FAQ's

1. **Describe how Patrick Geddes contributed to the planning scenario in India.**

Geddes' work in improving the slums of Edinburgh led to an invitation from Lord Pentland (then Governor of Madras) to travel to India to advise on emerging urban planning issues, in particular, how to mediate "between the need for public improvement and respect for existing social standards". For this, Geddes prepared an exhibition on "City and Town Planning". The materials for the first exhibit were sent to India on a ship that was sunk near Madras by the German ship Emden, however new materials were collected and an exhibit prepared for the Senate hall of Madras University by 1915.

According to some reports, this was near the time of the meeting of the Indian National Congress and Pentland hoped the exhibit would demonstrate the benefits of British rule. Geddes lectured and worked with Indian surveyors and travelled to Bombay and Bengal where Pentland's political allies Lord Willingdon and Lord Carmichael were Governors. He held a position in Sociology and Civics at Bombay University from 1919 to 1925.

Between 1915 and 1919 Geddes wrote a series of "exhaustive town planning reports" on at least eighteen Indian cities, a selection of which has been collected together in Jacqueline Tyrwhitt's *Patrick Geddes in India* (1947).

Through these reports, Geddes was concerned to create a "working system in India", righting the wrongs of the past by making interventions in and plans for the urban fabric that were both considerate of local context and tradition and awake to the need for development.

His principles for town planning in Bombay demonstrate his views on the relationship between social processes and spatial form, and the intimate and causal connections between the social development of the individual and the cultural and physical environment. They included: ("What town planning means under the Bombay Town Planning Act of 1915")

- Preservation of human life and energy, rather than superficial beautification.
- Conformity to an orderly development plan carried out in stages.
- Purchasing land suitable for building.
- Promoting trade and commerce.
- Preserving historic buildings and buildings of religious significance.
- Developing a city worthy of civic pride, not an imitation of European cities.
- Promoting the happiness, health and comfort of all residents, rather than focusing on roads and parks available only to the rich.
- Control over future growth with adequate provision for future requirements.
- Geddes' exhortation to pay attention to the social and particular when attempting city renewal or resettlement remains relevant, particularly in light of the plans for slum resettlement and redevelopment ongoing in many Indian cities (see, e.g. Dharavi redevelopment program)

2. What is Conservative Surgery? Discuss.

His strategy was to attack the problems from all directions. Geddes purchased a row of slum tenements in James Court, in the Old Town, making it into a single dwelling. In terms of 'Place', he advocated 'conservative surgery' which meant weeding out the worst of the houses that surrounded them, widening the narrow closes (lanes) into courtyards and thus improving sunlight and airflow. The best of the houses were kept and restored. Geddes

believed that this approach was both more economical and more humane (9). Based on the principle of work, he galvanised the folk – the local resident community, local architects and artists to bring about the Old Town's regeneration and preserve their locality, without waiting for government action.

3. What is concept of Evolution of City?

His view of evolution led Geddes to employ two different kinds of organic analogy when it came to understanding cities and practising town planning. First, the city itself was conceived of as something 'organic', whether interpreted as a developing organism or 'evolving' in relation to its environment. In the context of his Ghent town planning exhibition, Geddes claimed to detect a beginning, perhaps the first clear and definite beginning, of the comparative study of cities in their life; each shown as arising like a living being, in constant relation to its environment; ... Like the living being it is, a City also reacts upon its environment, and in ever-widening circles. While the idea of a city as a living being may be very familiar to us now, it was hardly on the agenda then. It served to suggest that town planning was an integrating theoretical and practical activity, not simply a matter of laying down buildings and streets, like glorified architecture and engineering.

Geddes also introduced a second evolutionary theme, in which the city was itself an environment: a built environment, of course, whose design could positively influence the social organism it contained. In this second sense, the role of the planner was to influence social evolution beneficially through physical design. Overall, Geddes' evolutionary urbanism was therefore part 'developmental' (city-as-organism), part 'evolutionary' (in a non-Darwinian way) and part 'environmental' (city as environment, rather than organism). He thus mixed (and mixed up) a series of

intricate themes, perhaps quite purposely, which in practice proved difficult for others to follow.

4. Compare and contrast "conservative surgery" with the typical grip iron plan.

Geddes championed a mode of planning that sought to consider "primary human needs" in every intervention, engaging in "constructive and conservative surgery" rather than the "heroic, all of a piece schemes" popular in the 19th and early 20th centuries. In and around this(tenement in Edinburgh) area Geddes commenced upon a project of "conservative surgery": "weeding out the worst of the houses that surrounded them…widening the narrow closes into courtyards" and thus improving sunlight and air flow.

The best of the houses were kept and restored. Geddes believed that this approach was both more economical and more humane. In this way Geddes consciously worked against the tradition of the "gridiron plan", resurgent in colonial town design in the 19th century:

"The heritage of the gridiron plans goes back at least to the Roman camps. The basis for the grid as an enduring and appealing urban form rests on five main characteristics: order and regulatory, orientation in space and to elements, simplicity and ease of navigation, speed of layout, and adaptability to circumstance."

5. Discuss the contributions of C.A. Perry.

As a staff member of the New York Regional Plan and the City Recreation Committee, Perry formulated his early ideas about the neighbourhood unit and community life. In 1909 he became associated with the Russell Sage Foundation as associate director of recreation until 1937. His ideas were realized in neighbourhoods like Radburn through the work of Clarence Stein.

Perry's intentions were calibrated to the human foot, not the automobile. Do remember that Perry's Neighbourhood

Unit was conceptualized prior to an automobile-based society (1920's). His notes on the plan above refer to walk distances, narrow streets and a mix of uses. Note that there also is a fairly connected network of streets, another modern-day casualty from the road classification system. You do not see cul-de-sacs in the diagram above and in fact you see a lot of intersecting streets on highways and arterials.

The concept of the neighbourhood unit, crystallised from the prevailing social and intellectual attitudes of the early 1900s by Clarence Perry, is an early diagrammatic planning model for residential development in metropolitan areas. It was designed by Perry to act as a framework for urban planners attempting to design functional, self-contained and desirable neighbourhoods in the early 20th century in industrialising cities. It continues to be utilised (albeit in progressive and adapted ways, see New Urbanism), as a means of ordering and organising new residential communities in a way which satisfies contemporary "social, administrative and service requirements for satisfactory urban existence".

6. **Discuss the core principles of the neighbourhood concept.**

The core principles of Perry's Neighbourhood Unit were organized around several physical design ideals:

"**Centre the school** in the neighbourhood so that a child's walk to school was only about one-quarter of a mile and no more than one half mile and could be achieved without crossing a major arterial street. Size the neighbourhood to sufficiently support a school, between 5,000 to 9,000 residents, approximately 160 acres at a density of ten units per acre. Implement a wider use of the school facilities for neighbourhood meetings and activities, constructing a large play area around the building for use by the entire community.

Place arterial streets along the perimeter so that they define and distinguish the "place" of the neighborhood and by design eliminate unwanted through-traffic from the neighborhood. In this way, major arterials define the neighborhood, rather than divide it through its heart.

Design internal streets using a hierarchy that easily distinguishes local streets from arterial streets, using curvilinear street design for both safety and aesthetic purposes. Streets, by design, would discourage unwanted through traffic and enhance the safety of pedestrians.

Restrict local shopping areas to the perimeter or perhaps to the main entrance of the neighborhood, thus excluding nonlocal traffic destined for these commercial uses that might intrude on the neighborhood.

Dedicate at least 10 percent of the neighborhood land area to parks and open space, creating places for play and community interaction"

The neighbourhood unit was embraced for its community idealism, and many of the public sectors in those countries which were exposed to the theorem have since adopted its purpose; of protecting and promoting the public health and of considering the safety and welfare of citizens. Furthermore, private developers and investors continue to construct and fund planned communities based upon many of the concepts tenets, due to consumer demand for the idealistic community intimacy associated with living with heteronormative homo reciprocals of similar socio economic status.