

# Presentation Title: Upgrading Aotearoa's Urban Operating System

**Target Audience:** Strategic Decision Makers, Planning Authorities, and Regional Councillors **Estimated Delivery Time:** 7 Minutes (followed by Q&A)

## Slide 1: Introduction – The Paradigm Shift (0:00 - 1:00)

**Visual:** A stark contrast between sprawling, car-centric suburbs ("Grey Inertia") and a vibrant, green, mixed-use urban corridor.

**Speaking Notes:** "Welcome, everyone. Today we are looking at a fundamental 'System Upgrade' for New Zealand's spatial governance under the proposed Aotearoa Planning Bill 2025. For three decades under the Resource Management Act (RMA), we have suffered from 'Grey Inertia'—a reactive, fragmented system that resulted in chaotic sprawl, high regulatory debt, and a postcode lottery of over 1,175 different local zones. The new Bill, heavily inspired by Japan's extraordinarily successful 1974 Land Use Planning Act, pivots us from a subjective 'Culture of Permission' to an objective 'Culture of Adherence'. We are moving from a system where 'Property Rights are Supreme' to one where **'Public Welfare is Supreme'**. If a project fits the mathematical envelope of the rules, it achieves 'Permitted Activity' status automatically, liquidating the project-level litigation that has historically paralyzed development."

## Slide 2: The "Urban Dam" – Containing Sprawl (1:00 - 2:30)

**Visual:** A diagram showing the "Hydraulic City" concept, with an "Urbanisation Promoting Area" (Reservoir) separated by a dam wall from the "Urbanisation Control Area" (Rural fringe).

**Speaking Notes:** "To manage the intense pressure of urban growth and rising land values, the framework introduces a binary spatial strategy called the 'Urban Dam'.

- **The Reservoir (Urbanisation Promoting Area - UPA):** This is our designated growth zone with a 10-year horizon. It operates on an **'Infrastructure First'** mandate. Development rights are only unlocked when the state provides the skeleton—sewage, streets, and transit.
- **The Stop Valve (Urbanisation Control Area - UCA):** Outside the UPA, urbanization is 'prohibited in principle' 6. Infrastructure investment here is explicitly deprioritized to function as a dam wall.

By strategically withholding pipes and roads in the UCA, we instantly kill speculative land-banking on the fringes and force growth pressure back into the city centre, making vertical density economically viable."

## Slide 3: Density Follows Frequency & The Universal Code (2:30 - 3:30)

**Visual:** A tiered cityscape showing 6-storey buildings near a rail line, tapering down to 3-storey buildings near a bus route.

**Speaking Notes:** “To replace the chaotic 1,175 local zones, we are adopting a universal codebase of 13 to 20 National Standardised Zones (NSZs). This allows developers to operate at a national scale with standardized, off-the-shelf designs.

Within these zones, we apply a strict legal doctrine: **Density Follows Frequency**. We legally tether building intensity to the capacity of the transport network.

- **Category 1 Corridors** along rapid rail mandate a minimum of 6 storeys.
- **Category 2 Corridors** along frequent bus routes mandate a minimum of 3 storeys.

Furthermore, we are implementing 'Inclusive Zoning', which makes narrow-range commercial activities, like corner cafes and co-share offices up to 150 square meters, legal 'as-of-right' in residential zones to activate 15-minute complete neighbourhoods."

## Slide 4: The Newcomer Principle – Protecting Our Engines (3:30 - 4:30)

**Visual:** A split screen showing a new apartment next to a busy port, and a new lifestyle block next to a working farm. Both new developments are highlighted with an "Invisible Shield".

**Speaking Notes:** “One of the greatest threats to our economy is 'reverse sensitivity'—when new residents move next to a working farm or a 24/7 port and use litigation to complain about noise or smells.

The Bill introduces the **Newcomer Principle**. Simply put, the 'Agent of Change' bears the cost of mitigation. If a developer builds housing near a port, *they* must fund the acoustic glazing and mechanical ventilation. If a resident builds near a farm, *they* must mitigate the spray drift. This creates an invisible shield that protects our vital 'Economic Engines' from being litigated out of existence by residential complaints."

## Slide 5: Non-Negotiable Biological & Safety Utilities (4:30 - 5:30)

**Visual:** An infographic of the 3-30-300 rule next to a map showing a "Red Line" over a flood plain.

**Speaking Notes:** “We must treat nature and safety not as aesthetic luxuries, but as hard, non-negotiable utilities.

First, the **3-30-300 Rule**. Every citizen must be able to see 3 trees from their home, live in a neighbourhood with 30% canopy cover, and be within a 300-meter walk of green space. We will achieve this through engineered 'connected soil volumes' that prevent street trees from dying in concrete.

Second, the **Red Line Policy**. We are mandating an initiative-taking approach to hazard avoidance.

Development is prohibited in high-risk zones based on a 100-year climate horizon (Year 2126). Planners must model for 'Residual Risk'—the inevitable eventual failure of man-made defences like seawalls."

## Slide 6: Rural Stewardship (5:30 - 6:00)

**Visual:** A tractor on a large farm, clearly separated by a zoning line from a small cluster of "lifestyle blocks".

**Speaking Notes:** “Finally, we recognize that Aotearoa’s primary industries require unique protections. Unlike the Japanese model, we have established specific rural zones. Our **Rural-Production** zones are reserved exclusively for large-scale agriculture. We explicitly prohibit the sprawl of 'lifestyle blocks' in these areas,

containing them strictly within designated Rural Residential zones to prevent the fragmentation of our highly productive soil."

## Slide 7: Conclusion – The Triple ROI (6:00 - 7:00)

**Visual:** Summary text highlighting: 1. Legal Certainty, 2. Economic Scale, 3. Long-term Resilience.

**Speaking Notes:** "In conclusion, the Aotearoa Planning Bill 2025 provides decision-makers with a highly structured, objective blueprint. Implementing this system delivers a compelling 'Triple ROI' for the nation:

1. **Legal Certainty:** By relying on objective adherence, we eliminate the endless cycle of project-level litigation.
2. **Economic Scale:** National Standardised Zones allow the construction pipeline to industrialize and drop costs.
3. **Long-term Resilience:** Mandatory hazard avoidance and 'Green Utility' ensure our communities endure.

Thank you. I will now open the floor to questions."

## Facilitator Guide: Anticipated Q&A

**Q1: Under this new framework, how do we manage community pushback regarding the "character" of a neighbourhood or loss of private views?**

- **A:** Under the new "Section 14 Mandate," decision-makers are legally required to ignore subjective factors. The law explicitly states that private views from private property, aesthetic "character," and the social status of residents cannot be used to block compliant development. If a project fits the mathematical volume, it gets built.

**Q2: How does the "Urban Dam" actually stop land speculation on the fringes?**

- **A:** Speculation relies on the hope of future rezoning. By placing rural fringes into the Urbanisation Control Area (UCA), we make urbanization "prohibited in principle" and explicitly refuse to fund sewage or road extensions there. Furthermore, inside the growth areas, we use "Scheduling Areas" to freeze land prices at pre-development values so the government can build infrastructure before the market inflates the cost.

**Q3: Does not standardizing the zones nationwide remove local democracy?**

- **A:** There is a massive trade-off built into the Bill. It explicitly exchanges the ability for locals to argue the subjective merits of individual projects in return for national speed and efficiency. The public still has a voice, but that input is forcefully moved "upstream" to the Regional Spatial Planning stage. Once the 30-year strategic plan is locked in, the "Golden Rule" prevents those arguments from being re-litigated at the project consent level.