

# Unlocking the 24/7 City: The Japanese Blueprint for Aotearoa's Urban Future

Rethinking parking to create affordable housing,  
supercharge local commerce, and humanize our streets.





## 1. The Policy (How Japan does it)

"Proof of Parking" shifts vehicle storage from a public entitlement to a private responsibility.



## 2. The Housing Dividend

Eliminating mandatory parking minimums slashes construction costs by up to 20% and reclaims urban land.



## 3. The Economic Engine

Replacing car storage with pedestrian infrastructure boosts local retail revenue by up to 66%.



## 4. The Aotearoa Application

The Aotearoa Planning Bill 2025 provides the legal toolkit (Tier 3 Parking Plans) to retrofit cities like Manukau.

# The 'Grey Inertia' of Subsidized Car Storage

## The Wasted Center

33% to 45% of central Manukau's land is lost to surface parking, creating isolated "urban islands."

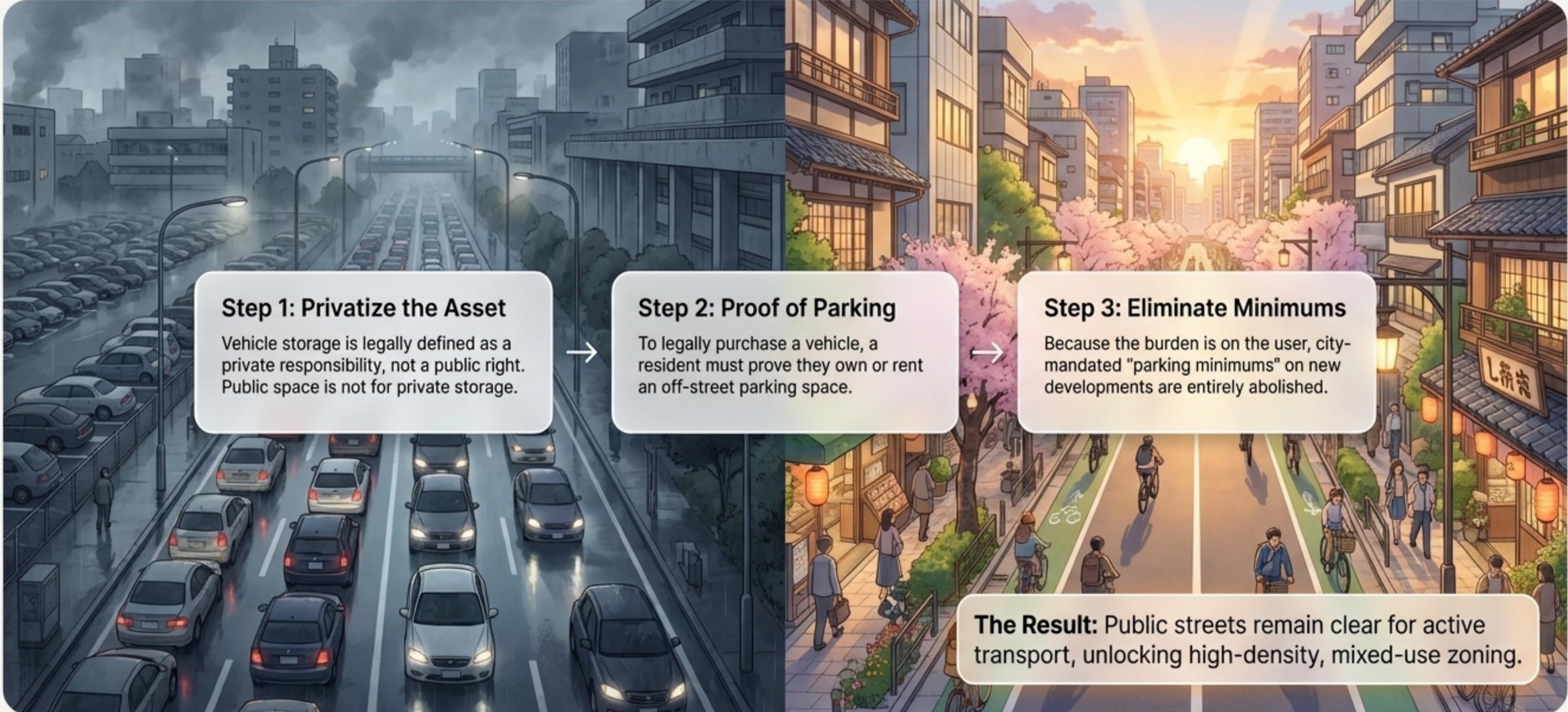
## The Hidden Car Tax

Mandatory parking minimums force developers to oversupply "free" parking, subsidizing driving while penalizing non-drivers.

## The Vicious Cycle

Abundant free parking fuels low-density sprawl → Sprawl makes active transit impractical → Cities mistakenly mandate even more parking.

# How Japan Handles On-Street Parking: The Tokyo Model



## Step 1: Privatize the Asset

Vehicle storage is legally defined as a private responsibility, not a public right. Public space is not for private storage.

## Step 2: Proof of Parking

To legally purchase a vehicle, a resident must prove they own or rent an off-street parking space.

## Step 3: Eliminate Minimums

Because the burden is on the user, city-mandated "parking minimums" on new developments are entirely abolished.

**The Result:** Public streets remain clear for active transport, unlocking high-density, mixed-use zoning.

# The Housing Impact: Liquidating the “Car Storage Tax”

## The Problem: The “Car Storage Tax”

- Constructing a single structured parking space costs \$20,000 to \$65,000.
- This mandated requirement adds ~10% to the final purchase price of a home, acting as a hidden tax passed onto buyers regardless of whether they own a car.



## The Unlock: Market-Led Parking

- Abolishing parking minimums allows developers to build based on actual market demand.
- Result: Lowers overall construction costs by up to 20%, directly lowering the financial barrier to entry for residents.

# The Geometry of Affordability: Yield Per Acre



**1 Acre of Surface Parking**  
**0 Housing Units**  
**0 Retail Spaces**

**Result:** Suppressed economic vitality and forced sprawl.



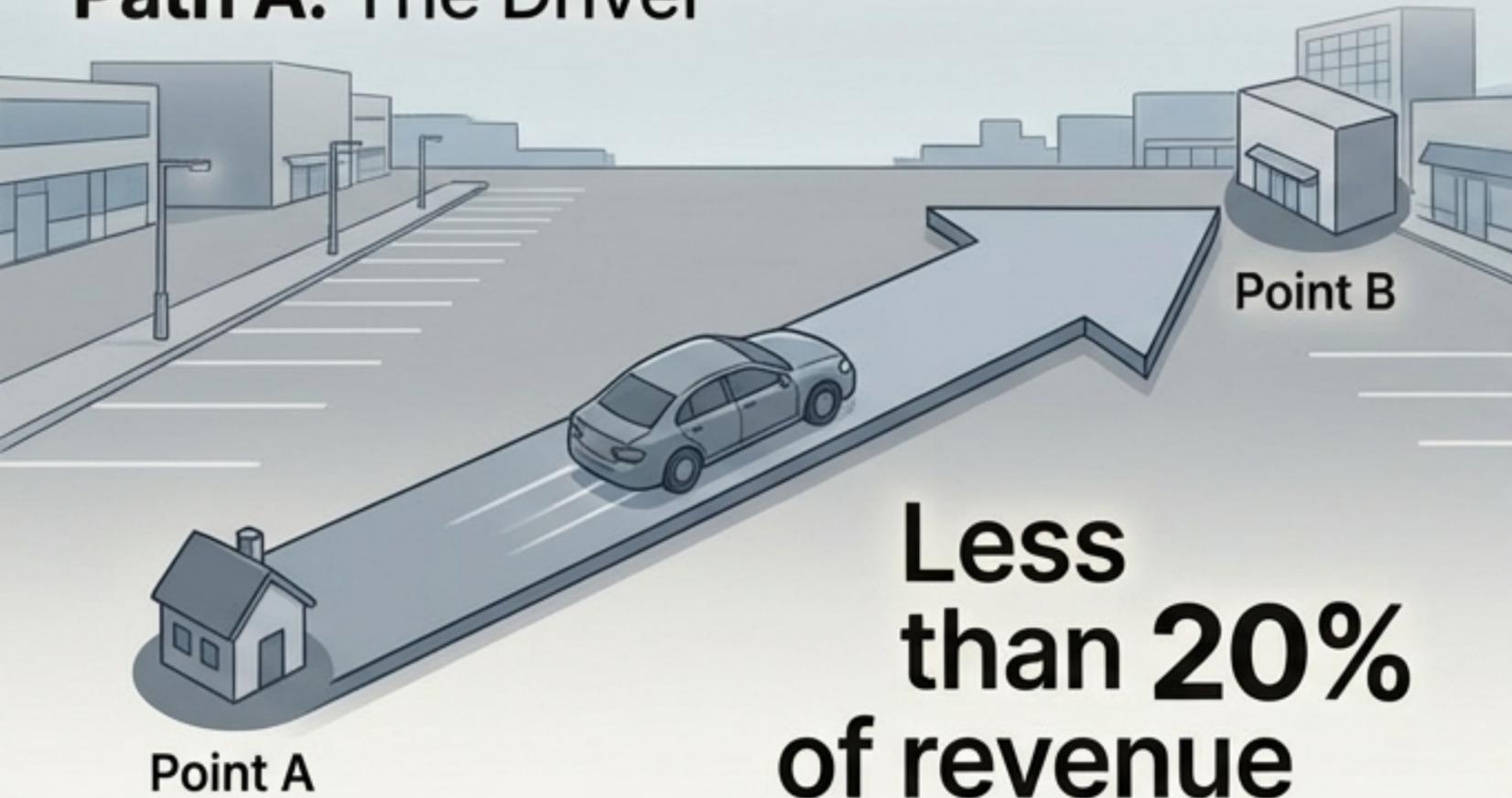
**1 Acre of People-Centric Development**  
**40 Housing Units**  
**10,000 sq ft of retail**

**Result:** Spreading land costs across multiple units inherently lowers the price per home while building a captive customer base for local retail.

# The Revenue Reality: Overcoming the “Perception Gap”

While it is widely assumed drivers are the primary economic engine for shops, data proves that active transport generates far higher local yields.

## Path A: The Driver



**Behavior:** “Trip-Chaining.” They drive to a single specific destination, complete one transaction, and leave immediately.

## Path B: The Pedestrian / Transit User



**Behavior:** Engagement. Moving at a human pace allows spontaneous interaction with multiple storefronts, capturing the spending power of the hybrid workforce.

# Activating the 'Linger Factor'



# Curbside Profitability: Storage vs. Placemaking

**\$550 – \$950**



## Vehicle Storage

Generates \$550 – \$950 per day in localized economic activity.

Function: Subsidized storage of private property.

**\$1,600 – \$1,660**



## Dining Parklet

Generates \$1,600 – \$1,660 per day in local revenue.

Function: Repurposing space from vehicle storage to people-focused activities maximizes the Return on Investment (ROI) of urban land.

# Applying the Tokyo Model to Aotearoa



## Blueprint

### The Catalyst: Aotearoa Planning Bill 2025

NZ is executing a "system transplant" using Japan's 1974 Land-Use Law to shift from car-centric sprawl to infrastructure-led growth.

## Blueprint

### The Beta Test: Manukau City Centre

Manukau serves as the prime case study for transitioning a legacy "Dormitory Suburb" into a high-productivity "24/7 Ecosystem."

Goal: Transform "seas of parking" into oceans of communities using the Tier 3 Parking Plan.

# The Transition Playbook: Auckland's Tier 3 Parking Plan



## Step 1: Manage Demand (Price & Remove)

Proactively price on-street parking to manage demand and discourage long-term storage of private vehicles in public space.

## Step 2: Consolidate & Unlock

Consolidate remaining parking into shared facilities ('Park-Once-and-Walk' districts), allowing sprawling surface lots to be redeveloped into mixed-use blocks.

## Step 3: Humanize the Streets

Repurpose freed road space for wider footpaths and dedicated bus lanes.

**The Math:** A dedicated bus lane moves 4x more people per hour than a general traffic lane.

# Activating the 'Social Glue': Standardised Inclusive Zoning



## The Problem with Legacy Zoning:

Traditional single-use zoning bans commerce in residential areas, forcing people into cars to buy basic necessities.

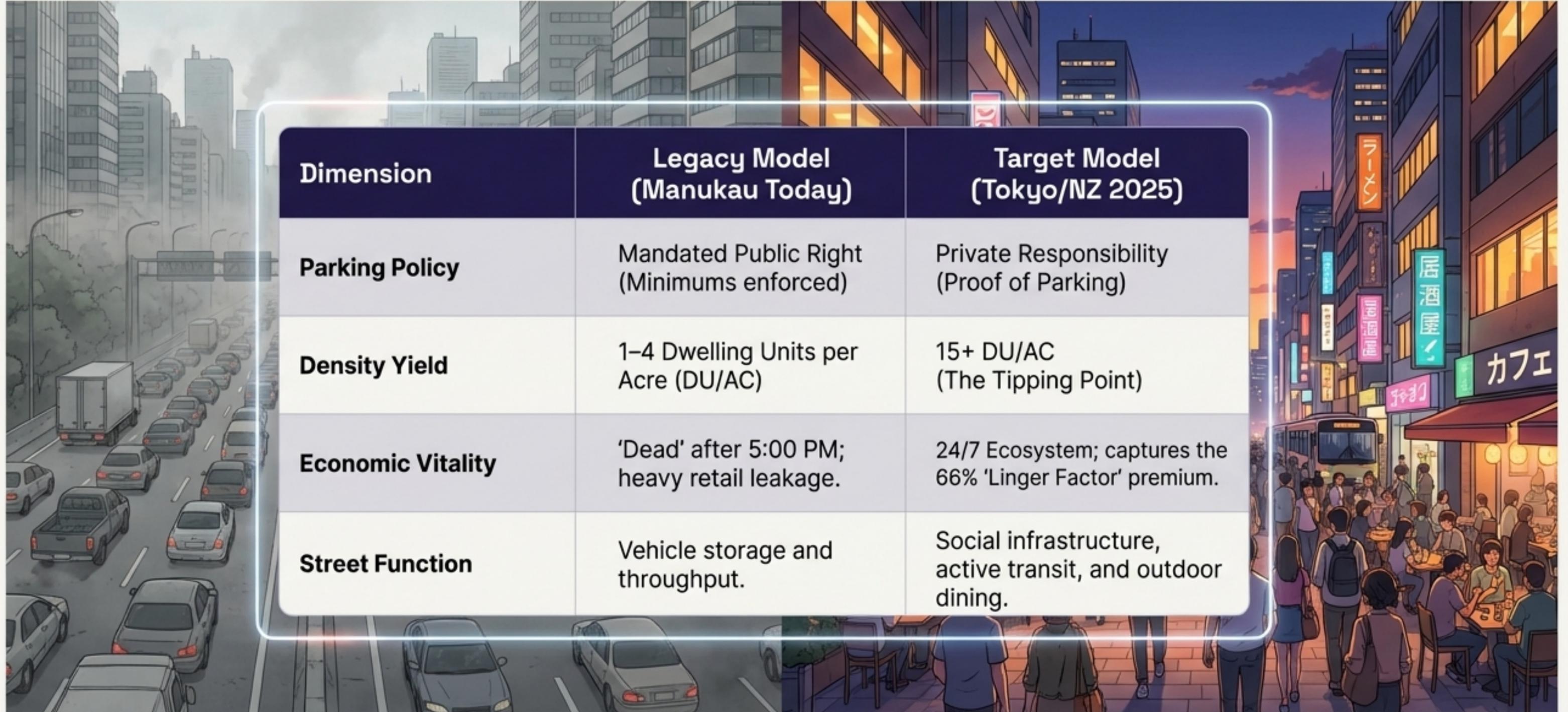
## The Japanese Solution: 'As-of-Right' Mixed-Use

Permitting low-impact businesses (capped at 150 sqm) on residential corners automatically, without predatory resource consent battles.

## The Outcomes:

Creates local workhubs, artisan dairies, and cafes. Transforms dormant intersections into the "Third Places" required for community resilience and walking viability.

# The Diagnostic Matrix: Dormitory Suburb vs. 24/7 Ecosystem



Dimension	Legacy Model (Manukau Today)	Target Model (Tokyo/NZ 2025)
<b>Parking Policy</b>	Mandated Public Right (Minimums enforced)	Private Responsibility (Proof of Parking)
<b>Density Yield</b>	1–4 Dwelling Units per Acre (DU/AC)	15+ DU/AC (The Tipping Point)
<b>Economic Vitality</b>	'Dead' after 5:00 PM; heavy retail leakage.	24/7 Ecosystem; captures the 66% 'Linger Factor' premium.
<b>Street Function</b>	Vehicle storage and throughput.	Social infrastructure, active transit, and outdoor dining.

# Synthesis: The Virtuous Cycle of Urban Geometry





THE STRATEGIC MANDATE

# “LESS PARKING MEANS MORE CITY.”

To liquidate regulatory debt and build resilient habitats, decision-makers must treat car storage as a private responsibility. By embracing the geometry of people over the geometry of cars, Aotearoa can unlock housing affordability and engineer a thriving, 24/7 urban future.