



Drawing adapted from various sources by
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Figure 10.10 A community centre – a ‘citizenship street’ – plugged into the transportation system.

programme was implemented through the creation of Curitiba’s Industrial City (CIC). The CIC has proven to be of great economic importance to the city, contributing significantly to the city’s Gross Domestic Product of \$8.26 billion in 1995. Twenty per cent of the city’s workers are employed there. Without the infrastructure development, the industrial development would have been impossible.

The so-called ‘above-ground underground system’ has attracted great international attention. The separate express bus lanes and the ‘tubular stations’ at each stop with platforms that enable passengers to enter a bus without climbing up steps and having already paid for the trip (see Figure 10.11) do operate much as in a subway system. The network carries 1.3 million riders a day. Paralleling the transit system is a hierarchy of roads with each level having a designated purpose. In addition to the efforts to deal with transportation is the desire to create an ecologically sound city. The area in parks has been substantially increased (from 0.5 to 52 square metres per person), over 1.5

million trees have been planted and 145 kilometres of cycle-ways have been built. Recycling programmes have been established and educational programmes increasing environmental awareness have been implemented. What, however, amongst all these activities is urban design?

The design of the transit system can be regarded as plug-in urban design and the community centres consisting of a number of buildings might be regarded as total urban designs. This type of endeavour has traditionally been called physical planning. Such an effort in Curitiba has resulted in a large number of specific design projects, which, fragments in themselves, are part of a well-coordinated larger system. A number of observers regard such work as ‘urban design at the city scale’. The lessons of Curitiba do apply to many urban design projects. The question is: ‘How was Curitiba’s success achieved?’

A recent study (Irazábal, in progress) suggests that there were three major contributions to the success of the ‘hegemonic planning project’ that was undertaken