Reconstructing the Integrated National Policy Direction (INPD) Framework

A Sustainable Urban/Rural Blueprint for New Zealand's Planning Reform

An executive briefing on resolving the structural contradictions of the RMA through legally cohesive tie-breaker rules and nature-based infrastructure solutions.

Resolving the Structural Contradictions of New Zealand's Planning System

The Ambiguity Trap

- An ambiguous **no hierarchy** model pitting **economic growth** against **environmental limits**, causing **regulatory paralysis**.

The INPD Framework

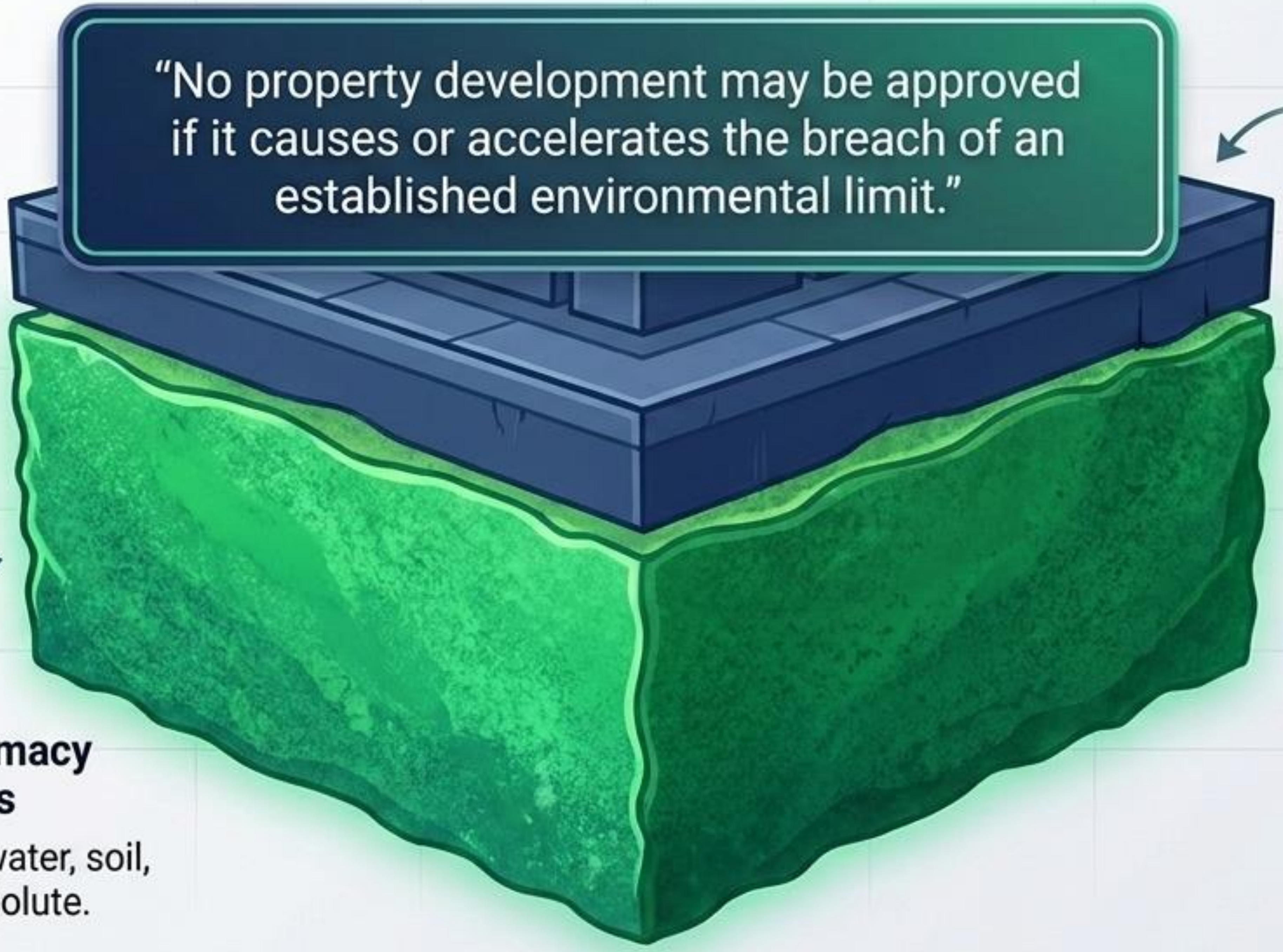
- Replaces competing goals with explicit, legally cohesive tie-breaker rules.
- Development is enabled, public infrastructure costs remain sustainable, hazard risks are managed, and Treaty partnerships are predictable.

The **Statutory Funnel:** Settling Debates at the **Top**

Rather than litigating the same issues repeatedly, the funnel systematically translates broad national goals into local decisions, narrowing the scope for debate at the implementation stage.

The **Blueprint for Reconstruction:** 5 Pillars of the INPD

Pillar 1: Establishing the Baseline Rules of the Game



Rule 2: Integrated Property Rights

Property rights are highly enabled, but bounded by polluter pays and costs-fall-where-created principles.
Developers cannot externalize costs onto the public ledger.

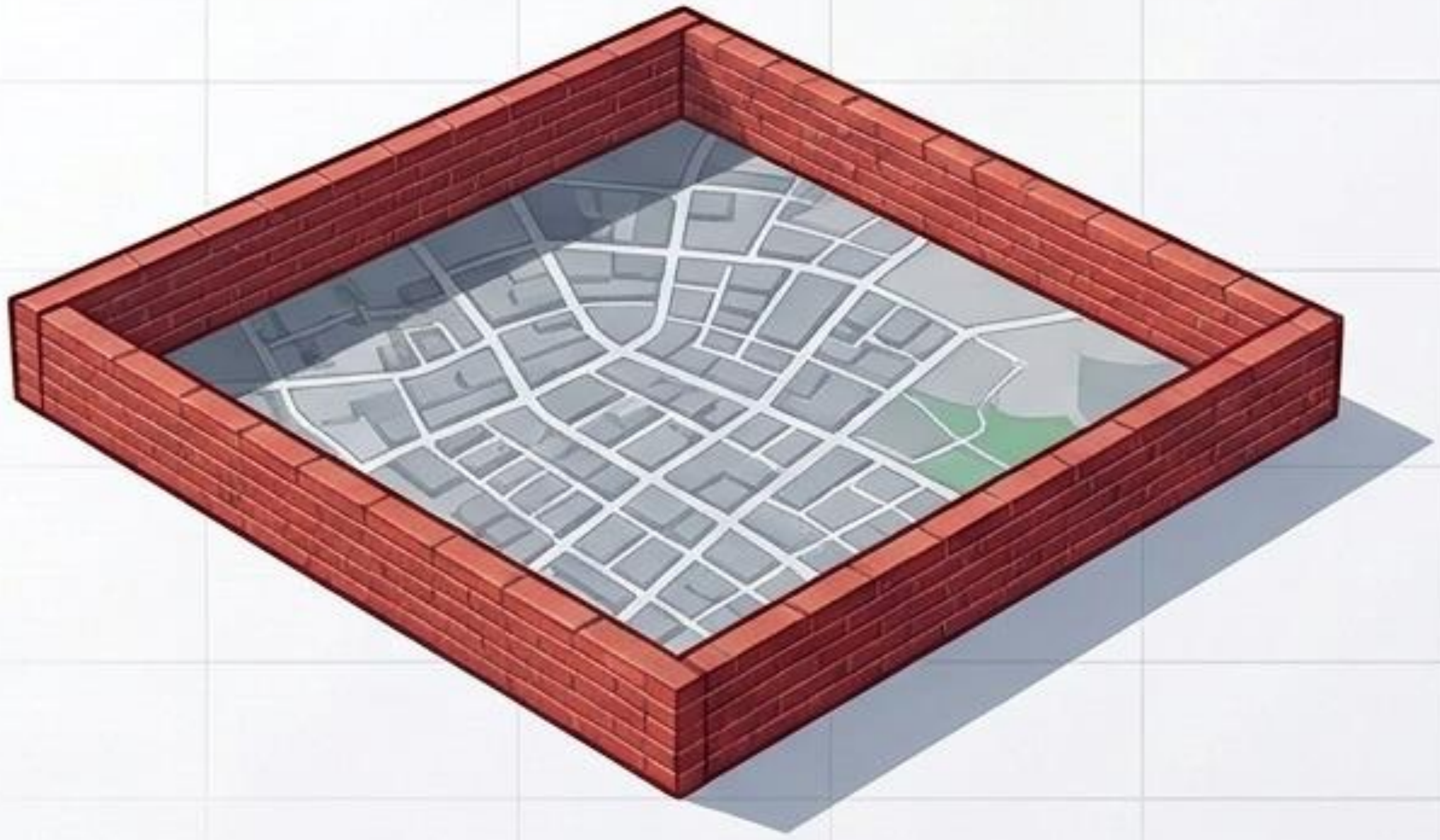
Rule 1: Baseline Supremacy of Environmental Limits

Environmental limits (air, water, soil, ecosystem health) are absolute.

Pillar 2: Replacing Blanket Bans with Smart Land Abundance

Eliminating outright bans on growth boundaries to remove the conflict between competitive land markets and council strategic infrastructure costs.

The Old Paradigm: Blanket Boundary Ban



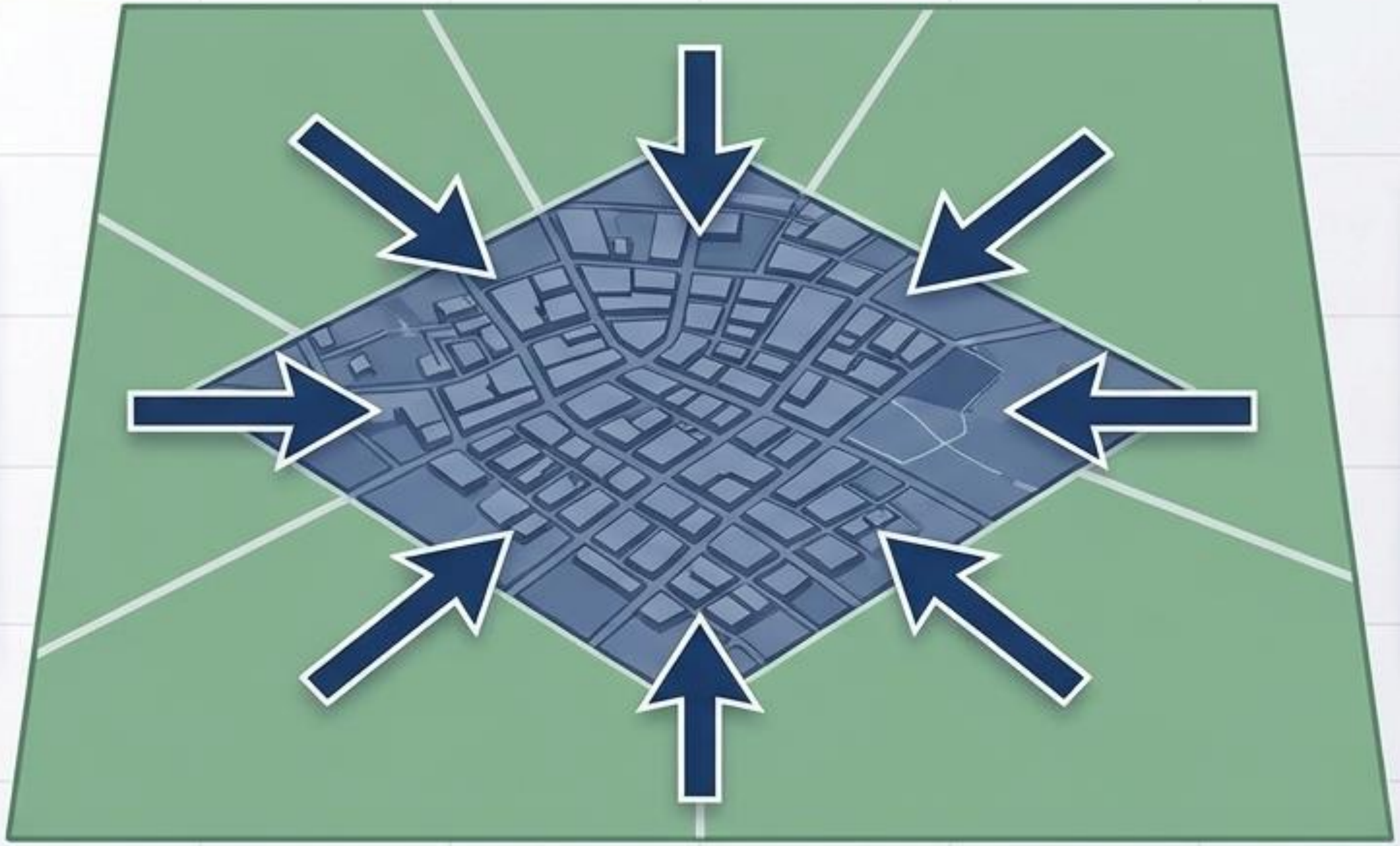
The INPD Paradigm: The ISB Tool

Core Mechanism: The Infrastructure Service Boundary (ISB) Tool

Spatial Dynamics: Who Pays for Out-of-Sequence Growth?

Active Infrastructure Zones (AIZs)

Councils fully fund and sequence bulk infrastructure in these active zones.



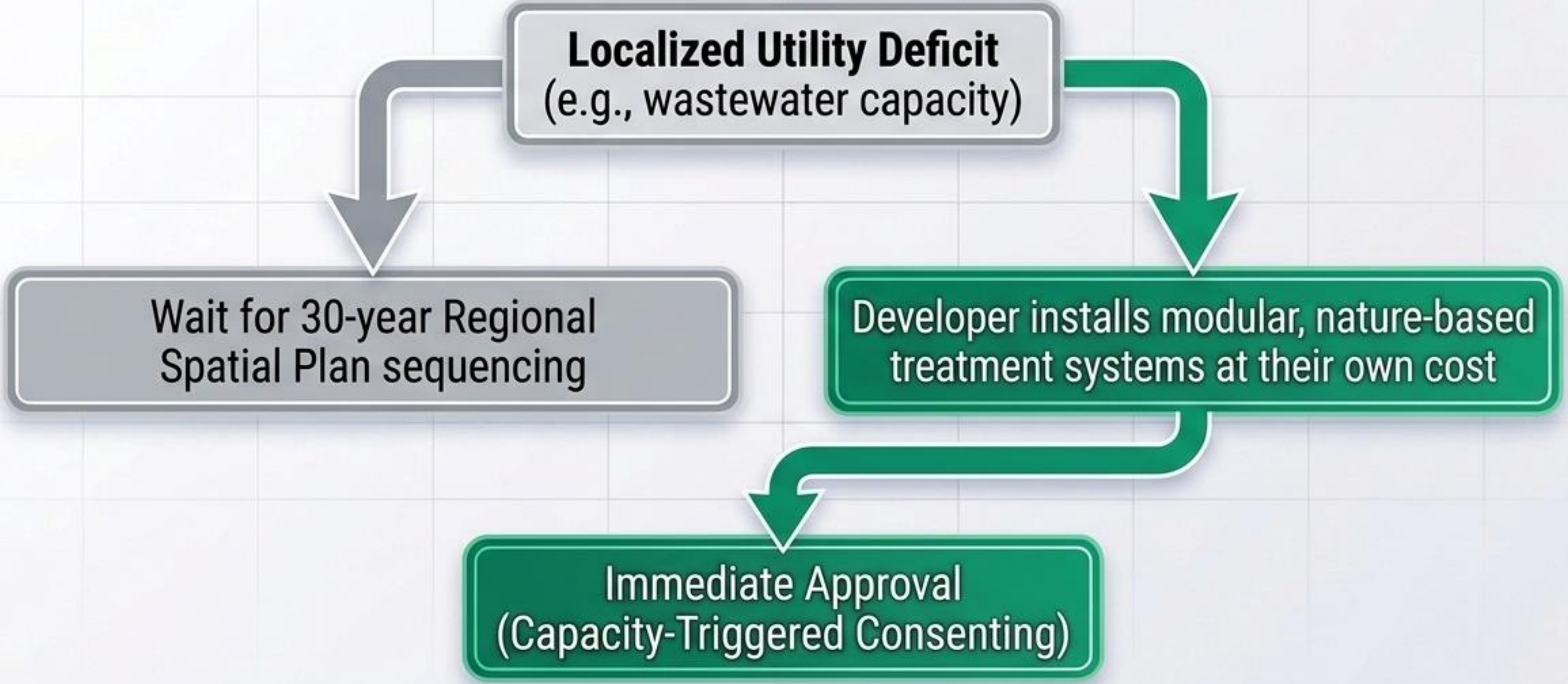
Developer-Funded Growth Zones (DFGZs)

Unconstrained greenfield land where expansion is permitted.

Crucial Rule: If developers build out-of-sequence or outside the AIZ, they bear 100% of the capital costs to connect to public networks, including downstream capacity upgrade fees.

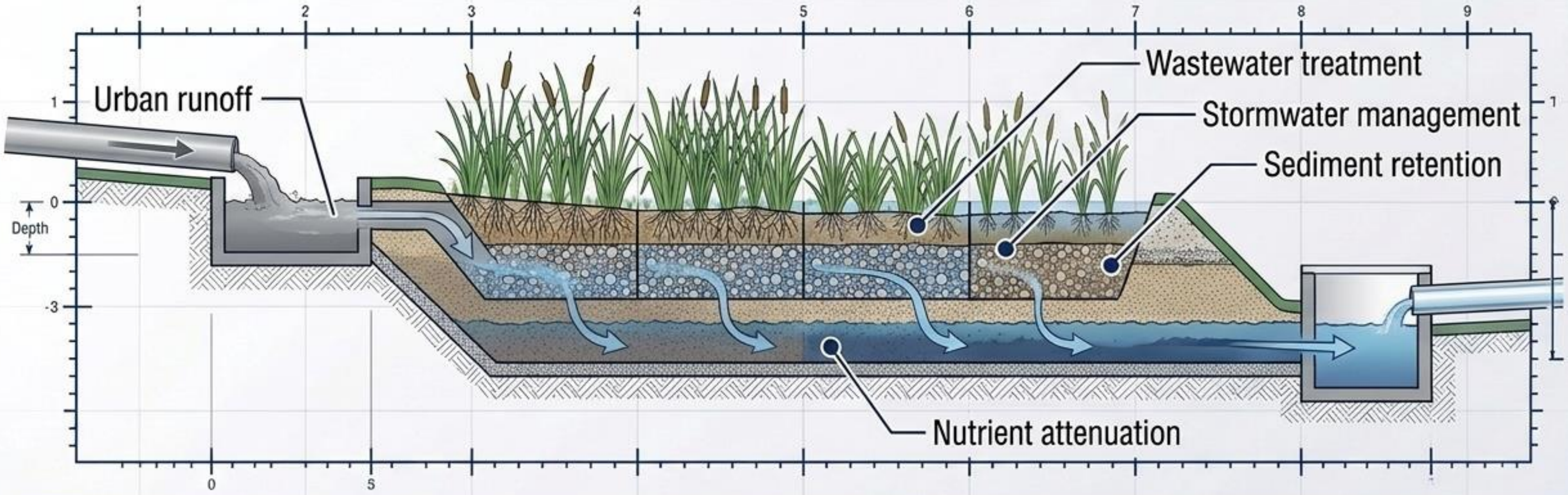
Overcoming Bottlenecks: Capacity-Triggered Consenting

Under the Planning Bill, councils cannot delay development via plan changes due to deficits. Developers are empowered to bypass bottlenecks.



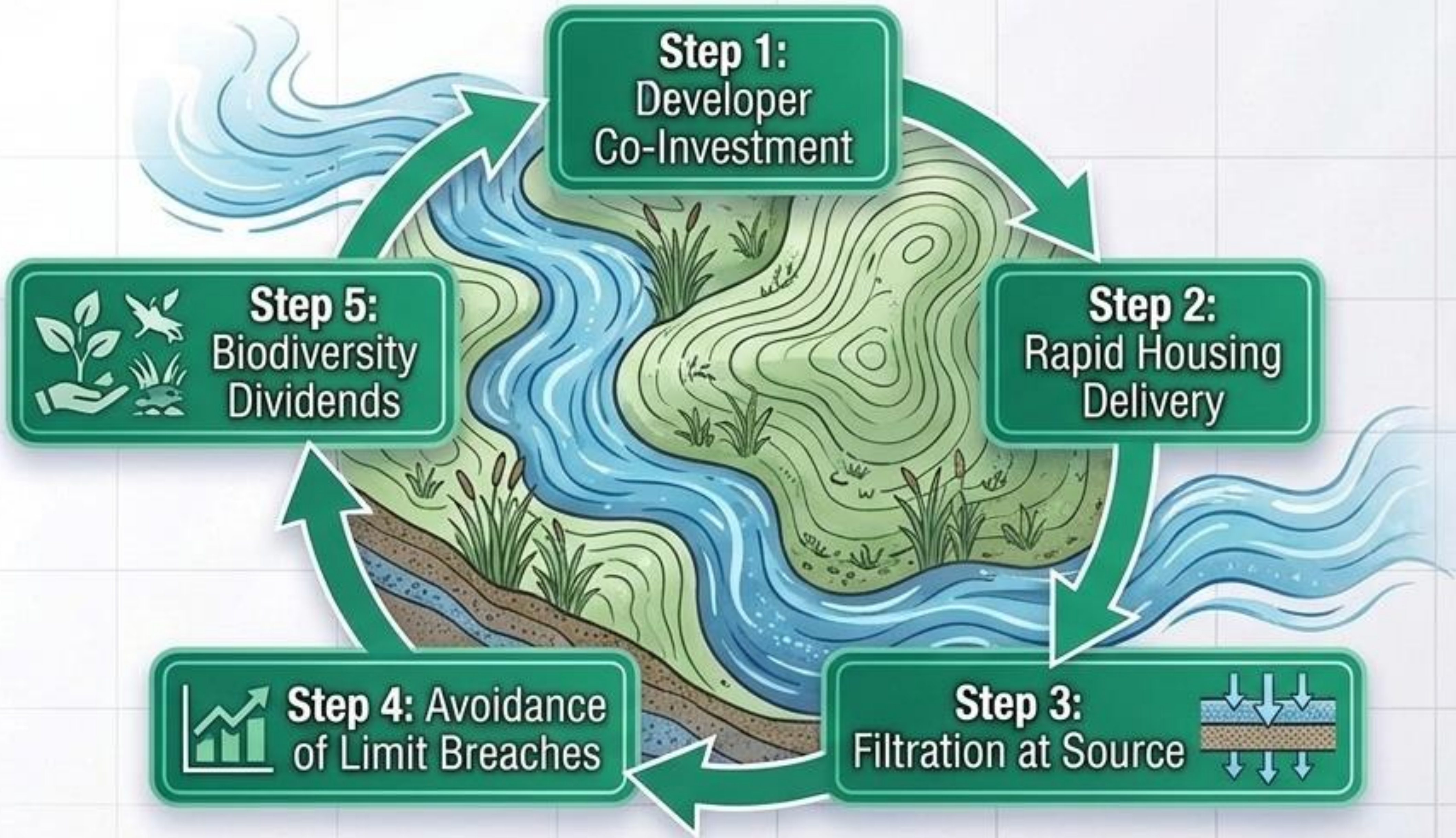
The Sustainable Catalyst: Engineered Constructed Wetlands

Transitioning abstract legal directives into actionable, modular green infrastructure that actively mitigates flooding and absorbs contaminants.



Statutory Mandate: Land use and natural environment plans must legally enable the construction, operation, and maintenance of constructed wetlands in both urban and rural environments.

Wetlands as a Legal Shield & Compliance Tool



Action Plan Shield:

If a catchment risks breaching environmental limits, councils must develop an enforceable Action Plan.

Constructed wetlands can be integrated directly into these plans as a primary remediation tool.

Councils are stripped of traditional delay tactics, but empowered with statutory tools to negotiate private funding for green infrastructure.

Pillar 3: Harmonized, Sector-Neutral Hazard Rules

Eliminating the legacy double standard. Applying a consistent risk-based threshold across all land use, infrastructure, and commercial activities.

Category 1 (Very High Risk)	**Category 2** (High Risk)
Uniformly avoided. Housing, primary production, and new lifeline utilities are banned unless there is an absolute functional need (e.g., ports).	Conditional approval. Requires a certified Life-Safety and Asset-Redundancy Engineering Report proving the asset withstands projected climate events without requiring public bailouts or causing service collapse.

Establishing a universal, enforceable standard of resilience, replacing fragmented, sector-specific regulations with a single, rigorous risk assessment.

Pillar 4: Standardizing Treaty Co-Governance Interfaces

Integrating Treaty settlement precedence directly into the statutory funnel to eliminate regulatory fragmentation and unpredictability.

Case Study: Waikato Catchment Special Planning Zone (WCSPZ)

Formally establishing zones where national templates pre-incorporate strict clean-up standards (Te Ture Whaimana). No unpredictable, localized overrides.

Developers use a pre-standardized ruleset reconciled from Day One.

Standardizing the interface eliminates ad-hoc interpretation and provides developers with a predictable, pre-reconciled regulatory funnel.

Pillar 5: Legible Decision-Making & System Enforcement

The Urban Land Market Statutory Officer shifts from pushing pure market permissiveness to monitoring Overall System Balance.

The officer evaluates competitiveness, but must treat capacity deficits and environmental limit breaches as hard legal boundaries. Councils cannot be legally penalized for restricting capacity if further development would trigger an environmental breach.

Establishing a universal, enforceable standard of resilience, replacing fragmented, sector-specific regulations with a single, rigorous risk assessment.

Synthesis: The Competitive Market in Equilibrium

1. Abundant Supply

- Multi-directional growth, highly responsive to demand.

2. No Scarcity Expectation

- Ban on drip-feeding eliminates incentives for land-banking.

3. Moderated Prices

- Flooding the market removes artificial regulatory premiums.

4. Protected Limits

- Growth is accommodated entirely within the bounds of ecosystem health via modular green infrastructure.

The Path Forward: From Strategy to Action Plans

Step 1: Re-zoning Alignment

Councils map AIZs and DFGZs, calculating fair-share infrastructure liability.

Step 2: Regional Spatial Plans

Translating the INPD into 30-year strategic strategic growth directions.

Step 3: Action Plan Development

Integrating constructed wetlands into legal compliance frameworks to remedy active catchment breaches.

Step 4: Market Execution

Developers deploy capital into green infrastructure to unlock out-of-sequence housing supply.

Prepare for an era of **predictable rules, abundant land**, and **engineered ecological resilience.**