for our towns. These proposed changes to the District Plan still need to go through a formal plan change process.

The plan change process includes submissions, a hearing, a planners report (which summarises all of the findings and provides a recommendation) and a decision. The hearing will be heard by a panel of independent commissioners.

### **How can I provide feedback on the proposed rules?**

A formal consultation period is underway until 16 September. Submissions can be made at [westernbay.govt.nz/plan-changes](http://westernbay.govt.nz/plan-changes).

Any hearings required as a result of the submissions will take place by March 2023.

A decision will be reached by August 2023.

### **Can I get help with my submission?**

If you need help with your submission, the Minister for the Environment has provided funding to appoint an independent 'Friend of Submitter' to help you have your say if you would like to.

Belinda Messenger has been appointed to this role. Belinda is a qualified, fully independent planner, who was not involved in developing the plan changes. There is no cost for this service. If you require assistance from Belinda, you can contact her at: [planchange92@resourceplanning.nz](mailto:planchange92@resourceplanning.nz).