



Credit cards give us goods quickly, the fax machine gives us the message quickly – the only thing left in our Stone Age is central governments. -- Jaime Lerner, former mayor of Curitiba

Citizens, the ancient Athenians realized, are the best people to identify priorities for action in their own cities. If cities are to become more sustainable, people must take action in the neighborhoods where they live. Most of the urban environmental success stories came about when citizens identified various problems and the links between them in order to pin down cause and effect. A charismatic mayor in Curitiba, for instance, saw that chaotic development and poor public transportation conspired to worsen air pollution: car use increased as buildings sprouted far from bus stops. By winning popular backing for a new bus system, he demonstrated that when citizens understand such connections, they often support or even demand change. -- Molly O'Meara

Most urban residents support strong environmental policies, but wealthy interest groups and corrupt officials often skew local political decisions. -- Molly O'Meara

When citizens have insufficient understanding of the causes of local problems, the political process suffers. -- Molly O'Meara

From every single window in Curitiba, I could see as much green as I could concrete. And green begets green; land values around the new parks have risen sharply, and with them tax revenues. --- Bill McKibben



CURITIBA

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