

An aerial photograph of a city port and skyline at sunset. In the foreground, a large container ship is docked at a pier with several cranes. To the left, industrial smokestacks are visible. In the background, a dense city skyline with numerous skyscrapers is silhouetted against the orange and yellow glow of the setting sun. The water reflects the light from the sky and the city.

BRIEFING DOCUMENT: PLANNING REFORMS 2027

MODERNIZING THE METROPOLIS

A Blueprint for Complete Neighbourhoods

Analysis of Proposed Planning Reforms, Standardized Zoning, and Transit-Oriented Development.

Context: Transition from Resource Management Act (RMA) to Planning Act.

Core Philosophy: Shifting from auto-centric planning to a humane, productive urban model.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: THE SHIFT TO PERMISSIVE URBANISM

THE SHIFT TO PERMISSIVE URBANISM

01. THE REGULATORY ENGINE

Transitioning from "bespoke," restrictive zoning to Standardized Inclusive Zoning modeled on Japanese land use law.

02. THE SPATIAL MANDATE

Enforcing Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) with minimum 6-storey mandates within walkable catchments (800m-1200m).



03. THE PHYSICAL FORM

Filling the gap between high-rises and single homes with "Missing Middle" gentle density.

04. THE OUTCOME

Reversing "negative productivity" (congestion) and fostering social cohesion through "As-of-Right" mixed-use permissions.

THE JAPANESE INFLUENCE: STANDARDIZED INCLUSIVE ZONING

THE OLD MODEL: EXCLUSION

- Rigid 'Centres Hierarchies'
- Commercial banned in residential areas
- "Spot Zoning" required for exceptions
- Focus: Banning activities



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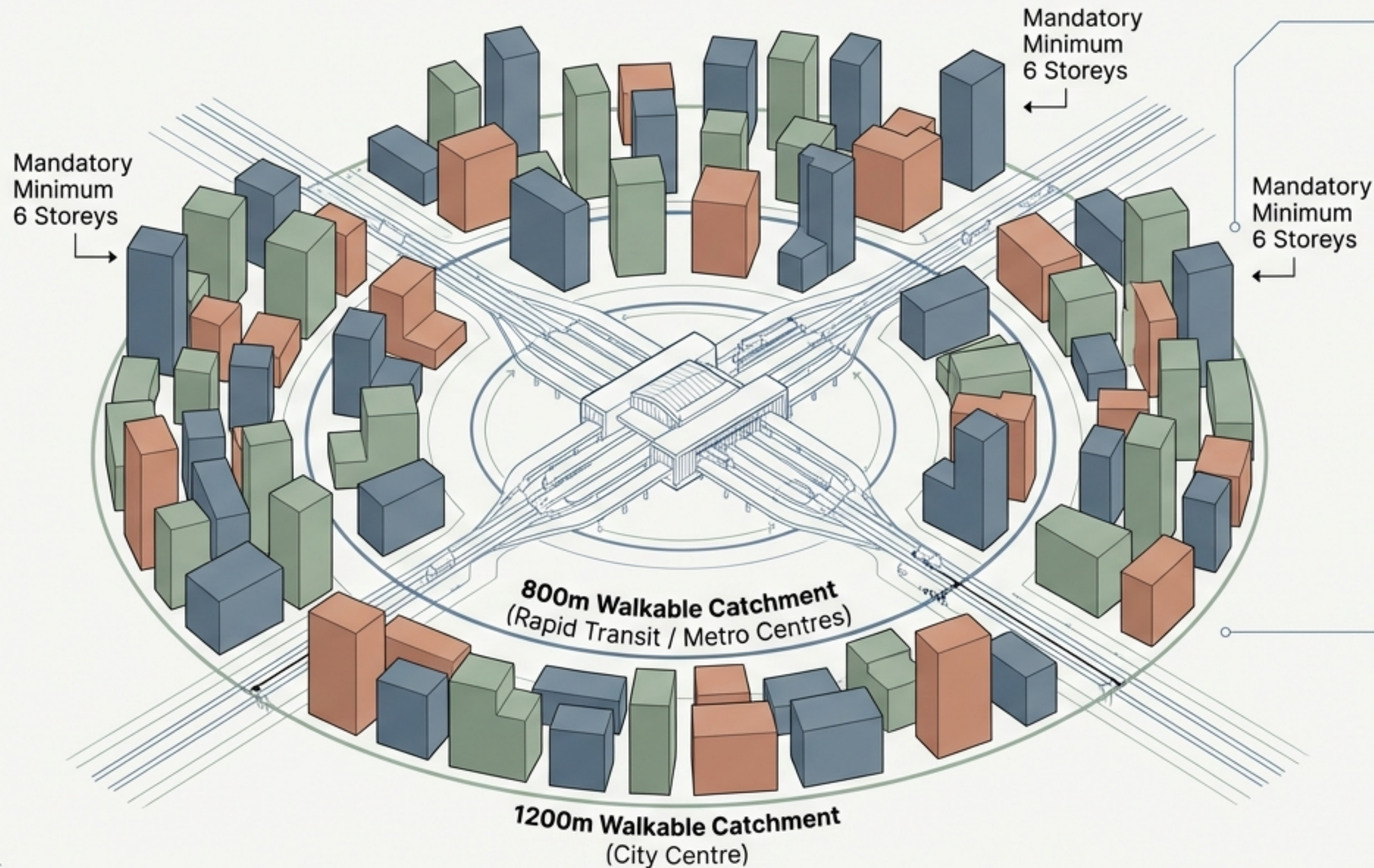
THE NEW MODEL: INCLUSION



- Modeled on Japanese Land Use Law
- Inclusive Zones: Mix is the default
- Focus: Managing externalities (noise/nuisance)
- Result: 'As-of-Right' evolution

TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD) FRAMEWORK

The Logic: Density Follows Frequency



THE SPATIAL MANDATE

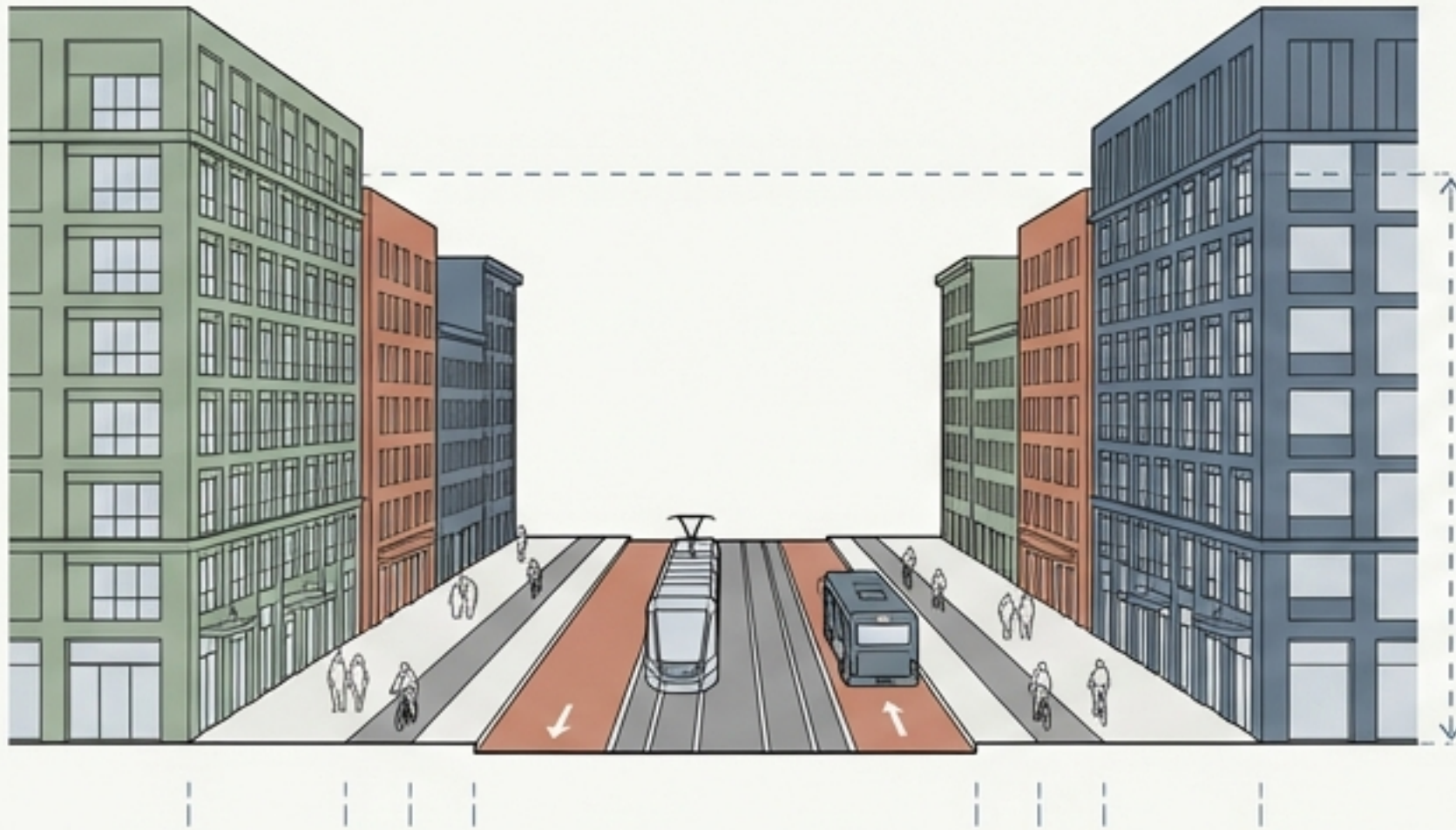
Councils are required to enable building heights of at least six storeys within these catchments.

Matching population intensity to infrastructure capacity.



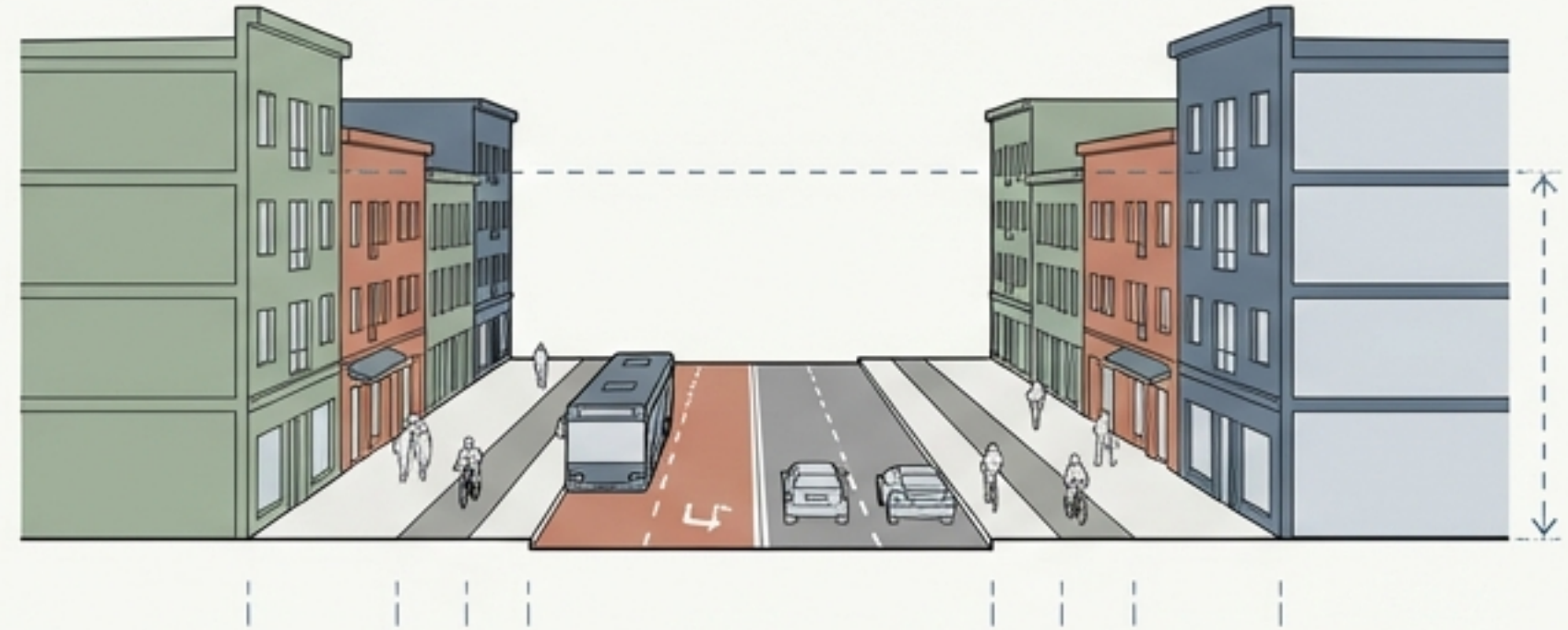
THE CORRIDOR HIERARCHY

CATEGORY 1: SPINE CORRIDORS

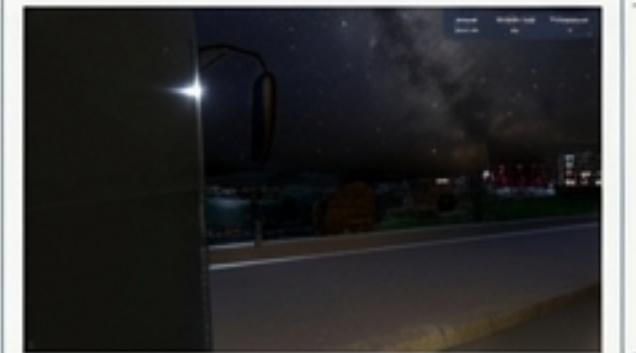


- **Definition:** Strategic routes, high frequency.
- **Typology:** 'Hard shell / Soft core' perimeter blocks.
- **Mandate:** Minimum 6 Storeys.
- **Use:** Rapid Transit.

CATEGORY 2: PRIMARY CORRIDORS



- **Definition:** Frequent bus routes (7 days/week).
- **Typology:** Mixed-use, human scale.
- **Mandate:** Minimum 3 Storeys.
- **Speed Limit:** 30km/h (supports active transport).



THE 'MISSING MIDDLE': THE GOAT OF URBAN DESIGN



DEFINITION

A range of house-scale buildings with multiple units, compatible in scale with detached single-family homes.

THE FUNCTION

Delivers "Smart Density"—more people per hectare without the "overkill" or "scariness" of high-rises.

PLACEMENT

Designed to be built "anywhere in a city," not just the core.

UNIVERSAL TYPOLOGIES FOR GENTLE DENSITY

PLEXES



Inter
Stacked & Side-by-Side units within a house footprint.

COURTS



Inter
Clusters of small units around shared green space. Vital for neighborhood fabric.

ATTACHED



Inter
Space-efficient individual ownership.

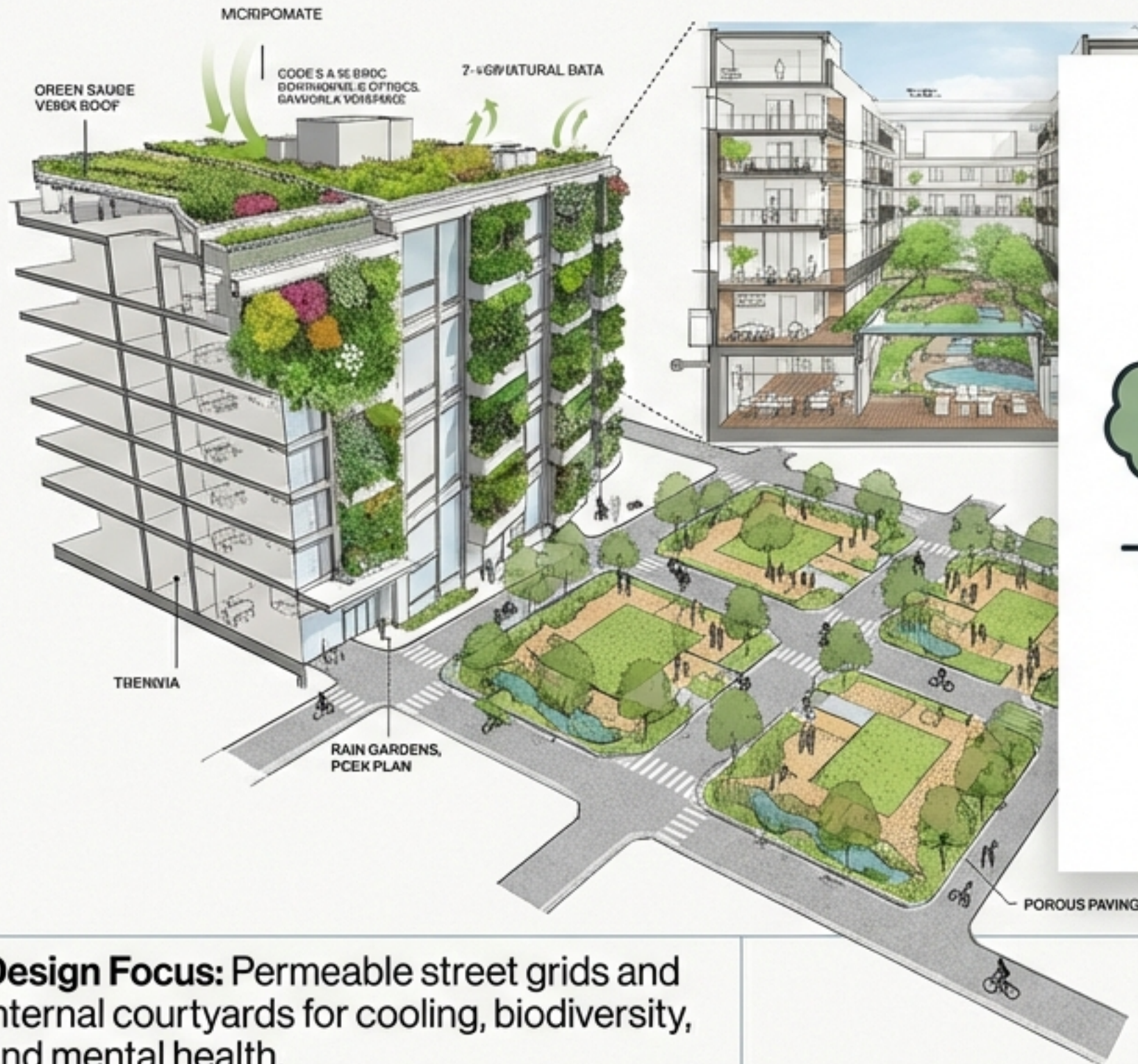
INTEGRATED



Inter
Workspace on ground floor, living above. Activates the street.

GREEN UTILITY & INTEGRATED MODIFICATION (IMM)

Nature as Infrastructure



THE 3-30-300 RULE



3 TREES
visible from
every home.



30% CANOPY
cover in the
neighborhood.



300 METERS
to the nearest
green space.

Design Focus: Permeable street grids and internal courtyards for cooling, biodiversity, and mental health.

MIXED-USE AS-OF-RIGHT: THE CORNER STORE RENAISSANCE



THE MECHANISM

- **As-of-Right:** No resource consent required.
- **Narrow Range (Neighborhoods):** Permitting Dairies, Cafes, Hair Salons, Co-share offices.
- **Location:** Specifically on Corner Sites.

“Everyday life happens just outside your door.”

Ensures amenities without displacing larger commercial centers.

SOCIAL ARCHITECTURE & COMBATING ISOLATION

THIRD PLACES

Local amenities acting as social hubs.

AGING IN PLACE

Typologies that support the elderly and multi-generational living.



SOCIAL FRICTION

Shared spaces force positive social interaction—an antidote to loneliness.

WALKABILITY

Active transport leads to increased face-to-face interaction.

URBAN PRODUCTIVITY: AGGLOMERATION & INNOVATION

NEGATIVE PRODUCTIVITY (Sprawl)



AGGLOMERATION (Density)



- **Solving Negative Productivity:** Reducing the economic cost of congestion.
- **Innovation:** Clustered mixed-use fosters competition.
- **Startup Friendly:** Low barriers for Live-Work units and home businesses.
- **Emissions:** Mixed-use cuts vehicle emissions by up to 80%.









CASE STUDY: THE 'LIVING METROPOLIS' SIMULATION



PLANNER'S REFLECTION

- **Emergent Dynamics:** The city is a complex, emergent system, not a static blueprint.
- **Observed Phenomena:** Simulation revealed trends like "White Flight" and Gentrification.
- **Policy Response:** Strategically placing low-rent housing near transit to ensure equity.
- **Conclusion:** The planner's job is never truly done.

SUMMARY OF BENEFITS: FROM SPRAWL TO SYSTEM

| CURRENT STATE (The Problem) | FUTURE STATE (The Reform) |
|--|---|
|  • Auto-centric Planning  • Exclusive / Bespoke Zoning  • Negative Productivity (Congestion)  • Social Isolation | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) • Standardized / Inclusive Zoning (Japanese Model) • Agglomeration & Innovation • Complete Neighbourhoods / Social Cohesion  |

THE HUMANE HORIZON



The reforms represent a return to the "lost art (and science) of community building." By moving from restriction to permission, we create a framework where the city can evolve naturally to meet human needs—fostering a society that is connected, productive, and resilient.