

Briefing on Intensification

John Higgins, Head of Resource Consents
David Falconer, Team Leader City Planning

What is intensification?

Building more homes within the same footprint of our city, so we have somewhere for our growing population to live – without losing our productive land.

We need rules to help guide how this happens.

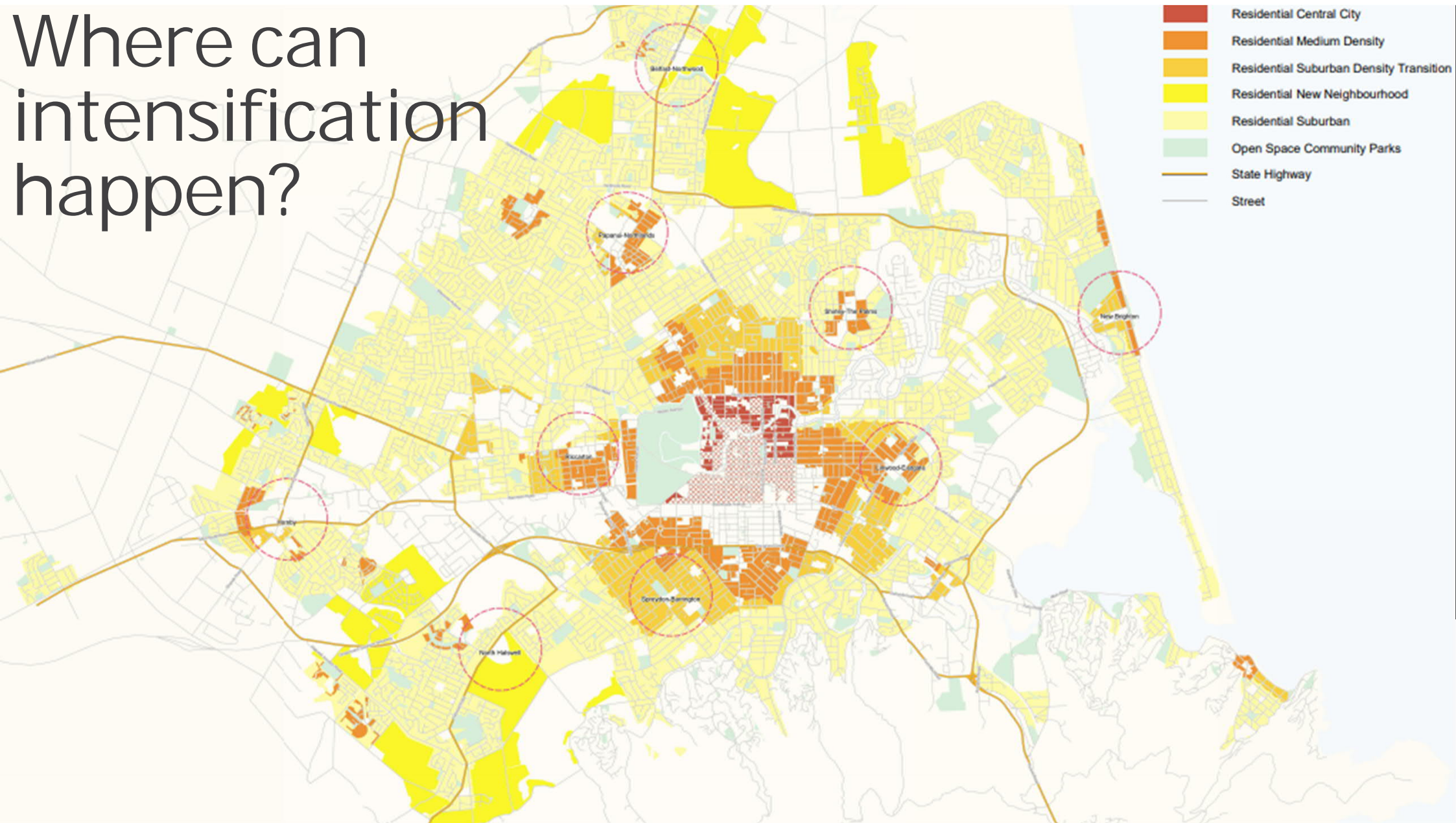


Challenges and opportunities

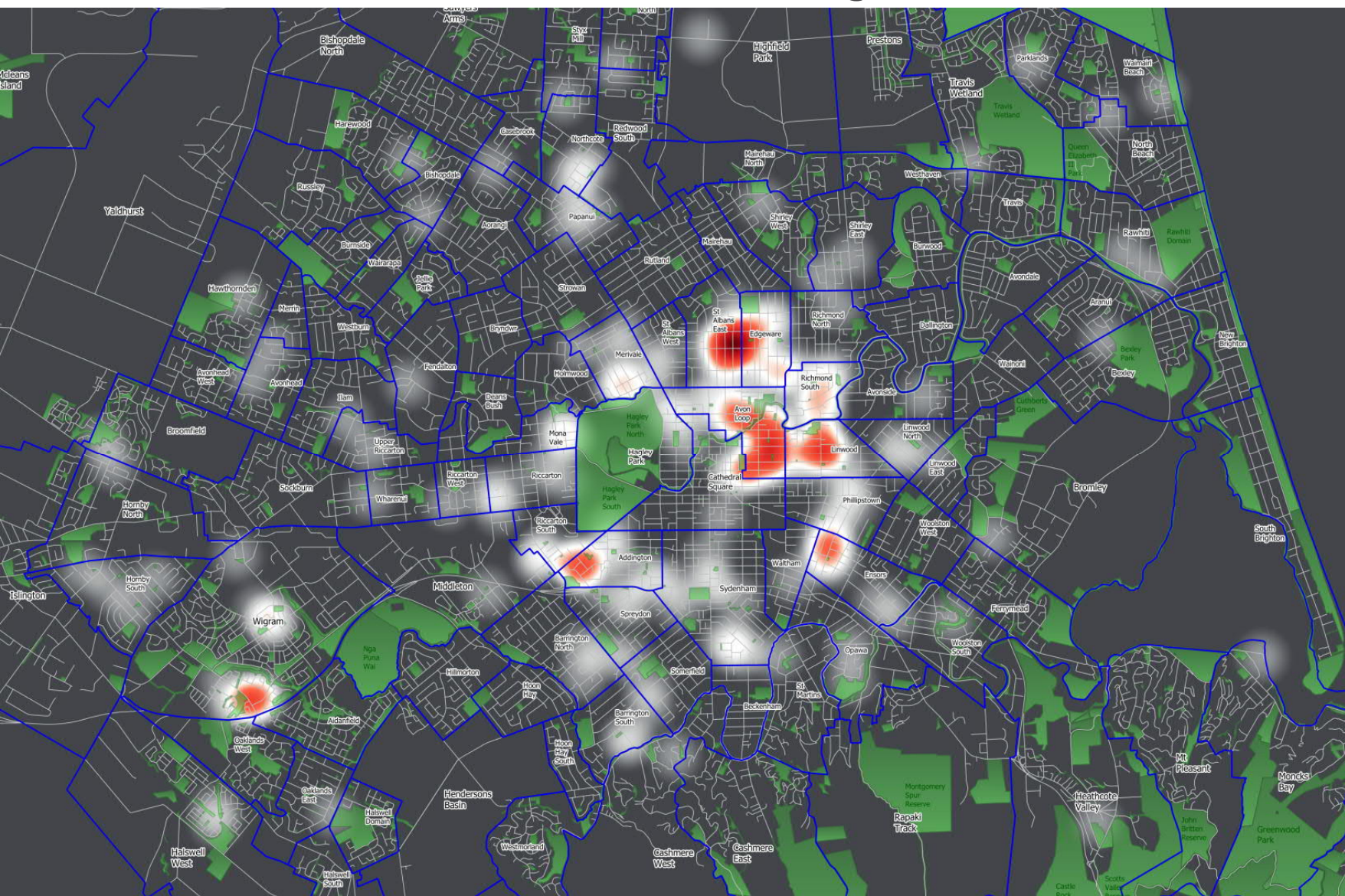
- Our population is growing and changing and will continue to do so over the coming decades.
- While growth is inevitable, it needs to be well planned and managed.
- We are required us to do things differently, and follow the directive from central government.
- If Christchurch knows how to deal with anything, it's change.
- We know from our experiences over the past decade we can adapt to the challenges we face.
- We are already ahead of the game, because of our planning, investment and partnerships, but we can't stand still or we will fall behind.

What's happening at the moment?

Where can intensification happen?



Where is intensification occurring?



Red areas at the areas with the most multi-unit development between 2016-19

Current rules for intensification

- Minimum tree and garden planting
- Maximum building height
- Maximum site coverage
- Minimum outdoor living space
- Minimum building setbacks from boundaries
- Maximum height of fences
- Minimum unit size
- Urban design assessment
- Daylight recession planes

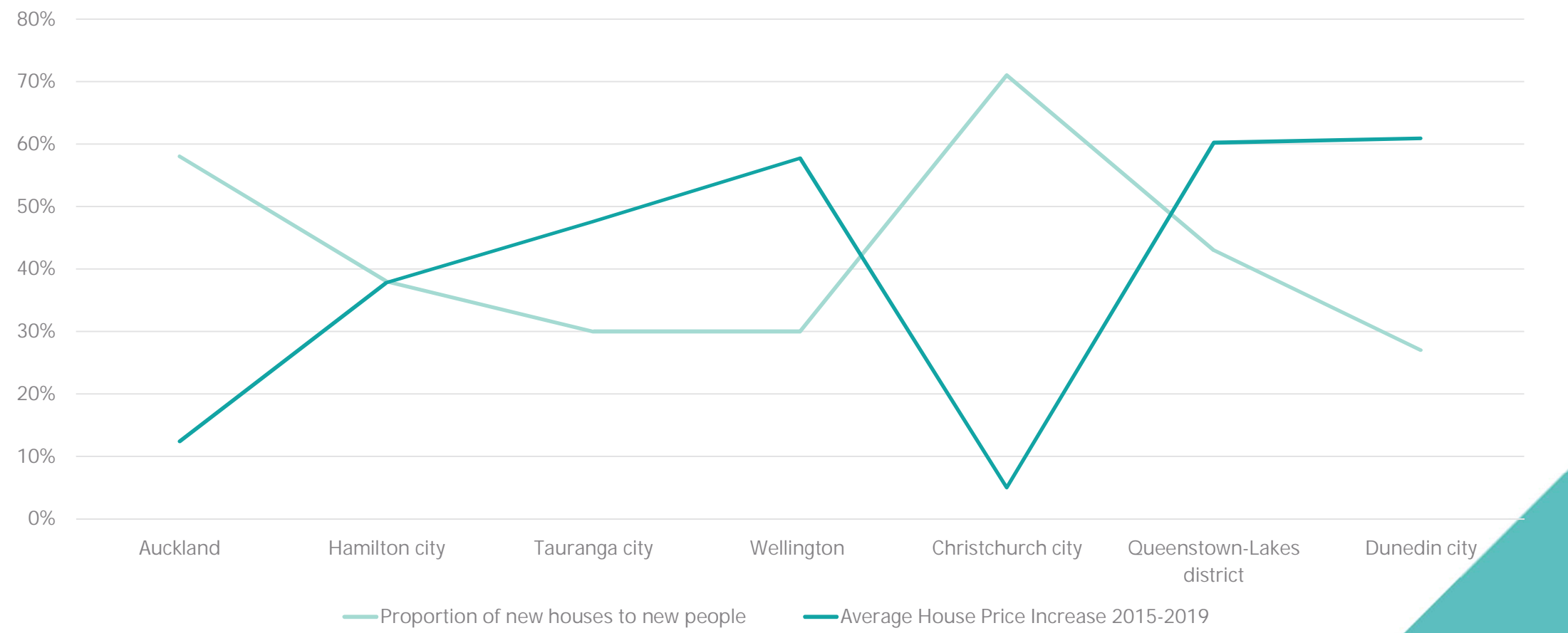


How were these rules developed?

- District Plan Review 2013-17 – Order in Council from Government
- Full Public Notification of the rules
- Decisions by an Independent Hearings Panel
- Appeals only on points of law
- Statement of expectations from Ministers, including:
 - *Reduce significantly:*
 - a) *reliance on resource consent processes; and*
 - b) *the number, extent, and prescriptiveness of development controls and design standards in the rules, in order to encourage innovation and choice; and*
 - c) *the requirements for notification and written approval.*
 - *Facilitate an increase in the supply of housing.*

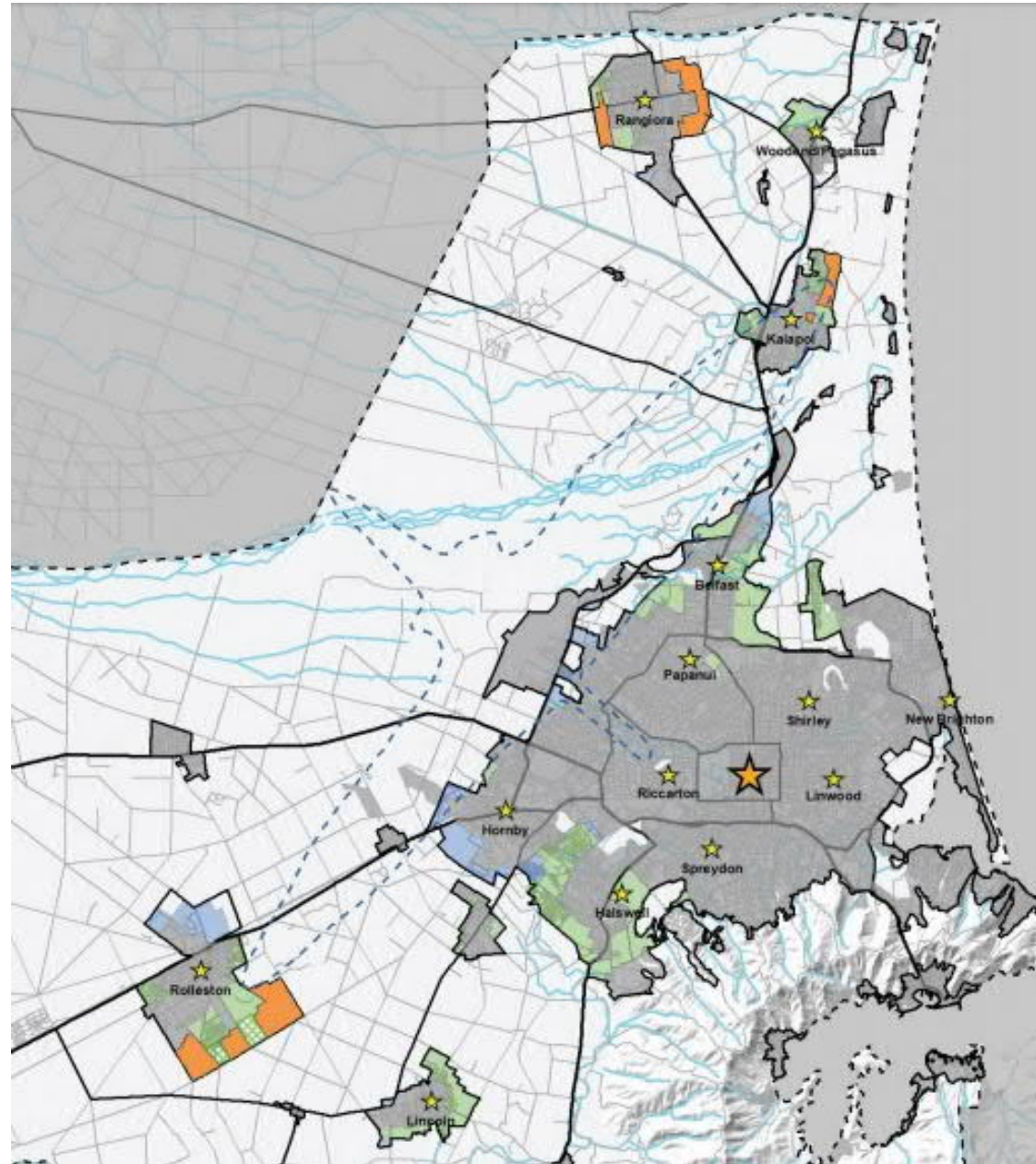
Why do we need intensification?

Higher housing supply has kept houses affordable

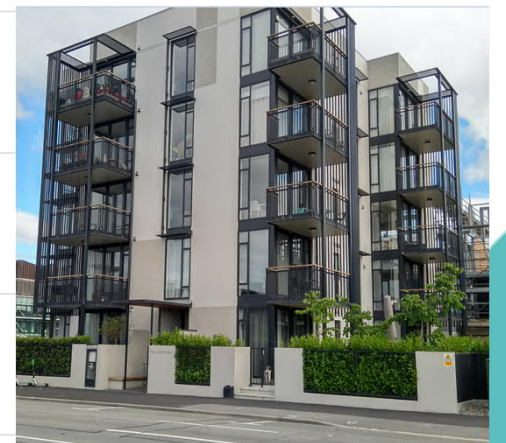
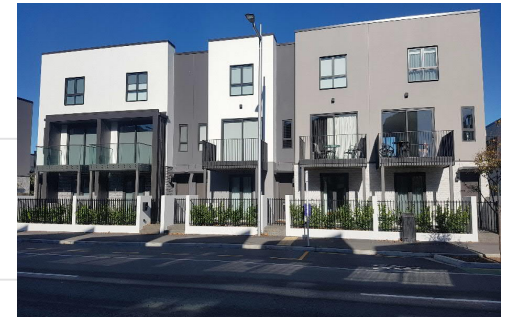
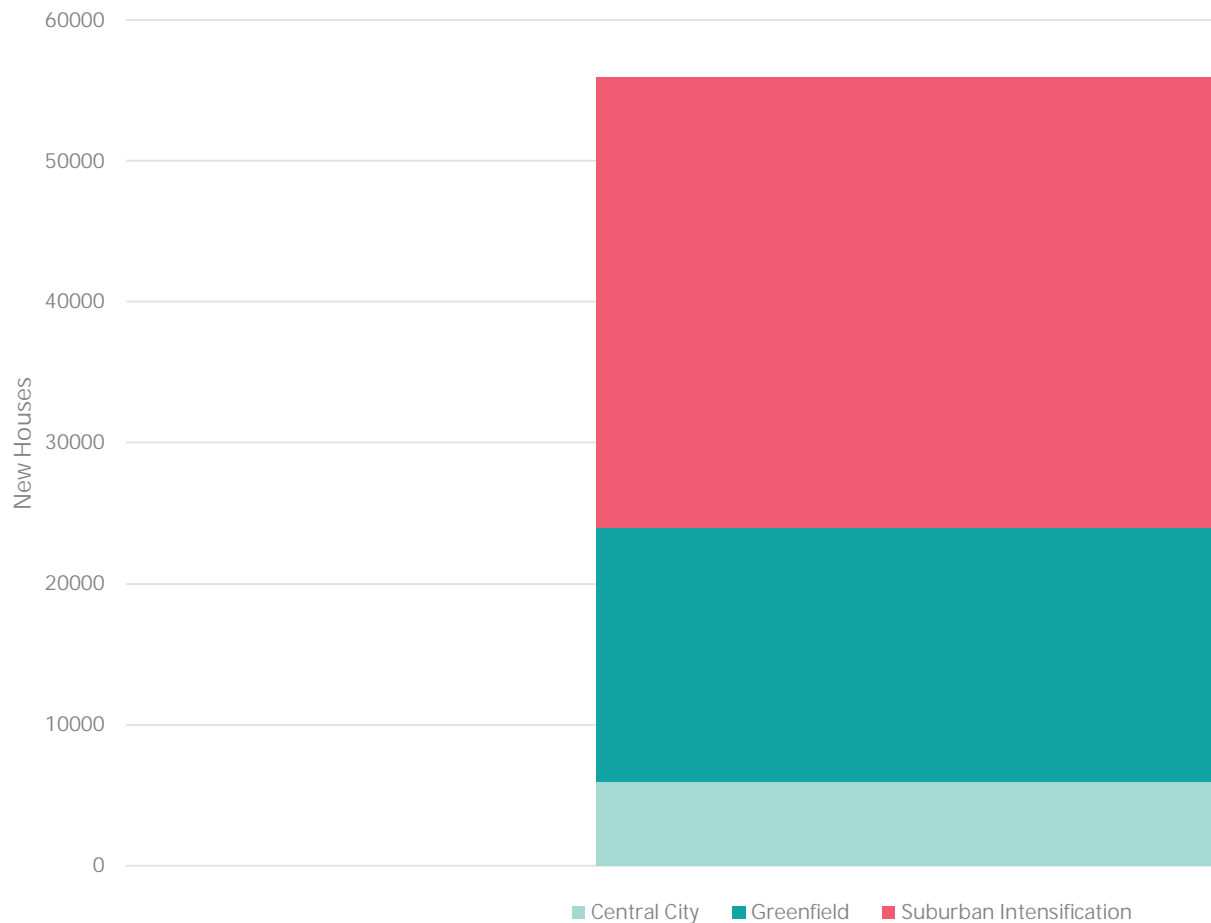


More intensification

- = more housing supply
- = less sprawl
- = less emissions
- = more productive land (food basket)
- = urban regeneration



Intensification helps accommodate population growth



Intensification increasing, but more needed to provide for growth



Resource Consent Process

Resource Consent process

- Multi-unit residential developments over 3 and 4 units (depending on the zoning) usually require resource consent.
- Two decisions are required to be made – whether an application is notified and whether it is granted.
- Amendments to the RMA over the last decade have sought to streamline and simplify the Act.
- The new District Plan also sought to reduce reliance on the resource consent process and also reduce notification.

What triggers notification?

- Where there are minor or more than minor adverse effects, an application is required to be notified.
- When assessing adverse effects, we have to consider what is “permitted” and “anticipated” under the zoning.
- Most of the time the rule breaches are small.

What's considered when deciding whether to grant an application?

- Whether the development is consistent with the objectives and policies of the District Plan.
- The level of adverse effects associated with the development.
- Similar to the notification decision, the assessment is not undertaken in a vacuum.

Urban design assessment

- Applications are usually accompanied by an urban design assessment.
- An urban design assessment is required for over 3 units in the Residential Medium Density Zone (RMD) and over 4 units in the Residential Suburban Density Transition Zone (RSDT).
- Assessments are primarily focused on the arrangement, appearance and function, rather than design preference.
- The assessment does need to consider that multi-unit developments are anticipated and also what the built form standards allow.

Is there an upper density limit?

- There is no specific density control in the Residential Central City, RMD and RSDT Zones, but the development is controlled by bulk and location rules as well as the urban design assessment rule.
- There is a policy that refers to minimum density but not a maximum. The rules specifically state there are no density controls.
- Applications can also be made under the Enhanced Development Mechanism, but this is optional. They generally aren't made under this rule as it is more restrictive.
- There is a decision made by Tony Hughes-Johnson QC that works through this very issue. <https://ccc.govt.nz/consents-and-licences/resource-consents/resource-consent-applications-of-interest/>

Common concerns raised with us

- Construction effects such as noise and parking.
- Buildings are dominant and affect neighbours outlook and privacy.
- Developments are out of character for the local area.
- Lack of parking.
- Existing trees are removed and few trees are replanted.
- Overall developments are of a low quality.
- Developer's should be required to consult with neighbours.
- Neighbours have to contribute 50% towards a new boundary fence.

Are decisions being made correctly?

- We've now concentrated processing of applications to a core group of senior planners to improve assessments.
- We've developed a practice note to also improve assessments (still in draft).
- We use a number of different decision makers to make the decisions on applications.
- There has been a recent audit of resource consent decision making.

Recent Government direction

National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 (NPS-UD)

New Zealand Government

National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020

July 2020

Council submitted on the NPS-UD:
<https://ccc.govt.nz/the-council/request-information/council-submissions-to-external-agencies>

The aim of the legislation is to make sure New Zealand's towns and cities are functioning well and meet the changing needs of our diverse communities.

The District Plan must give effect to the NPS-UD, meaning the Council must carry out the desired intent of the new legislation.

What is included in the NPS-UD?

- Future Development Strategy – provide for at least 30 years of growth
- Removal of minimum carparking requirements (without public consultation) **by Feb 2022**
- Requirement to undertake an intensification plan change to review and potentially increase building heights/densities **by August 2022**

NPS-UD intensification directions

Location	Change required	Current provisions
City centre zones	Potentially enable unlimited height in zone; and enable 6 storeys within walkable catchment	6-7 storeys
Metropolitan centre zones	Enable at least 6 storeys in zone; and within a walkable catchment	n/a
Existing and planned rapid transit stops	Enable at least 6 storeys within walkable catchment of stop	2-3 storeys
In all other locations	Enable density/height commensurate with the level of accessibility and / or demand (whichever is greater)	2-3 storeys

Can we say NO to tall buildings?

The NPS-UD lists some qualifying matters that can be considered to limit height, including:

- Public Open space
- Nationally significant infrastructure
- Natural hazards
- Historic heritage
- Outstanding natural features and landscapes
- Significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna
- Maori ancestral lands, water, sites, waahi tapu, and other taonga
- Any other matter that makes high density development inappropriate in light of the NPS-UD.

However, to become a qualifying matter a lot of site-specific analysis, assessment of costs and broader impacts of imposing limits will be required - this will be challenging.

Does amenity matter?

The NPS-UD changes the direction of how we assess amenity.

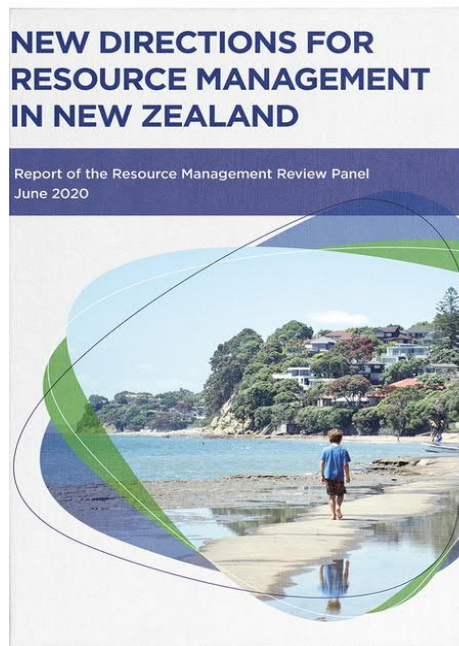
Policy 6: When making planning decisions that affect urban environments, decision-makers have particular regard to the following matters:

(b) that the planned urban built form in those RMA planning documents may involve significant changes to an area, and those changes:

(i) may detract from amenity values appreciated by some people but improve amenity values appreciated by other people, communities, and future generations, including by providing increased and varied housing densities and types; and

(ii) are not, of themselves, an adverse effect

Resource Management reforms



Three Acts will replace the 1991 RMA:

- *Natural and Built Environments Act (NBA) – the main replacement for the RMA and aims to protect and restore the environment while better enabling development.*
- *Strategic Planning Act (SPA) – requires development of long-term regional spatial strategies to help coordinate and integrate decisions made under relevant legislation.*
- *Climate Adaptation Act (CAA) – will address complex issues associated with managed retreat.*
- Public will be able to submit on the NBA and SPA Bills early/mid 2022, and enactment likely by end of 2022.

Council submitted on the exposure draft of the NBA:

https://christchurch.infocouncil.biz/Open/2021/07/FPCO_20210729_ATT_5422_EXCLUDED_WEB.htm

Resource Management changes that will impact housing

- We have to make sure there is sufficient housing and business development capacity.
- The maintenance and enhancement of amenity values is no longer a matter to have particular regard to.
- We must protect highly productive soils.
- We must reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- There may be less public notification as legislation changes only require “public participation to an extent that is proportionate to the significance of the matters at issue”.
- District Plans will be replaced by a Regional Plan, which will be approved by a Regional Committee on which Christchurch only gets one vote. Public submissions will be heard by a Independent Hearings Panel.

Topics our local communities
are asking questions about

Key themes from community feedback so far

- Car Parking Management
- Infrastructure/ Hazard considerations
- Green Space
- Design
- Mass Rapid Transit/ Commuter Rail
- Managing Greenfield/ Highly Productive Land
- Maximum Density/ Level of Density
- Non-residential activities in residential zones/ Short –Term accommodation



Carlton Mill Road

Challenges and opportunities –
it's our future