



# PIDE Webinar Series: Cities for Humanity and Development



## Discussion Questions

How can effective and inclusive cities be planned?

How city development determines economic and social welfare?

How to control urban sprawl?

How to manage inclusive cities for all?

What is the relationship between automobiles and city planning?

## In This Summary

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## Background

Pakistan has some of the largest cities in the world with currently Karachi having over 15 million inhabitants, Lahore having about 12 million people, and about 20 cities in total having populations of above a million. The rapid urbanization that the country has seen has also brought about its share of issues with the current urban landscape dominated by a shortage of urban space; automobiles induced congestion and uncontrolled urban sprawling due to policy emphasis on single-use family housing units.

To increase awareness and create a dialogue on issues that affect the country's cities, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) recently organized a series of webinars entitled 'Cities for Humanity & Development'. The webinars brought together international experts, urban planners, and other related professionals in discussing the issues that are faced by both cities in general and more specifically by cities in Pakistan.

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## **CITIES FOR HUMANITY AND DEVELOPMENT - I, 16TH JUNE, 2020.**

The first webinar of the series titled 'COVID-19 and the Future of Cities' was organized jointly by PIDE, Monash University's Center for Development Economics & Sustainability (CDES), and Monash Sustainable Development Institute (MSDI). The webinar panelists included Vice-Chancellor PIDE, Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque, Oxford University Economist, Anthony Venables, and Professorial Fellow Monash University, John Thwaites.



**Nadeem Ul Haque**  
Vice Chancellor  
PIDE



**Anthony Venables**  
Professor Economics  
Oxford University



**John Thwaites**  
Professorial Fellow  
Monash University

### **Key Discussion Points**

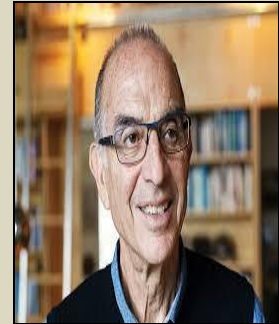
- Given the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, the panelists discussed how cities which have been important drivers of economic growth in both developing and developed economies may be seen problematic given the dangers of close-proximity densely populated urban living during a pandemic.
- The panelists agreed that even though the COVID-19 pandemic has created unprecedented conditions, yet once the situation normalizes, cities are still going to be main drivers of economic growth due to the infrastructure and the high productivity zones that they provide.
- On the issue of how the pandemic has affected cities in developing countries where often social distancing is difficult, Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque stated that policymaking including urban policy has been largely determined by foreign donor consultants in Pakistan, who have often benefited at the expense of local researchers and policymakers.
- The local capacity gap has been further highlighted during the current pandemic. While donor consultants have a part to play, their involvement should not come at the expense of local practitioners and researchers being sidelined. Well thought-out urban planning that keeps local realities in mind can only come about through involvement of locally informed policymakers.

## Cities for Humanity and Development – II – June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020

In the second webinar of the series, PIDE invited Toronto-based Urban Designer, Ken Greenberg, who has over four decades of experience in urban design across cities in North America and Europe. The webinar was moderated by Vice Chancellor PIDE, Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque.

### Key Discussion Points

- Dr. Haque started the webinar by listing the issues that affect Pakistani cities. He mentioned that how Pakistan has over the years followed the much-critiqued model of North American urban planning that leads to congestion, sprawl, and car-based mobility.
- Furthermore, he pointed out that the country has strict zoning laws that inhibit mix-use of land and has led to a shortage of urban space, exclusion of the poor, and diminished growth of commercial business activities.
- Ken Greenberg mentioned that the relationship with “automobiles” and how it affects urban spaces is not only peculiar to Pakistan but is rather a part of a much larger debate in the urban planning and design literature. This dependence on cars/automobiles not only leads to congestion and sprawl but also carries health concerns for populations that do not walk as often as they should.
- He further stated that the 20th century North American model of urban growth that Pakistan seems to be following has largely been abandoned by recent urban designers in North America. According to him, North America is “working through a major paradigm shift from a mid-20th century land-use segregated, auto-oriented configuration to a more sustainable, compact, mixed urban future.” More and more young people in North American cities now prefer to live in walkable urban spaces.
- The Toronto-based urban designer also mentioned that from his own experience, mix-use of urban space i.e. simultaneous use for commercial, residential, and other purposes is a viable solution for curbing urban sprawl and creating less congested cities.



**Ken Greenberg**  
Urban Designer  
Greenberg Consultants

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## CITIES FOR HUMANITY AND DEVELOPMENT - III, 22<sup>nd</sup> JUNE, 2020.



**Brent Toderian**  
Former Chief Urban Planner  
City of Vancouver

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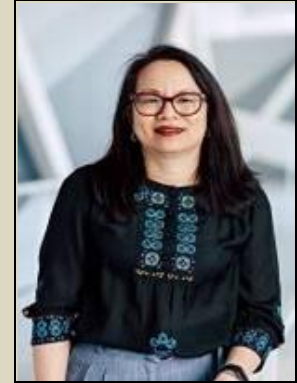
For the third webinar of the series, PIDE invited North American Urban Planner and former Chief Urban Planner for the City of Vancouver, Brent Toderian. This session was moderated by Vice Chancellor PIDE, Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque.

### Key Discussion Points

- Brent Toderian started by stating that although he has not visited Pakistan, having listened to the issues that Pakistani cities are currently facing, he sees many parallels between Pakistani cities and the cities that he has worked in both developed and developing countries.
- He stressed the importance of creating cities where people are not dependent on cars for mobility. Furthermore, he went on to describe how the need is for planners to create urban spaces that include more “interactive streets” i.e. streets on which people can walk and engage with businesses and other activities. These interactive streets are important ingredients for creating what he branded as “doing density better”.
- The increased emphasis to create urban spaces of high density can lead to planners often ignoring that density in-itself is only a number, and it is actually how this density is internally configured which is the key to creating urban spaces that are interactive, not-congested and amenable to vibrant commercial and residential activities.

## Cities for Humanity and Development – IV – 26<sup>th</sup> August, 2020

The fourth webinar in the series explored how cities could be planned so that they are made better suited for humanity and development. The guest speaker for the webinar was Ms. Leslie Woo, Chief Planning Officer Metrolinx based in Toronto, Canada. The session was moderated by PIDE intern, Zoya Ali.



**Leslie Woo**  
Chief Planning Officer  
Metrolinx  
Toronto, Canada

### Key Discussion Points

- In the beginning Ms. Woo mentioned the fundamental challenge that is faced by all urban planners around the world which is to ensure that any 'city plan' is able to align the interests and needs of increasingly heterogenic constituents and stakeholder base.
- Ms. Woo discussed how the North America model of suburban growth and its link with automobile based mobility is something that has both social and behavioral causes. Developing countries like Pakistan should not aim to copy such a model without serious critique because such models have led to uncontrolled congestion and urban sprawl in North America.
- She further mentioned that for any country to shift away from the sprawl model, what is required in addition to proper urban planning is also strong leadership and political drive that can mobilize bureaucracy, institutions and public to bring about change.
- The cities must have civic capacity to speak and campaign for the cities to be more inclusive. Cities should be thought of as collections of actions and the culminations of many decisions over the periods of time. In such a scenario, strong commitment to championing the city rights for the entire population and not just one segment is a fundamental part of making inclusive cities that are drivers of growth and welfare.

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