



PBL Netherlands Environmental  
Assessment Agency

# Dutch National Spatial Planning in transition

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24 September 2018  
Luxembourg



## Presentation today

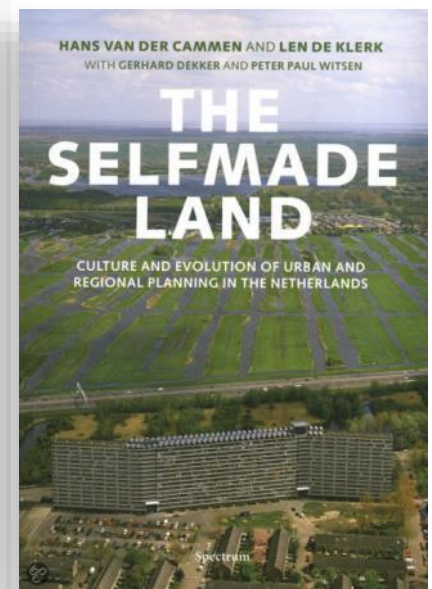
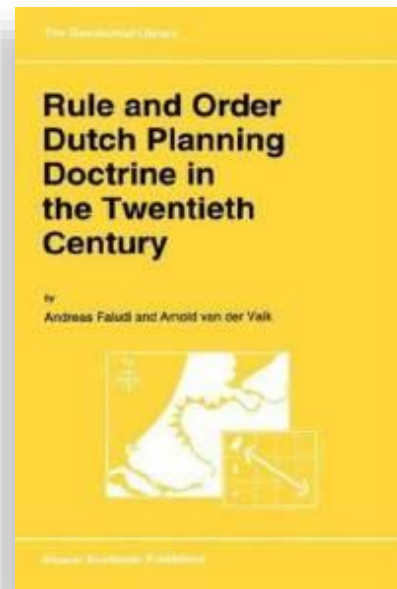
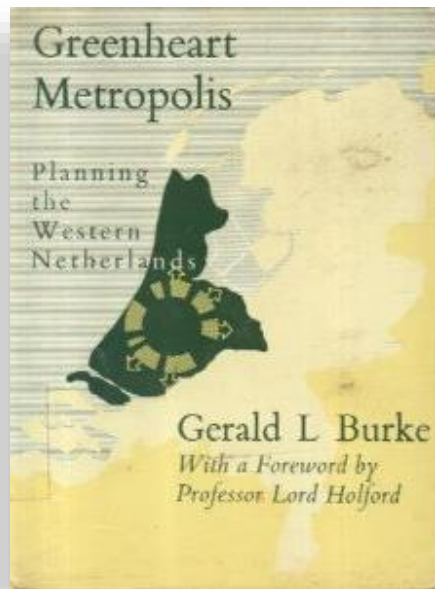
- Dutch national spatial planning in a nutshell
  - Coordination at core
  - Rule of law vs. flexibility
  - Controlling urban development
  
- Shifting periods, problems and solutions
  - Regulatory planning (1945-1990)
  - Developmental planning (1990-2000)
  - Decentralized planning (2000-2020)
  - Integrated planning (2020+)

Prelude

**Order and planning**

## Dutch planning world famous

- Since 1960s Dutch national planning lauded by international scholars





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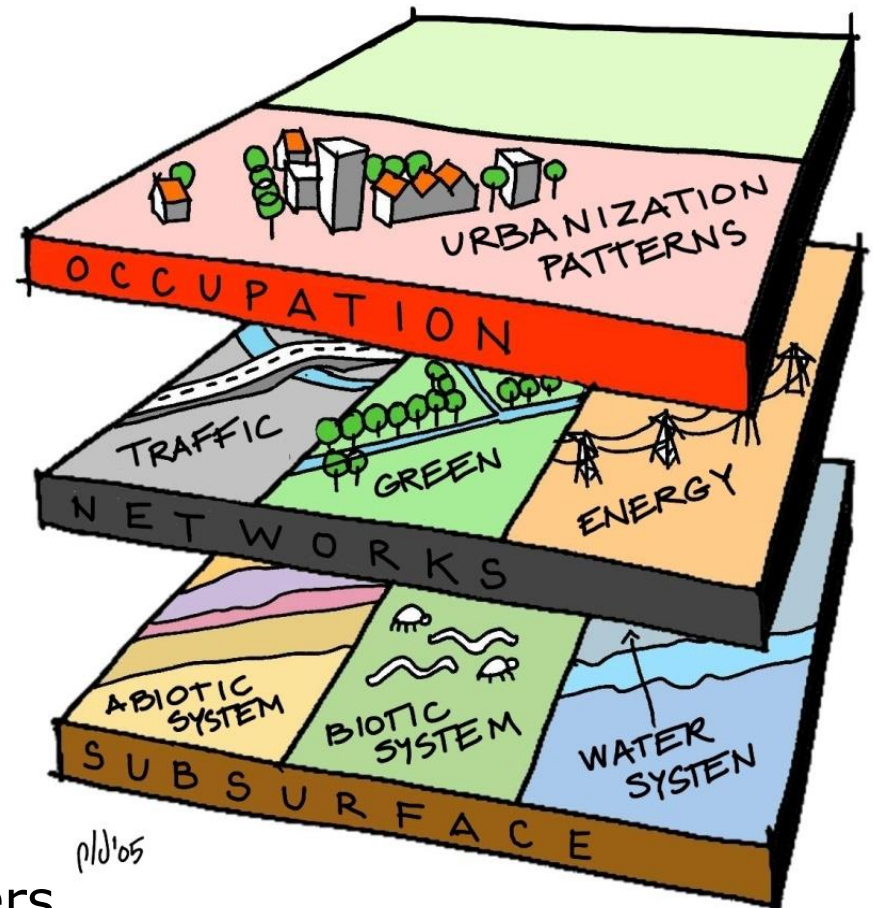




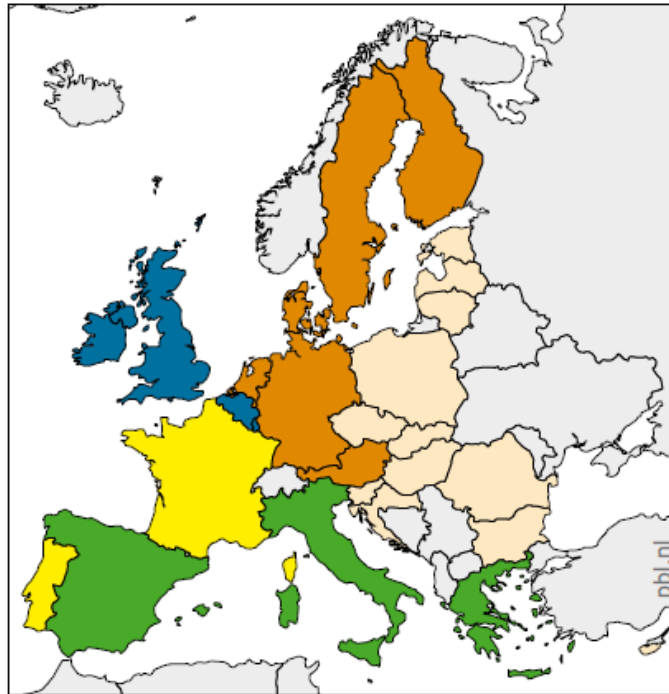
*“Ruimtelijke ordening”*  
means literally  
“ordering of space”

# Characteristics of Dutch spatial planning

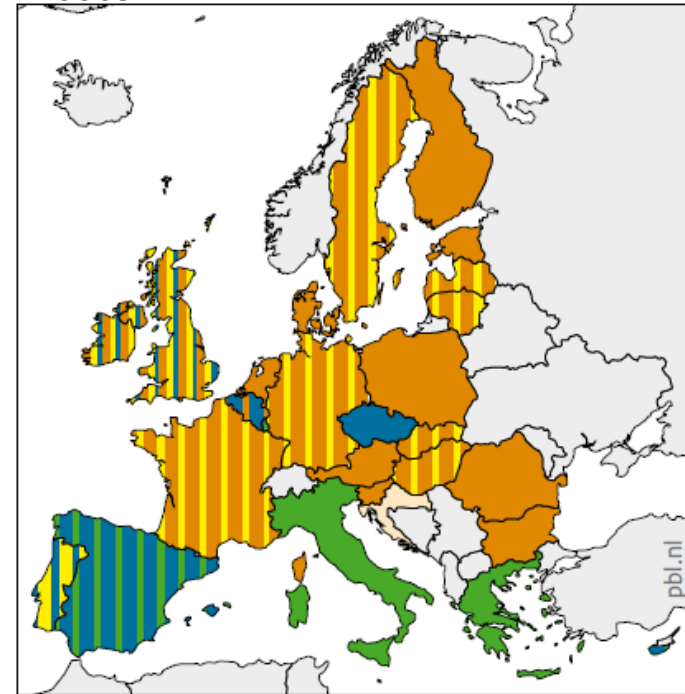
- **Coordination** is key
- Multi level governance
- Integrates sectors such as housing, water, transport, agriculture and heritage
- Uses urban design as a tool
- and participation of stakeholders







1990s



2000s



-  Comprehensive integrated approach
-  Land use planning
-  Regional economic approach
-  Urbanism tradition



Part I: 1945-1970

**Rise of regulatory  
National Planning**



Rotterdam 1946

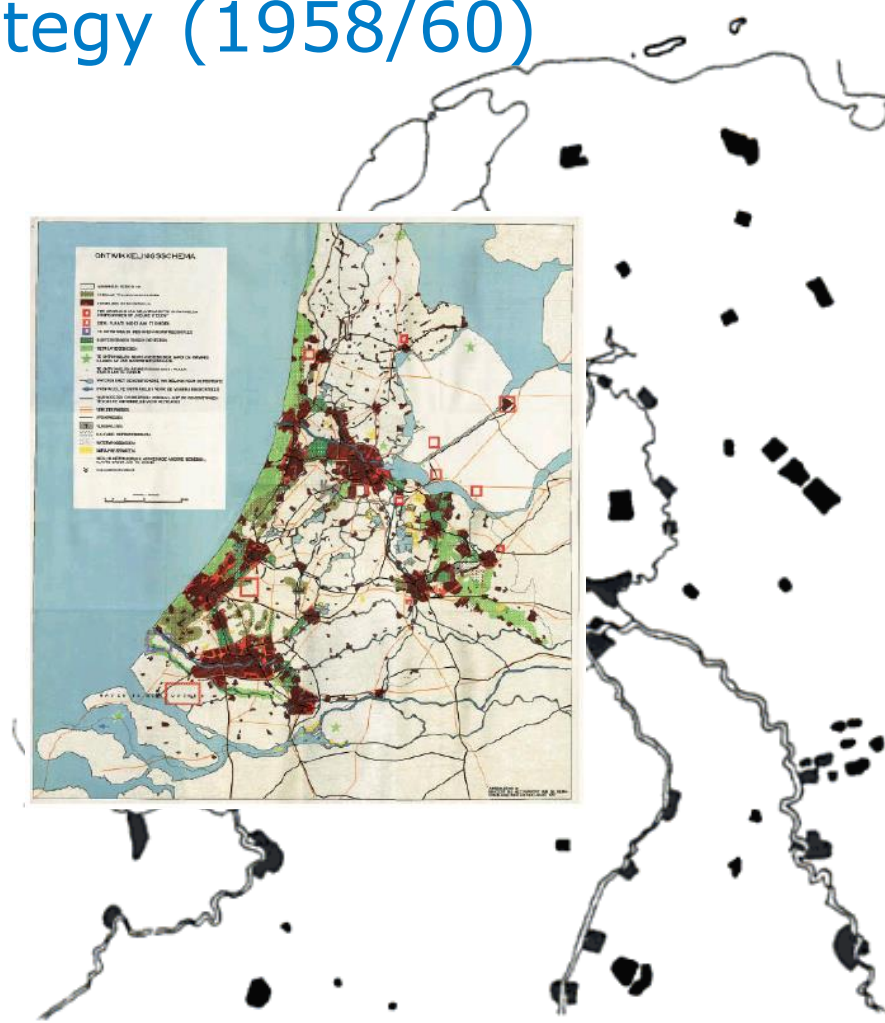
## First National Spatial Strategy (1958/60)

- Context
  - Postwar reconstruction
  - Housing shortage
  - Fear for a 'sea of houses'
- Principle
  - Deconcentration to relieve pressure in the West



# First National Spatial Strategy (1958/60)

- Context
  - Postwar reconstruction
  - Housing shortage
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- Principle
  - Deconcentration to relieve pressure in the West



Groenoord  
Alphen aan den Rijn, South Holland  
Street View - Oct 2009



A.J. Ernststraat  
Amsterdam, North Holland  
Street View - May 2016





**Ganges**  
Amstelveen, North Holland  
Street View - May 2014



**Lodewijk van Deysselstraat**  
Amsterdam, North Holland  
Street View - Apr 2016

Farmanleaan  
Amstelveen, North Holland

Street View - May 2016



Oosterlengte  
Amsterdam, North Holland  
Street View - Jun 2008



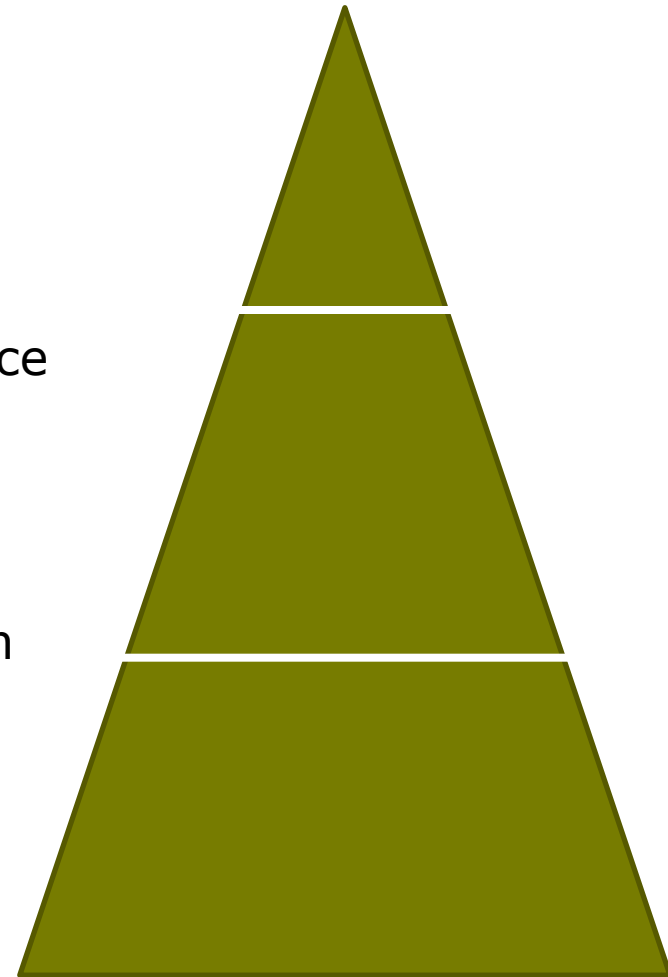
Eindhoven, North Brabant  
Street View - Aug 2015





# Spatial Planning System

- 1965: Spatial Planning Act
  - Established 3-tier planning system
  - No development without a permit
  - No permit without zoning plan conformance
- Hierarchy of plans
  - National strategy: principles / subsidies
  - Provincial plan: used to approve local plan
  - Local plan: **legally binding**
  - **Top-down directives**



# Green Heart / Buffer Zones

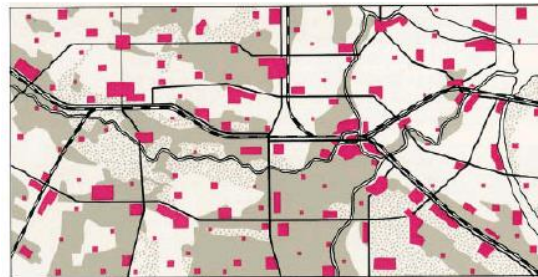


# Second National Spatial Strategy (1966)

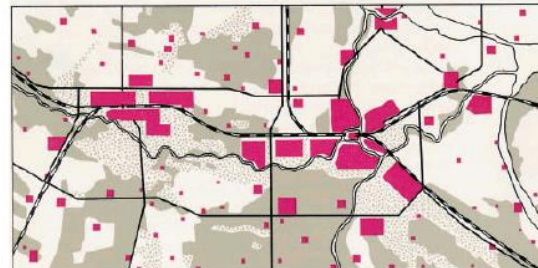
Concentration



Diffusion



Polycentricity

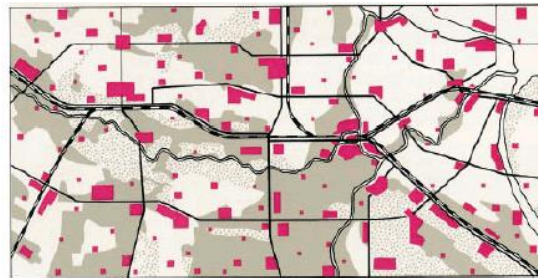


## Second National Spatial Strategy (1966)

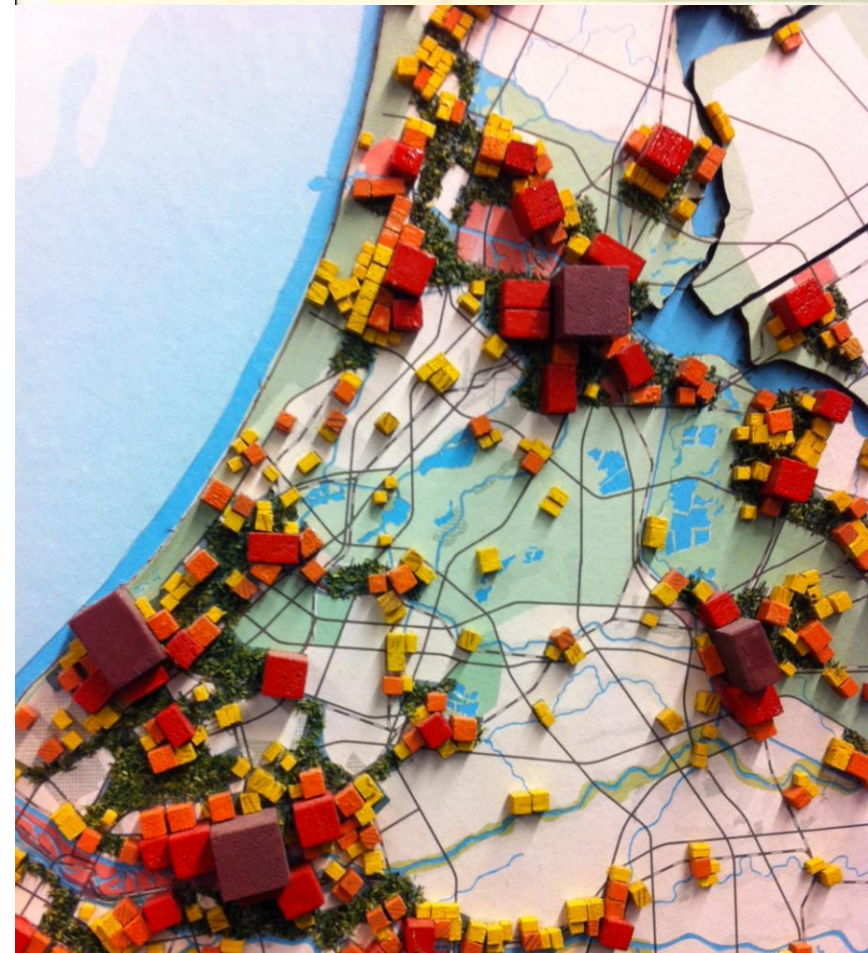
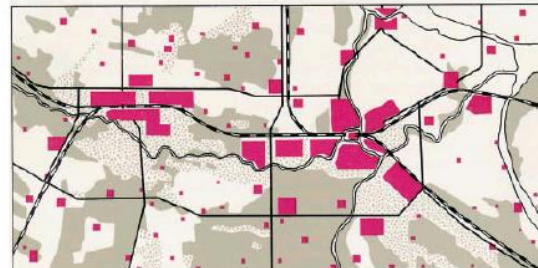
Concentration



Diffusion



Polycentricity





Color = density (15 - 60 homes/ha)

## Retail: restrictive out-of-town policy

- 1970s: restrictive policy forbids all retail outside existing centers, except for cars, boats, garden centers, etc.



Top-down national  
policy largely  
successful

1) supported by  
provinces

2) supported by  
retailers



## Suburban shopping mall

City center shopping out-of-town

US origins and global success





## Hypermarket

Grocery shopping out-of-town

French origins, global phenomenon



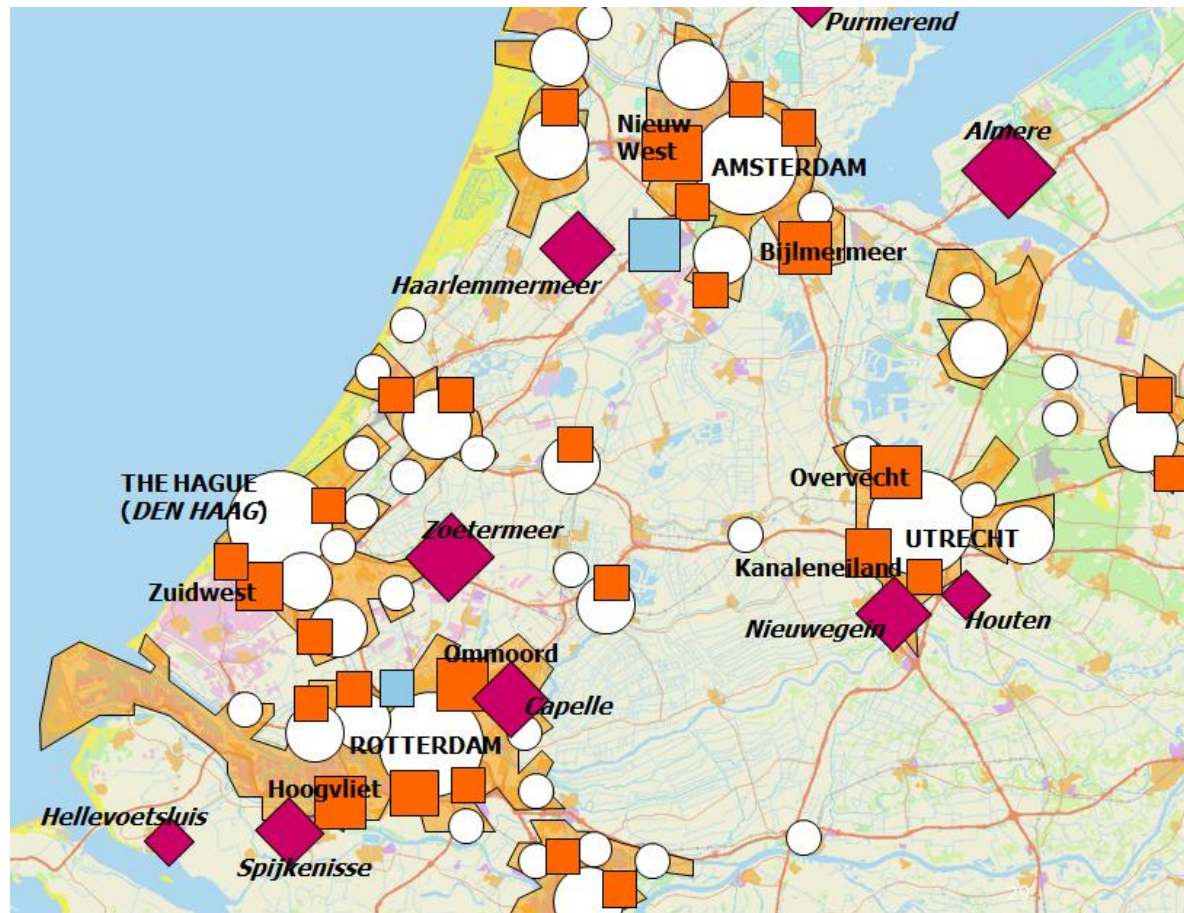


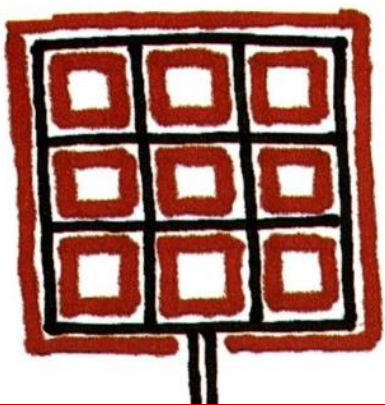
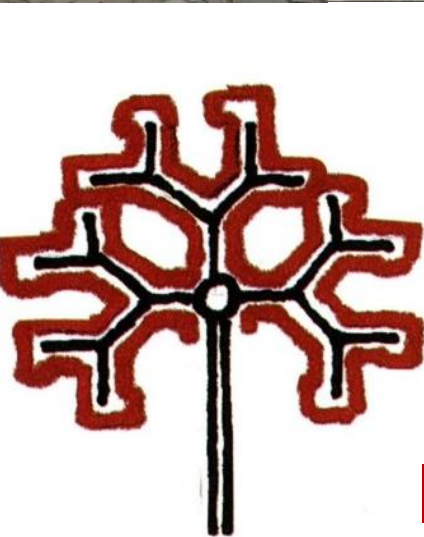
Part II: 1970-2000

**From regulatory  
to development  
planning**

## Third National Spatial Strategy (1970-80s)

- Regulatory planning effective to restrict but not to promote urban development
- Implementation using subsidies





**Human-scale planning**

eethuis  
bodrum  
döner & türkse pizza

eethuis  
bodrum  
Döner  
Türkse Pizza

ROTI TODAY  
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EETHUIS BODRUM TÜRKSE PIZZA / DÖNER / GRILL

Indobum





**Nieuwegein**



Nieuwegein



**Nieuwegein**

## Urban renewal and growth centers

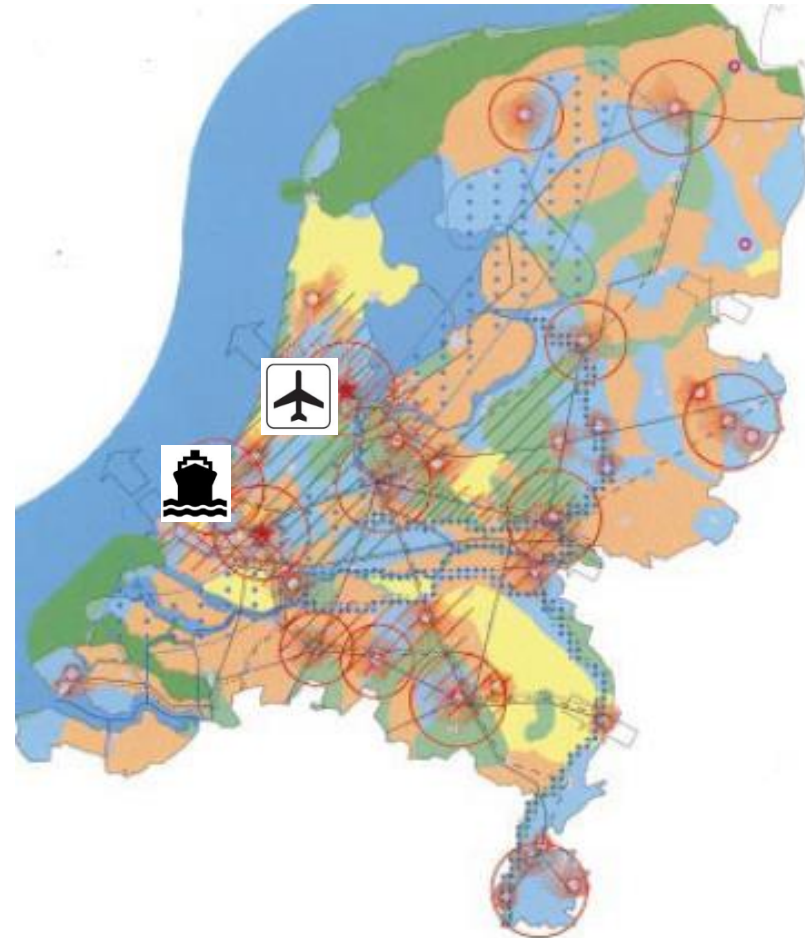
- Advantages for baby-boomers: child friendly design, good amenities, etc.
- Too successful: cities depleted of middle class population, commuting traffic jams





## Fourth National Spatial Strategy (1988-91)

- Economy first: Dutch cities need to be able to compete in a single European market
- Mainport policy: improve accessibility of Schiphol Airport and Port of Rotterdam
- Key projects: 30% national government contribution (usually stations)





**Amsterdam Eastern Docklands**



**Rotterdam, Wilhelminapier**

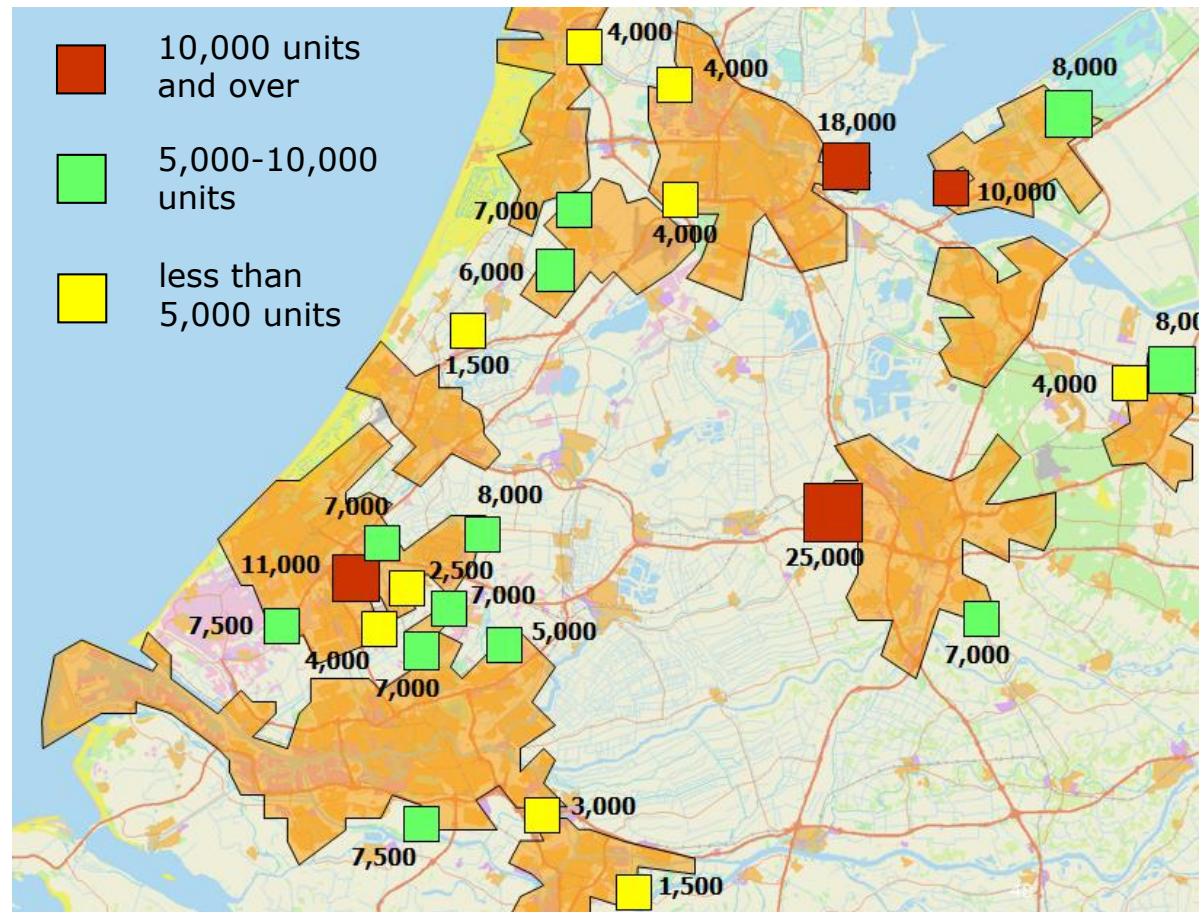


The Hague, station area

# Fourth National Spatial Strategy Extra (1991-00)

## VINEX-areas

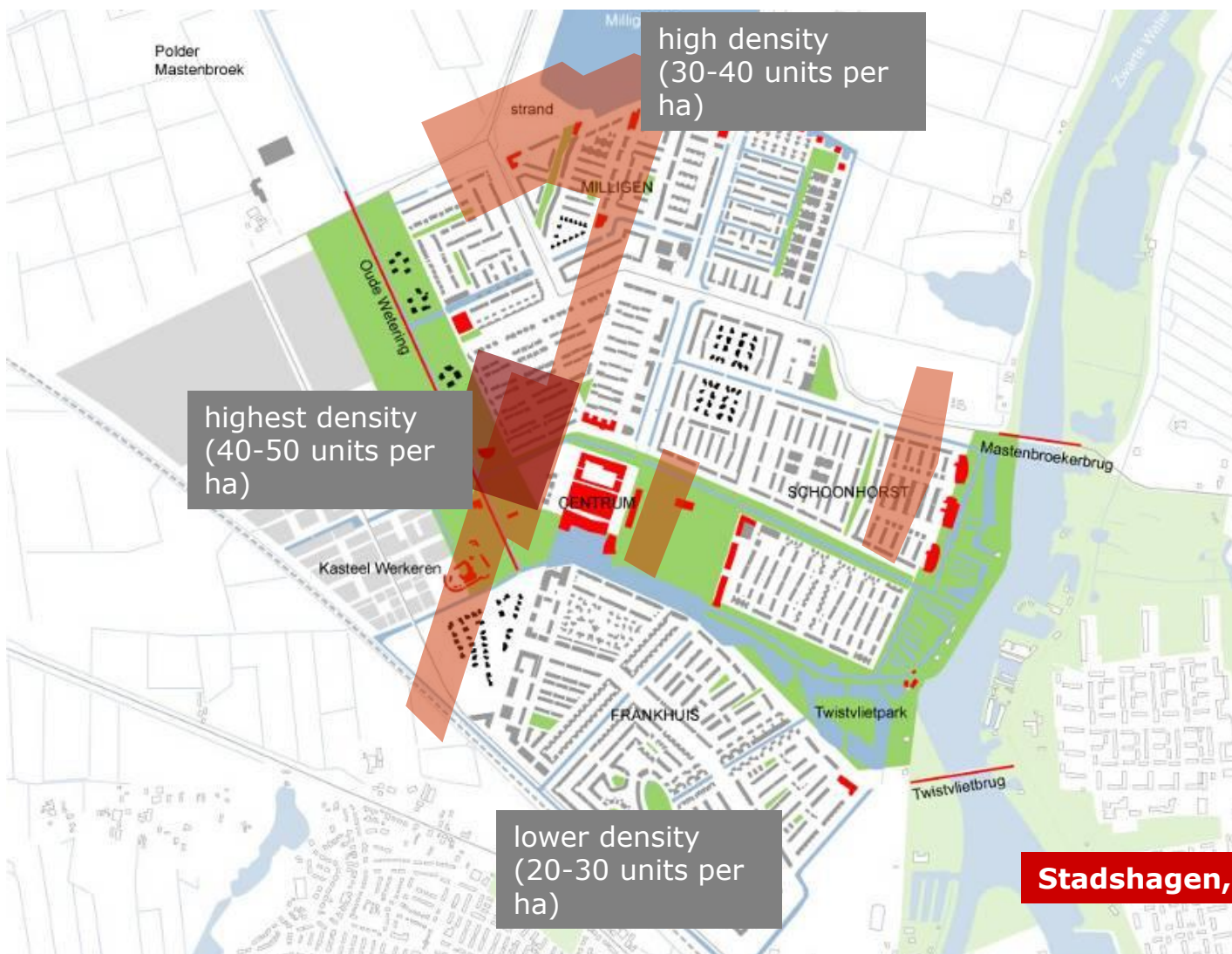
- focus on quality (owner-occupied) in and at edge of city
- Subsidies from national government
- 30% affordable, density 30-50 h/ha



An aerial photograph of a residential neighborhood in Ypenburg, The Hague. The houses are primarily two-story brick buildings with gabled roofs, many featuring dormer windows. The houses are arranged in a grid-like pattern with green lawns and small trees between them. A red banner with the word 'Vinex' is overlaid in the top left corner, and another red banner with the text 'Ypenburg, The Hague' is overlaid in the bottom right corner. The number '38' is visible in the bottom right corner of the image area.

# Vinex

Ypenburg, The Hague



**Stadshagen, Zwolle**



Stadshagen, Zwolle

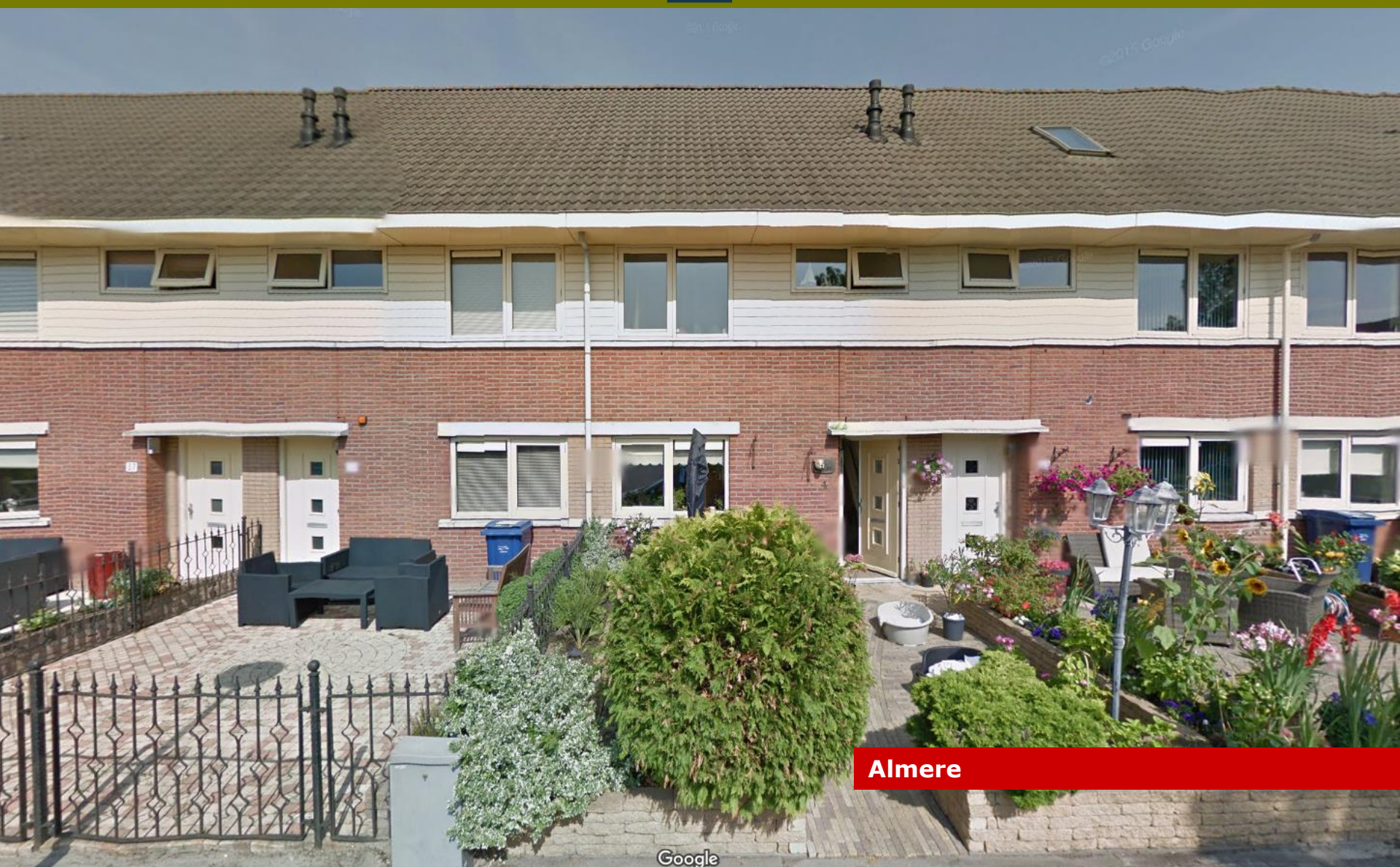




**Almere modernism**



**Postmodernism and Retro in Houten**



**Almere**



Almere



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**Almere**



**IJburg, Amsterdam & Ypenburg, The Hague**

## Fourth National Spatial Strategy Extra (1991-00)

- Ecological network with links between habitats “green infrastructure”
- Policy = protection through planning and by purchasing land for nature parks and subsidies for management
- Became a European-level policy (Natura 2000)







Part III: 2000-2018

**Decentralization of  
national planning**

## “Fifth” National Spatial Strategy

- Fifth NSP (1999) had emphasis on regulatory planning
- Elections in 2002: right-wing victory, new direction
  - Free-market orientation
  - Less rules and subsidies
- New NSP in 2004
  - “Room for development”
  - “Decentralize when possible”



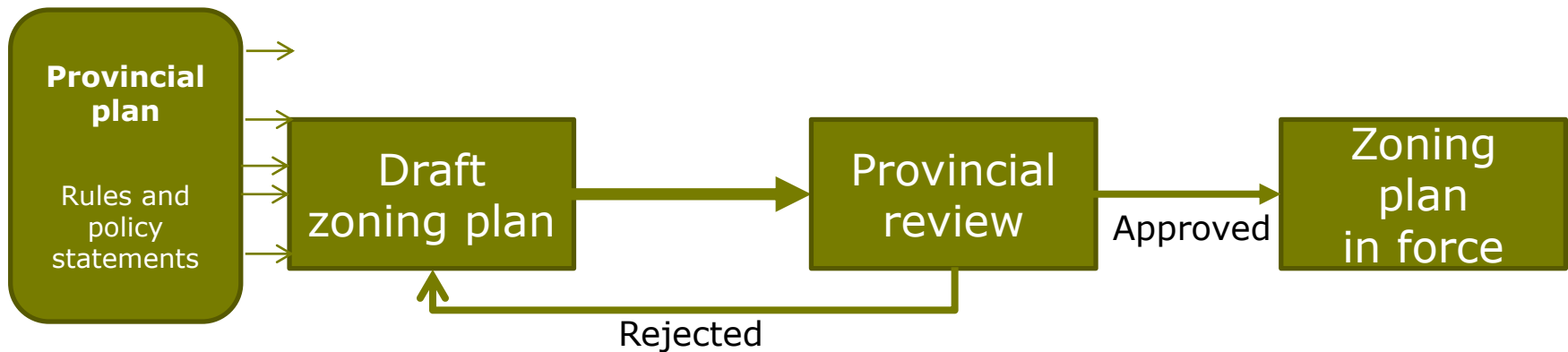


## Overhaul of planning system

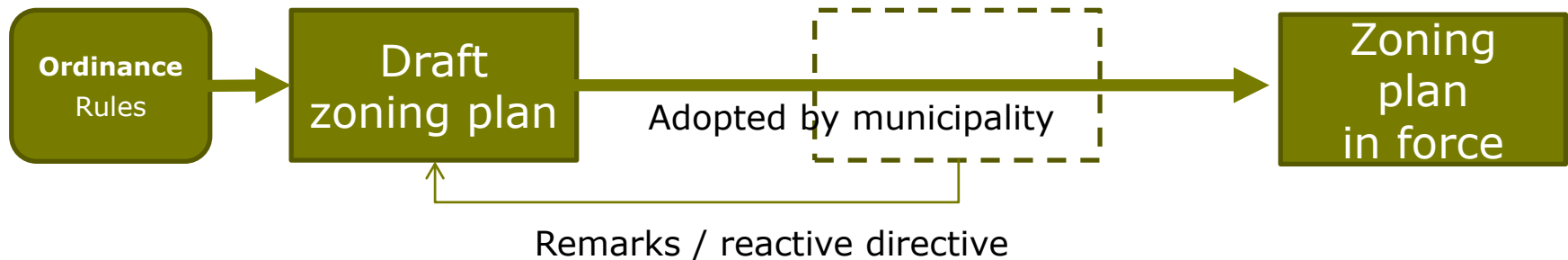
- Criticisms of planning system
  - Passive, not development oriented
  - Not plan-led (anymore): article 19
  - Unclear legality/binding nature of plans
  
- 2008 Spatial Planning Act
  1. Expediting procedures (shortening time limits local plans, abolition of provincial reviews)
  2. Encouraging proactive developmental planning (focus on 'own' interests and delegating rest; being selective)
  3. Simplifying the instrument toolkit (separating policy from law, the same instrument at every level of government)

## Faster procedures: provincial review abolished

1962 WRO



2008 Wro



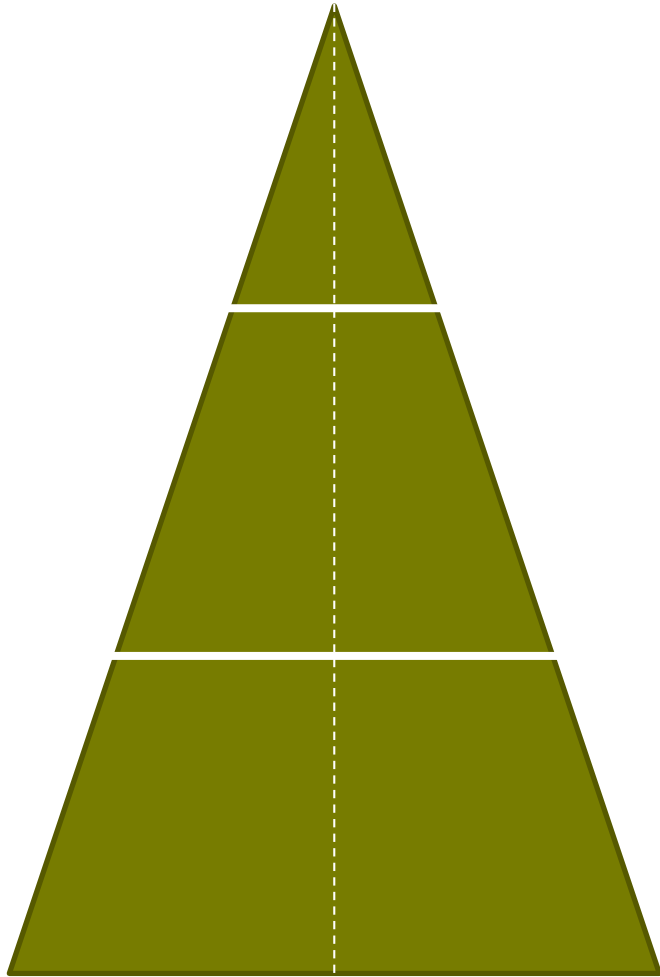
# Separation of **policy** and **law**

## 1962 WRO

- National government
  - National policy strategy
  - Main planning decision
  - Directive, NIMBY, infrastructure
- Province
  - Both vision and policy
  - Plan assessment
- Municipality
  - Structure vision
  - Zoning plan

## 2008 Wro

- National government
  - Structure vision
  - General rules for plans
  - Zoning plan
- Province
  - Structure vision
  - General rules for plans
  - Zoning plan
- Municipality
  - Structure vision
  - Zoning plan



## 2008 Wro

- National government
  - Structure vision
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  - Zoning plan
  
- Province
  - Structure vision
  - General rules for plans
  - Zoning plan
  
- Municipality
  - Structure vision
  - Zoning plan

## Current national policy

- National Policy Strategy for Infrastructure and Planning (2012)
  - Decentralization intensified: provinces should now play main planning role
  - Most national urbanization policy abolished
    - › Green Heart
    - › Buffer Zones
    - › Retail policy
    - › Densification policy
    - › Housing locations
  - Enforcement/control of policy abolished





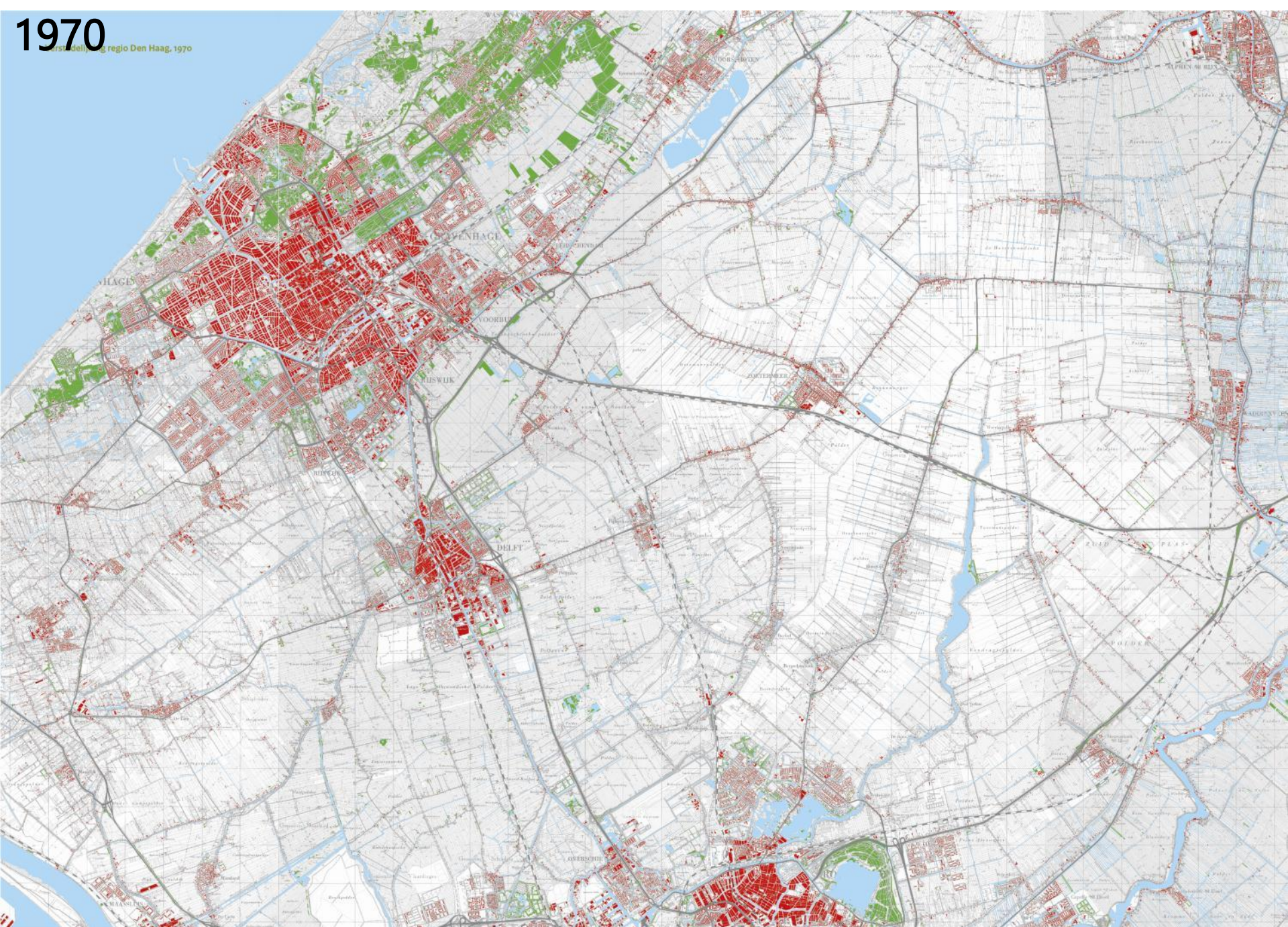
**Private initiatives**  
Self-build in NL

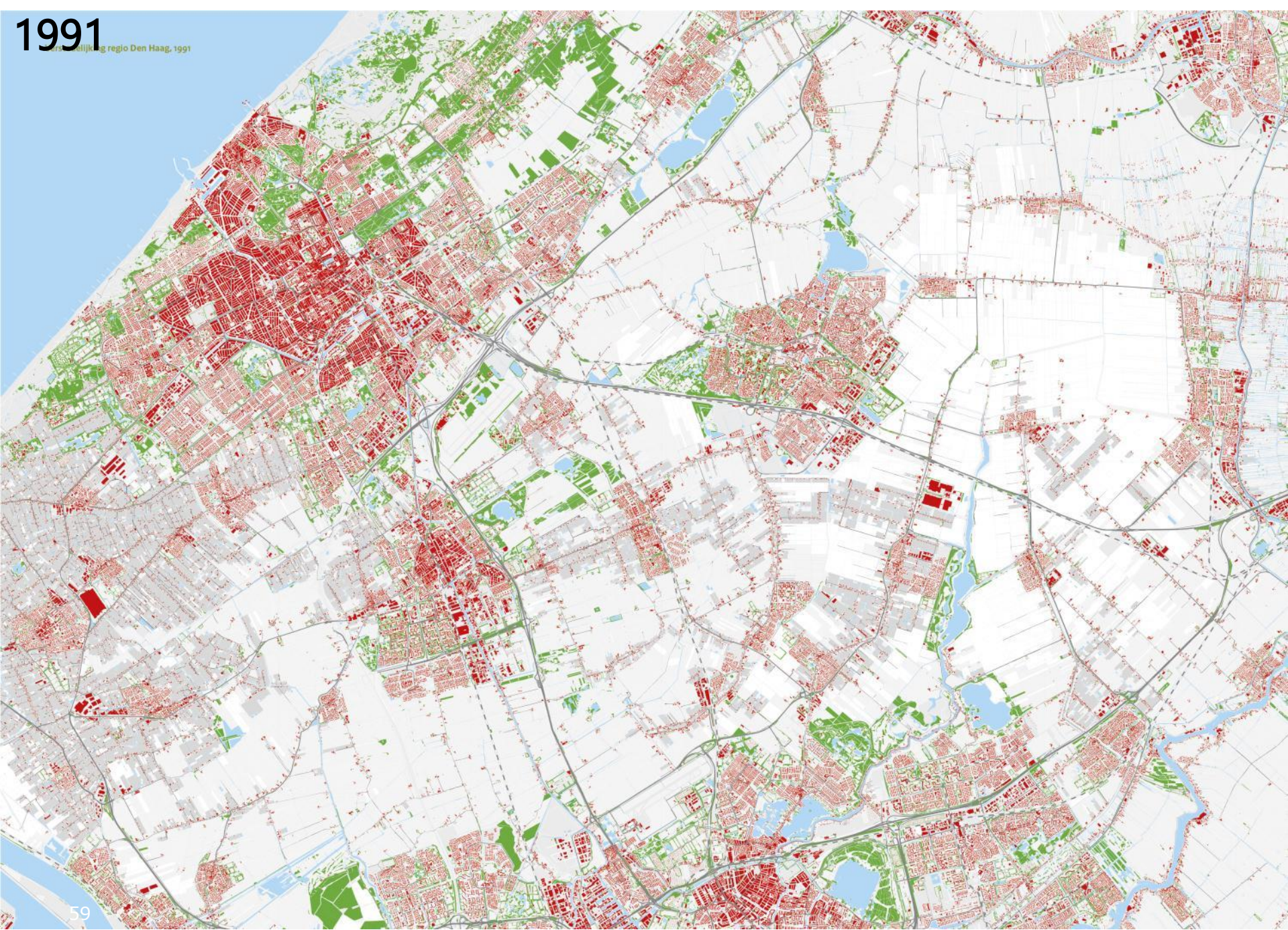




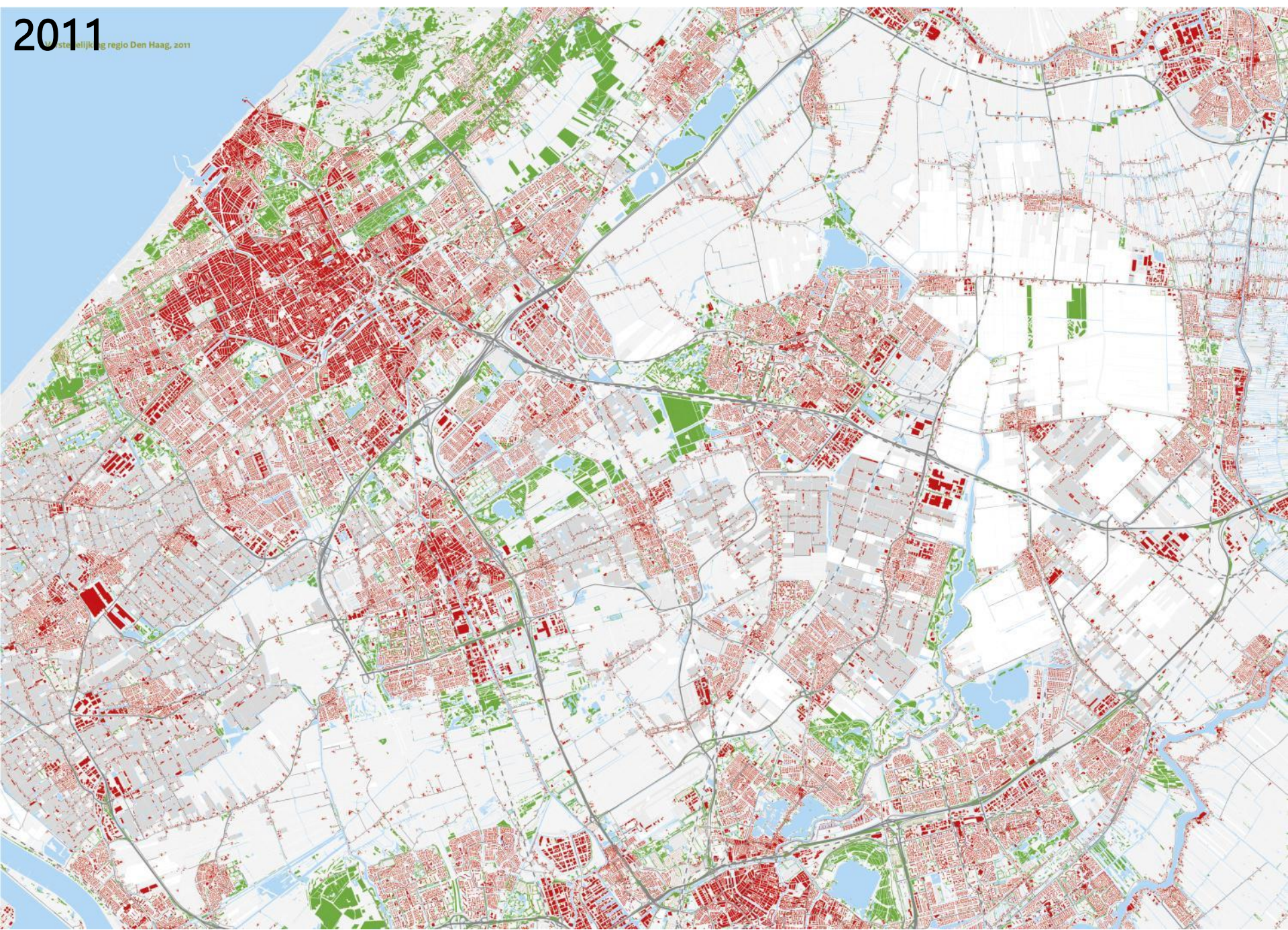
**Private initiatives**  
Bungalowpark in NL

1970  
Eerste deling van regio Den Haag, 1970

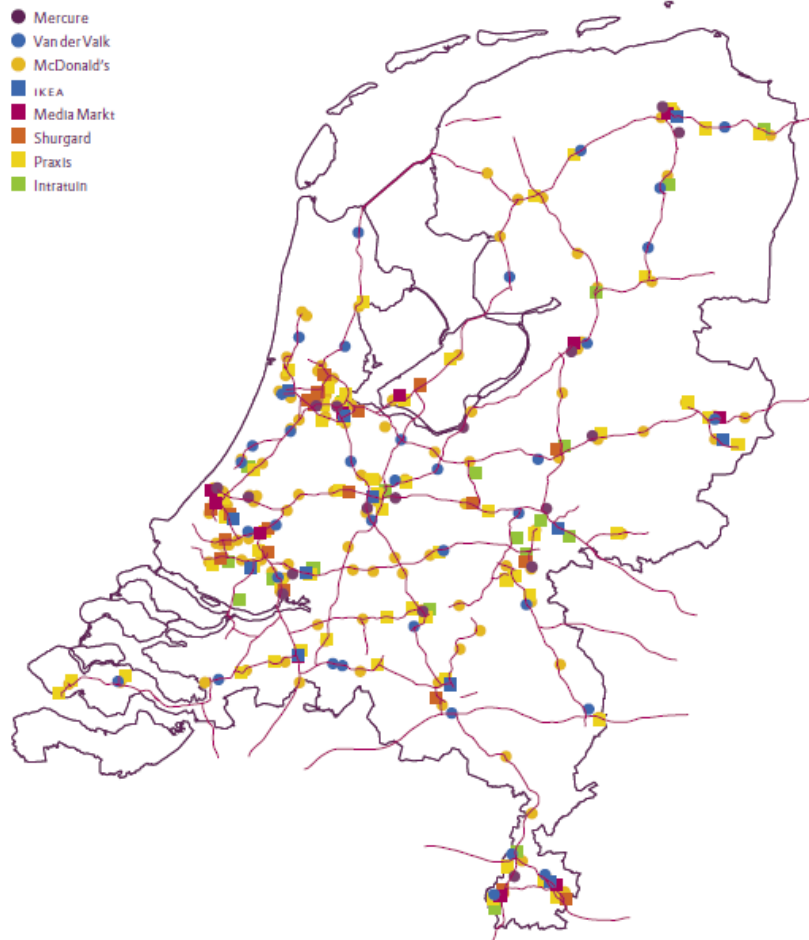




2011  
Stedelijk gebied regio Den Haag, 2011



# Growth of retail and leisure at highways

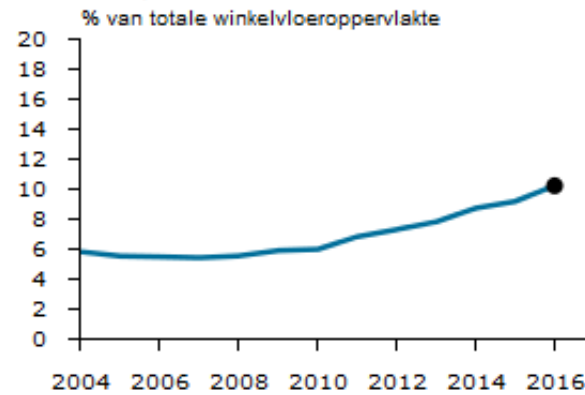


# Rising retail vacancy

2016



Nederland, 2004 - 2016



% van totale winkelvloeroppervlakte

- 0 - 5
- 5 - 10
- 10 - 15
- 15 - 20
- Meer dan 20
- Geen winkels

# Growth of office/industrial at highways

- In ontwikkeling
- Planfase
- Op papier

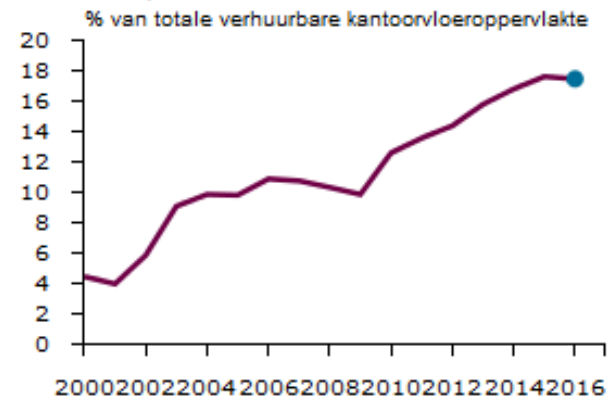


# Rising office vacancy

2016



Nederland, 2000 - 2016

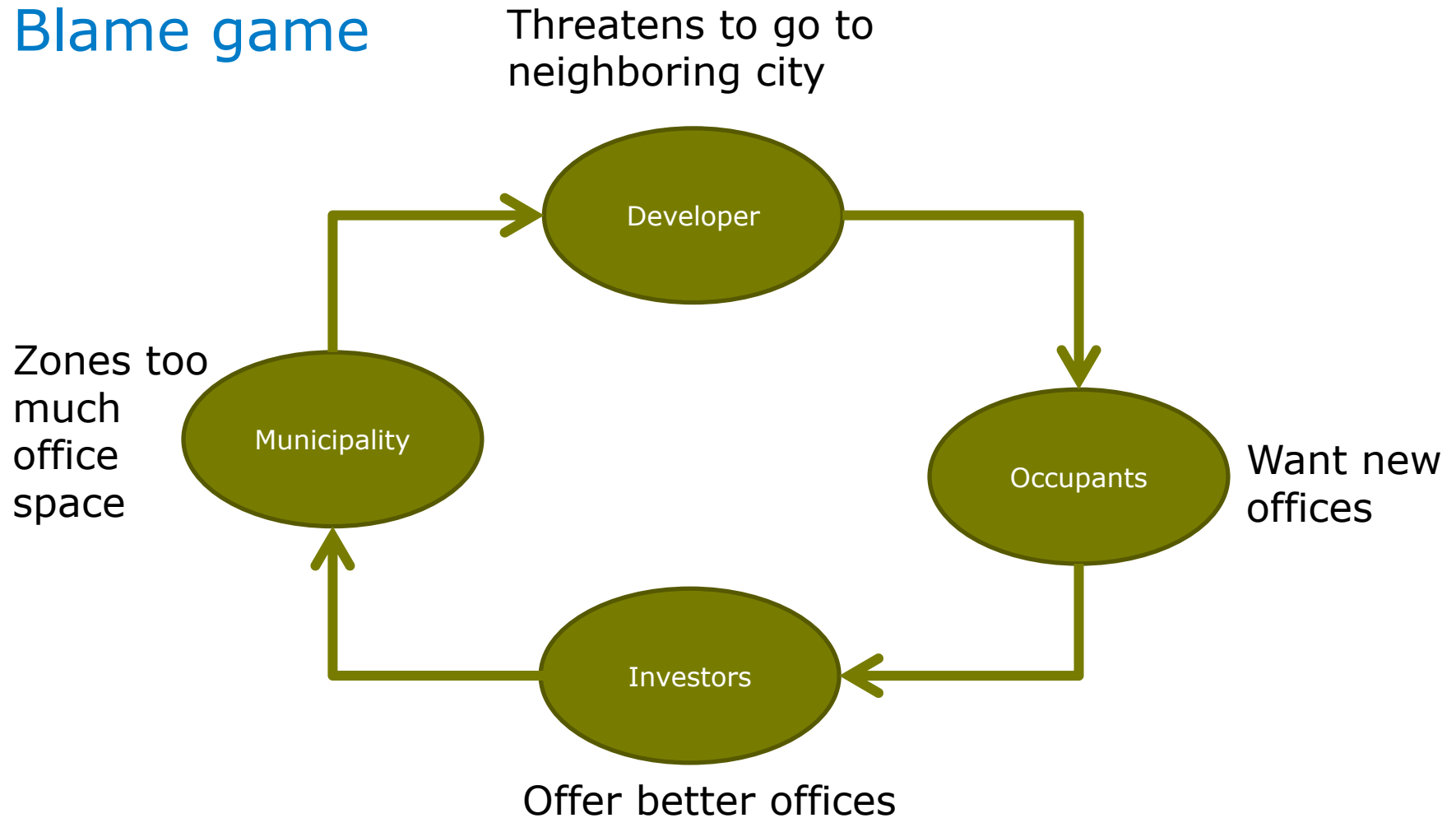


% van totale verhuurbare  
kantoorvloeroppervlakte

- 0 - 5
- 5 - 10
- 10 - 15
- 15 - 20
- Meer dan 20
- Geen kantoren



## Blame game

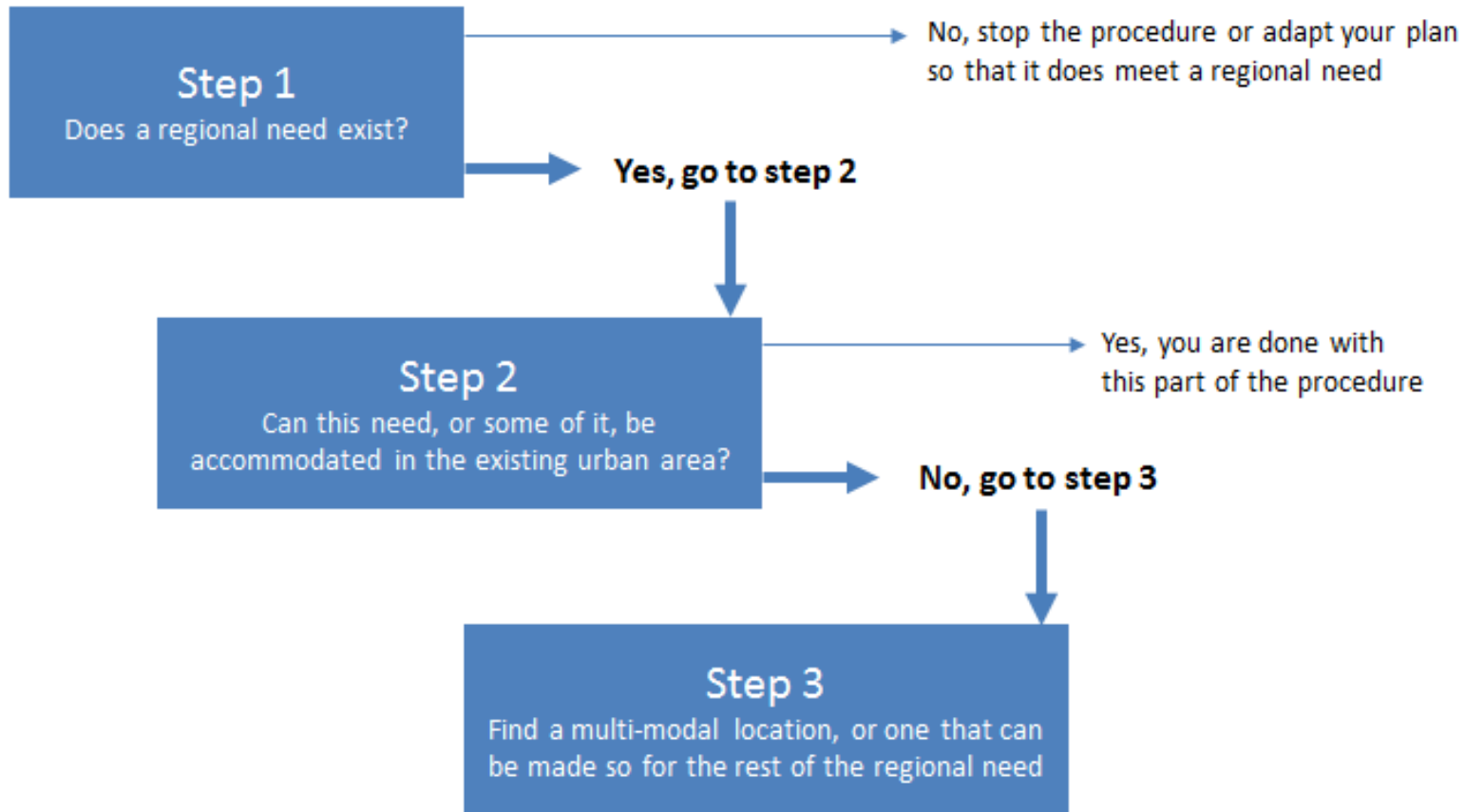


## Breaking the cycle

- Problem: too much at the wrong sites
  - “blame game” creates oversupply
  - development model favors greenfields
- Solution: not more top-down regulatory planning...
- but a 3-step procedure for plans that allow new urbanization to demonstrate that the development is sustainable (the ladder)



# Sustainable urbanization procedure



## Sustainable urbanization procedure

- Procedural, not substantive
- Enforcement
  - Citizens can challenge through the courts if directly affected
- Results
  - By 2014, only 8% applied the rule fully, but court has struck down plans since
  - By 2018, application improved dramatically
  - Side effects (detailed zoning, research burden)
  - A proposal made to relax requirement in 2017



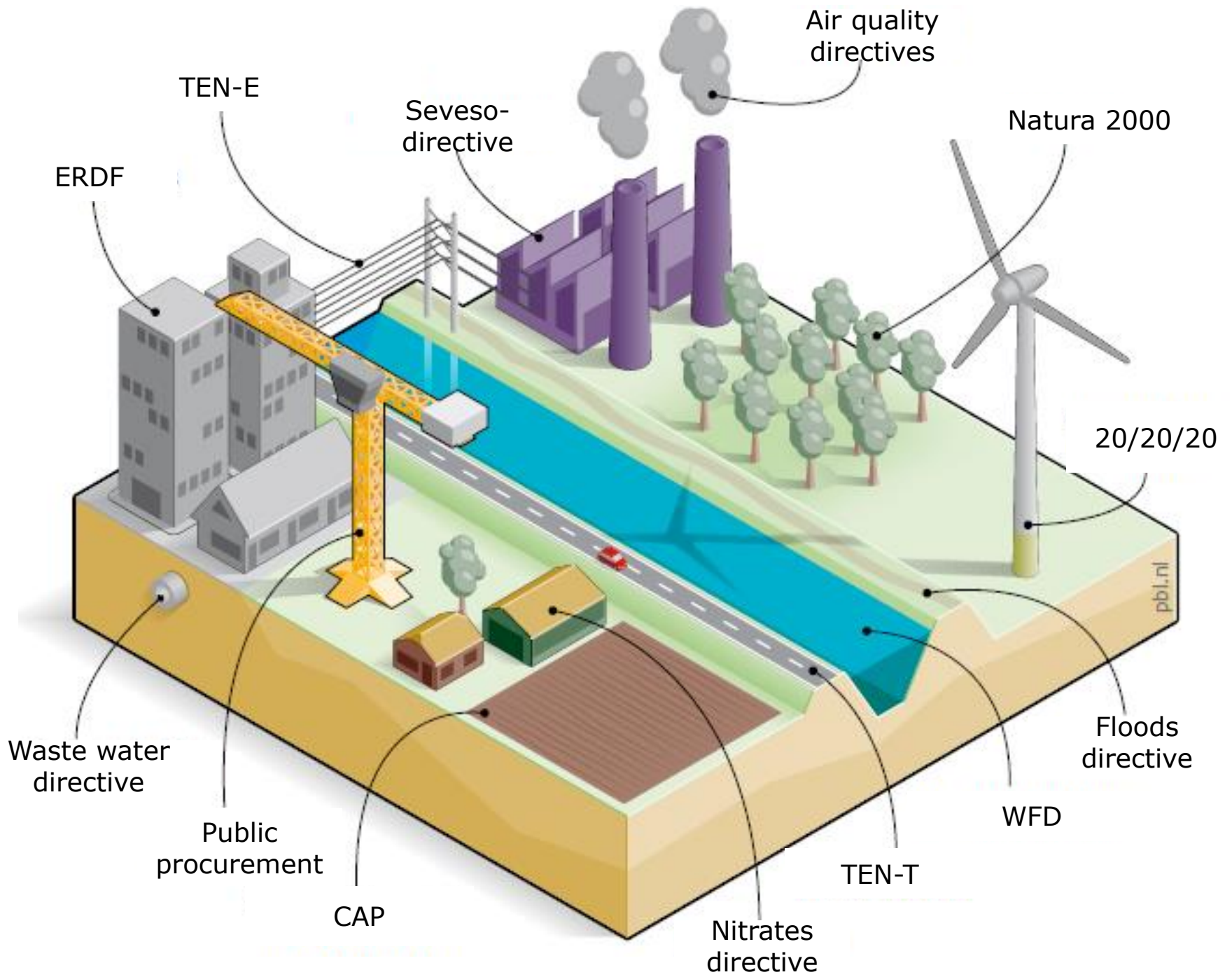


# In conclusion

Dutch national planning moved  
from regulatory to developmental  
to decentralized.

...is Dutch planning still a 'comprehensive integrated approach'?

Part IV: 2020+  
**Integration and  
new challenges**



## Solution: increase flexibility

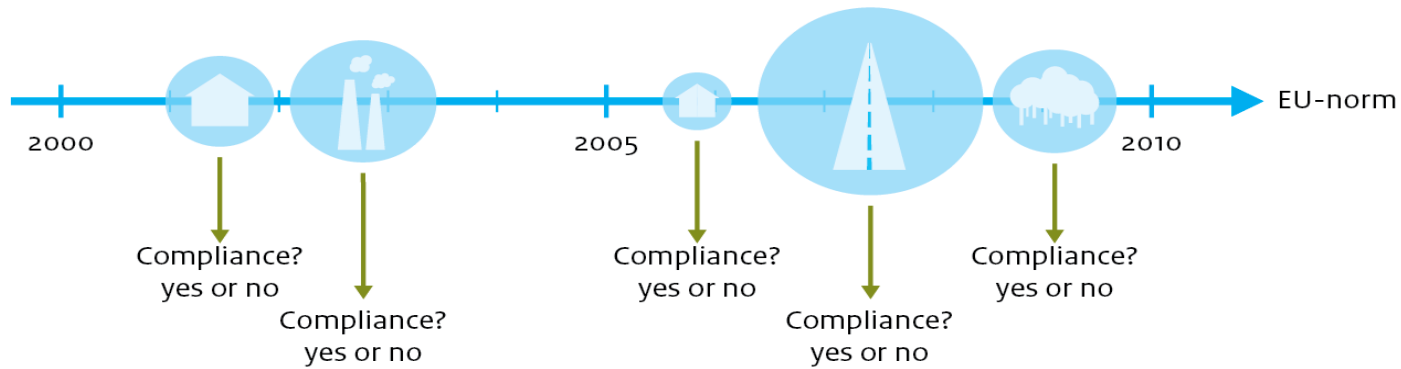
1. Include other considerations (e.g. economic impact)
2. Compensation: improve quality somewhere else
3. Programme: make a plan to meet EU norm with enough margin to allow for spatial development



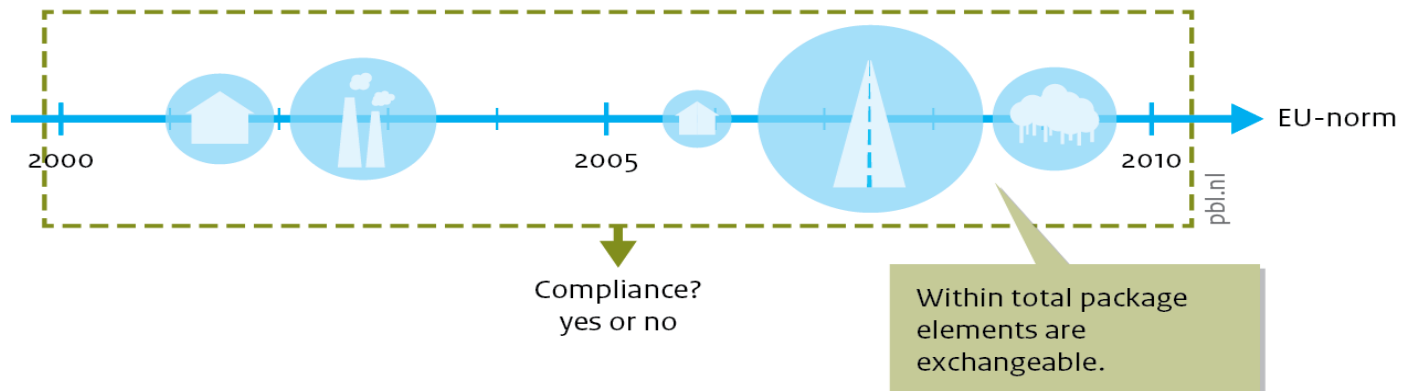


# Programmatic approach

Former situation



Programmatic approach





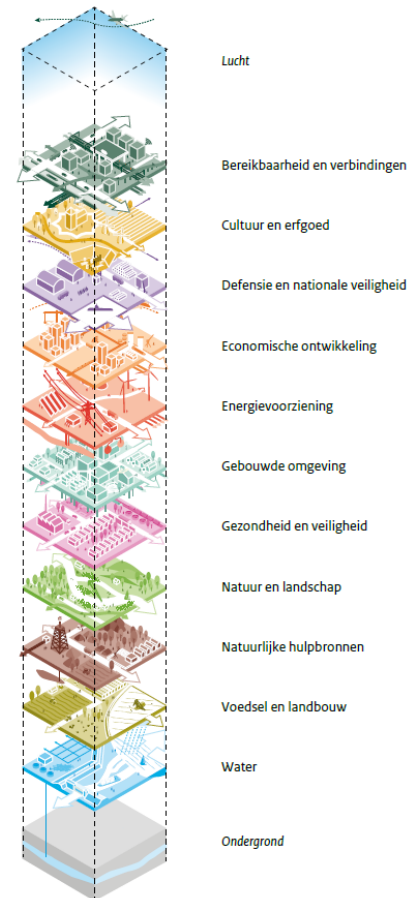
# Environment and Planning Act (2021)

- **Integration of environmental, water and planning law**
  - Bundles 26 acts into one: 'easier and better'
  - Integration (*samenhang*) is key
- **Two (conflicting) principles: protection *and* development**
- **EU system taken as a point of departure**
  - Programme added as a planning instrument
  - Other instruments have different names, but seem the same



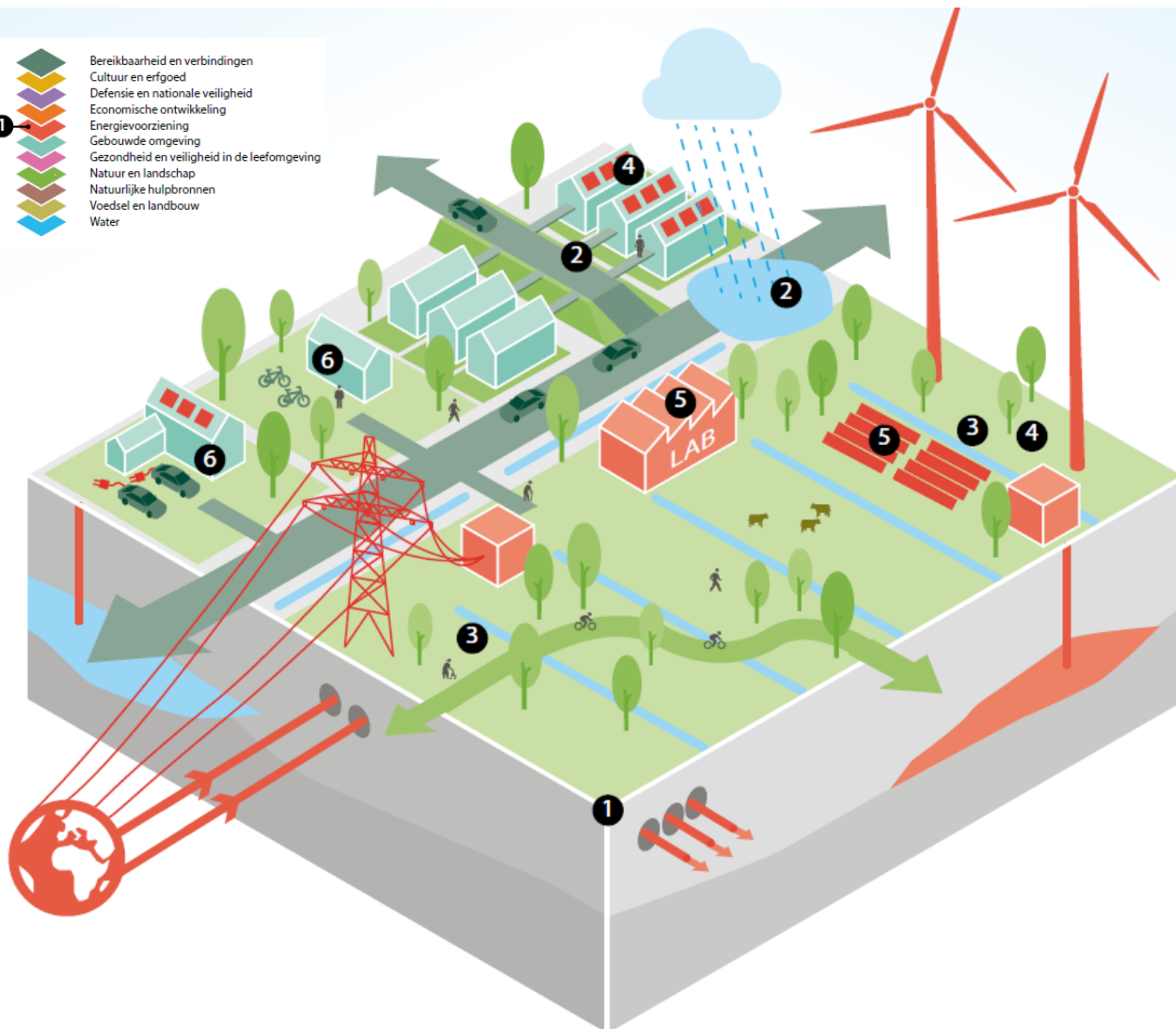
# Environment and Planning Vision (2019)

- **Four long-term environmental/spatial challenges**
  - Greening the economy
  - Energy transition
  - Livable cities
  - Landscape
- **Need a national approach**
  - Coordination across sectors needed
  - Coordination between levels needed
- **Formulation of 'national interests'**
  - Basis for deployment of legal/financial instruments

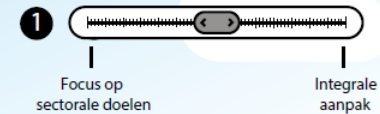




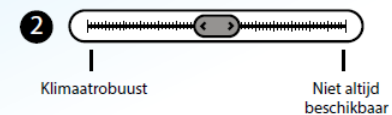
- 1 Berekbaarheid en verbindingen
- 2 Cultuur en erfgoed
- 3 Defensie en nationale veiligheid
- 4 Economische ontwikkeling
- 5 Energievoorziening
- 6 Gebouwde omgeving
- 7 Gezondheid en veiligheid in de leefomgeving
- 8 Natuur en landschap
- 9 Natuurlijke hulpbronnen
- 10 Voedsel en landbouw
- 11 Water



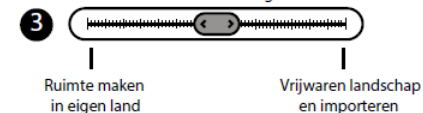
Omgaan met klimaatverandering:



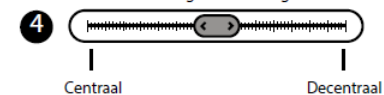
Vitale infrastructuur:



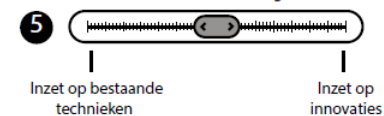
Duurzame energie:



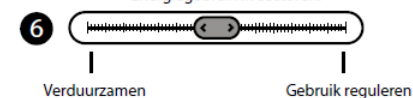
Energievoorziening:



Vaart maken met de energietransitie:



Energiegebruik in sectoren:





# Conclusions

- **Spatial planning is a reflection of the times**
  - Postwar era needed strong planning to manage growth (quantity)
  - Era of affluence/globalization required competitiveness (quality)
  - Era of stabilization / decline reduces need for intervention (trust)
  - New challenges seem to demand coordination (mobilization)
  
- **Spatial planning is coordination**
  - Balancing/integrating sectoral claims
  - Mediating between government levels
  - Weighing rule of law against flexibility

***Thank You!***