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Video 4 Summary/Discussion

In this video, Jamie Lerner, the mind behind Curitiba, discussed how to improve a city's green qualities and lower their carbon footprint. He explained his philosophy of improvements using the statement, "City is not a problem, it's a solution." He further extended the claim that is is a solution not only to the country, but a solution to climate change. He discussed his strategies through the characters in his book, including Vita the turtle, representing living and working together. Otto the automobile, represents the insatiable demand for more, and finally accordion the friendly bus, which provides the solution. All cities are unique, in shape and design and are all able to be significantly improved in three years, the key is working fast and being creative. Bogota was the first to follow Curitiba's green example, and now 83 cities in all have followed the example put forth from the mind of Jamie Lerner.

Many aspects combine to form a working green city, and transportation lies at the heart. Lerner proposed a simple solution to the effects of transportation, live close to where you work and work close to where you live. This is a simple concept, but it has huge impacts on the environment. Let's use New York City as an example, millions of people flood into the city every day just to work, but how many people live there? Not many, as a matter of fact people commute upwards of two hours one way! This means that people are driving four hours a day just to work. This all could be resolved if they lived where they worked! Of course this is not a fully logical solution because a city can

only house so many residents. Cars contribute over 50% of the carbon emissions in almost all cities across the world.

The other way to cut down on the carbon emissions put forth by our cars on the way to work is to utilize public transportation. A normal car can carry 6 passengers, but rarely carries more than one, while a public transportation vehicle can transport thousands a day, drastically cutting down on emissions. The style of public transportation in Curitiba is remarkably efficient, passengers pay before they board at terminals, and there's various styles of busses to accommodate a faster commute. Currently Rio is implementing a system much like the Curitiba bus stations, to accommodate more passengers efficiently on their subway system.

A key aspect to allow this system to work is the removal of competition between systems at certain locations. If there is one system doing a specific route, there is no need for competition, which would only hurt the environment. Combining the systems is the key, cooperation not competition allows everyone to benefit and the city to work more smoothly.

Recycling is another key to the environmentally friendliness of Curitiba. Curitiba has a separation rate of 70% higher than anyone else in the world of their garbage. Recycling is the driving force behind their health, but recycling is not only limited to bottle and cans. In fact one of the most remarkable aspects of their recycling program is the recycling of unused lands. They convert abandoned and unused quarries into beautiful and prosperous parks. The land is planted and converted into public lands which encourage nature into the lives of the city's residents. Nature has an intrinsic

value that can not have a price tag put on it. Nature is inspirational and can change a mindset in a single glance. This factor is a driving force behind the citizens in Curitiba. No matter the size, the shape, these parks are nature and add value to the lives of the people who utilize them. This new inspiration reinforces the drive to go green and stay green.

All of these ideas are well and good on their own, but they need to be implemented. Lerner explains the benefits of teaching the children. Children are knowledge sponges who soak up almost everything they hear, so by teaching them the importance of the environment at a young age instills the habits for the rest of their lives. It's a grass roots concept to which you teach the children and they in return teach their parents, and within a single generation, everyone has adopted a green approach.

Lerner finishes by explaining the concept of "urban acupuncture" meaning the most effective changes are small, but they have a huge impact. The changes need to be small enough not to completely overturn the people's lives, but done fast enough to avoid opposition. Small changes lead to huge improvements, and in three years a city can be completely transformed. Lerner ended with a song, and the lines you can do it repeated over and over. It's up to us to make these changes, and change the you can do it line to we did it.