

**Listen to an interview on Sustainable Cities about Curitiba in Brazil.**

**Optional exercise** (The answers are at the bottom of the page).

Put these points in the order they are mentioned.

Subject	Order
Cycle paths	
Free educational centres	
Transport system	
Pedestrian areas	
Public participation	
Tree planting	
House building	

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**Presenter:** This week's edition of 'Sustainable Cities' goes to Brazil. Here's our correspondent Sergio Nascimento to tell us about a place that found a different way to meet some of the challenges of modern life way back in the 1970s.

**Correspondent:** Hello. I've come to somewhere that has collected numerous awards for its innovative approach to urban living - Curitiba.

**Presenter:** Many governments are only now putting people back at the heart of city centre planning. Curitiba convinced people to stop relying on their cars several decades ago. How did they do it, Sergio?

**Correspondent:** Well, it started with an inspired and far-sighted Mayor, who with a few colleagues created what must be one of the fastest pedestrianisation schemes in history. Over the course of a weekend they blocked off some of the city centre streets and started planting flowers with the help of local children. This overcame the opposition of the shopkeepers who thought their businesses would suffer-they soon saw the centre could bring in far more customers than they'd had before. Popular support for a more people-friendly city grew from there.

**Presenter:** The city itself has grown considerably since those days I believe.

**Correspondent:** It supports a population of more than two and a half million people today, and it shares the problems of many developing urban areas in South America-immigration from the countryside, the pressure for housing and so on. Yet it has found some very original solutions. For example, instead of putting people into anonymous housing projects, it helped them to build their own homes.

**Presenter:** Really!

**Correspondent:** By recognising that many people already had the skills needed for construction work, it gave them support in the form of materials and advice from architects and then let them get on with the job. That way, people have a real investment in where they live, and really want to look after the place once it's built.

**Presenter:** Is it true that the city has one of the most extensive and efficient transport systems anywhere in the world?

**Correspondent:** That's right. There's a whole network of different types of buses that run into and around the city in their own dedicated bus lanes. It's coordinated by the city council, but privately financed. They managed to get transport companies to provide such a comprehensive service by paying them for the number of kilometres they cover, not the number of passengers they carry. There are buses every minute in the rush hour so the system can carry something like 2 million people - that's more than in New York.

**Presenter:** And they connect everywhere to everywhere else...

**Correspondent:** ...neighbourhoods to workplaces to hospitals to tourist attractions. Nearly 70% of all journeys are by bus. The whole system pays for itself, and it's been developed largely on the existing streets without knocking down buildings, so the character of the neighbourhoods is maintained.

**Presenter:** Have they forgotten about cyclists?

**Correspondent:** No, there's a network of about 150km of cycle paths around the city. And parallel to the transport systems they've developed a network of 'Faróis de Saber' or 'Lighthouses of Knowledge'.

**Presenter:** What are they?

**Correspondent:** They're free educational centres placed around the city, which have libraries, Internet access, and other cultural resources. People can get help with job training, social welfare and access to educational programs. Another thing they're keen on are the tree-planting initiatives and the development of green spaces. They even use sheep to keep the grass down! It is much cheaper and it helps regenerate the soil.

**Presenter:** And the secret to all this is planning...?

**Correspondent:** It's not only planning, it's involving local people in decision-making from the start. Public participation has ensured that the system has continued, even though the man who started it all is no longer Mayor.

**Presenter:** Fascinating. Now tell us about the recycling programmes, Sergio...

## Answers

Cycle paths	4
Free educational centres	5
Transport system	3
Pedestrian areas	1
Public participation	7
Tree planting	6
House building	2