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The Smallest City- Learning for Curitiba

In the video, [the Smallest city- Learning for Curitiba](#), Curitiba was described as a “smart city” and a model city for the 21st century. Curitiba is a very progressive city, the movement starting with Jaime Lerner, focusing on everyone being involved in the solution to the challenges the city faces. Lerner described Curitiba, as “ a city meant for encounter,” and designed the city around that concept. All of the city programs are somehow linked together encouraging the unity of the city. The complex color coded bus system, encourages meeting of new people and being engaged, by streamlining the transportation crisis most other cities face. The bus stops are nodes of development, each stop is thriving with business, police stations, markets, restaurants, and other places of economic interest. These highly developed areas allows Curitiba to build more open space in the city for people to gather and recreate. Flower street is a pedestrian hub, and is the heart of the shopping district. At first it was met with opposition and anger, but now is a vital part of the economy of Curitiba.

Curitiba has values of constant improvement and flexibility. They are very open minded to new ideas and improvements and are eager to put them in practice. This is not a value we see in American government. Brazil believes, it better to not have all of the answers be for staring and work on improving the city's potential not just the problems. America is very different in its thinking. America is very methodical and preplanned, weighing all of the risks and rewards before changing even the slightest thing. There is

a long drawn out process of permits and studies needed to construct or improve almost anything. This strict way of governing improvements, hinders many potentially beneficial ideas and projects from coming to fruition. In America, we focus too much of fixing the existing problems and lack the focus on improving and expanding the potential we have.

Curitiba is a very community based city, holding the belief that everyone is part of the solution very close to it heart. The city feels that everyone needs to feel welcomed and a part of the city to be a productive ascet. The city will survey its residents about their history, whether it be their family history, the history of the street they live on or the history of the building they live in or around. The city publishes about one hundred of these history bulletins a year, and will use them as an announcement for related events, from family reunions to street fairs and other community activities. This sort of community involvement, is lacking in America. We seem to have nothing of the sort here in the states and stay to ourselves more often than not. We are losing out on a potential revival if we could just open our minds and become more involved with each other and our community.

Education is also a pillar in the values of Curitiba. Based off of the American libraries built by Carnegie, Curitiba has a neighborhood library almost in every part of the city. The main difference is that the library of Curitiba are designed as a lighthouse, acting as a “beacon to learning.” The book selection is geared towards people in the neighborhood, for example a muslim neighborhood library would hold many books pertaining to islamic history, while another cultural neighborhood would hold more

books on their own specific history and heritage. American libraries hold a similar approach, but don't see the extensive use of the Curitiba libraries.

Another aspect of education is the conversion of unused busses into rolling classrooms. One bus may teach computer literacy, while another teaches sewing, and another teaches economics. They will frequent new neighborhoods each week and add to the community involvement and further education of the population. This is a concept not seen in America. We do hold education in a high regard, but most "extra learning" comes at a cost to the individual student. Night classes are available, as well as local education and history classes, but they are costly and mainly focused on the older generations.

Overall, Curitiba is on a great path to full community involvement, and America can benefit a lot by following their lead. From community programs, to the overall structure of the city, it is built around the community and their participation. The people are entrenched in every part of the city, and all programs are intertwined. This builds a strong and steady core for the city to grow and develop. America can learn so much by following the example laid out by Curitiba. With a strong community backing, almost anything is possible, and if you think it's not, just look at how far Curitiba has come in such a short time.