

CAPITALISING ON CHANGE



PROF. CHARANJIT SHAH,
FOUNDING PRINCIPAL
OF CREATIVE GROUP
SUGGESTS PLANS FOR
SOME OF THE BUSIEST
AREAS OF NEW DELHI

The National Capital of India has been studied extensively as an eye opener for the assorted bracket of readers and proposals have been illustrated to change the face of Delhi from ‘the most polluted’ to ‘the most sustainable.’ Starting from the early settlements to the present situation, we see an emerging trend of emphasis on the social understanding of the people. Delhi, is one of the very few cities in the world that has been in existence for over 1000 years. Due to its rich history, it has developed as a city of varied styles and vocabularies of architecture, materials, building techniques and fine detailing. With its recent humiliation of being titled the world’s most polluted city, a lot of other issues that cripple the city, have also cropped up.

“Delhi is the Capital of our nation, a city that is known for its multiculturalism. As an architect and planner, my wish is to see Delhi as I saw it 40 years back, full of life and open spaces. Through these remedies, our endeavour is to breathe life back into Delhi to create a walkable, cyclable and livable green city,” says Prof. Shah

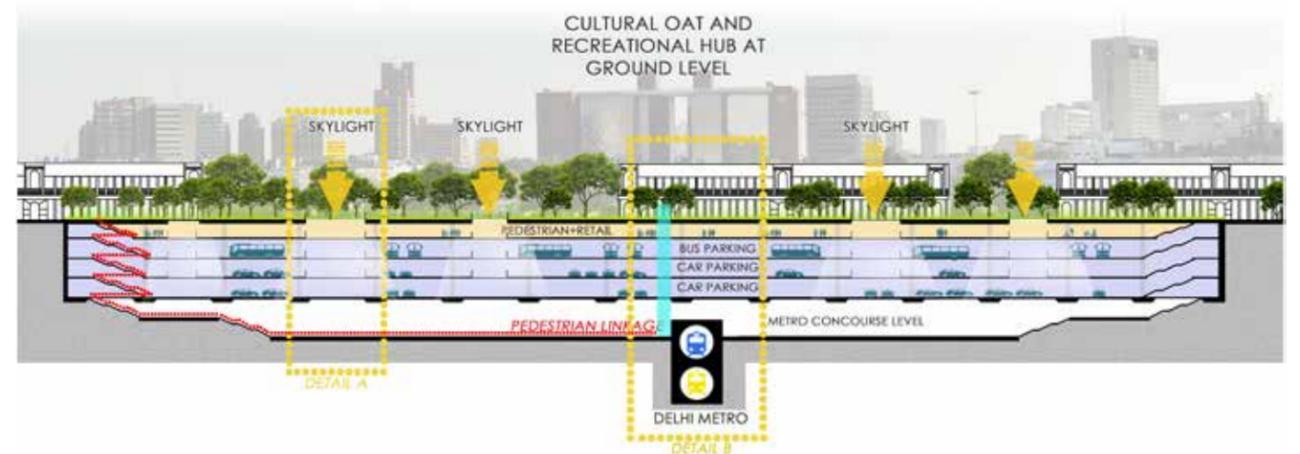


- Cycle Tracks
- Interactive pedestrian street
- Green bays
- Innovative street furniture with lighting, charging sockets.
- Green buffer

Connaught Place: Redesigning a Walkable, Commercial Hub

Connaught Place, Delhi’s imperial shopping complex, still exhibits the old world charm that it was born with during the British Raj. There is no other place in the country, which adroitly combines sheer architectural richness with an impartial commercial experience. Today it is one of the largest financial, commercial and business districts in the Capital and a premier tourist sight.

The CP circle’s land use initially utilized the ground floor for commercial purposes whereas the first and second floor were residences. At present, the circle has transformed into a retail and commercial hub, although the colonial character still remains.





However, with the insertion of the Metro and the Commonwealth Games being held in 2010 in the Capital, Connaught Place has gained global recognition as the heart of New Delhi. Rajiv Chowk is one of the busiest metro stations opening directly into the market and with the intrusion of street hawkers and vehicular congestion; CP has become a nightmare for pedestrians and motorists alike.

“A smart blend of user integrated facilities with the Central Park of Connaught Place as the hub has been proposed without interfering with the Lutyen heritage. An illustration has been made showing how adding layers beneath the Connaught Place radius in the form of combining street landscaping, retail and commercial hub, bus access, multilevel car parking and the metro train access on all different levels and at the same time, retracting the famous Connaught Place colonnades, can help in sustaining it as a pedestrian friendly commercial hub.”

At present, vehicular movement has overpowered the Inner as well as Outer Circle, which is the main cause of congestion in the area. Our proposal focuses on making the inner circle, a pedestrian friendly, walkable and cyclable zone. Vehicular access will only be limited to the Outer road and all radial roads branching out from the Central Park connecting the Outer circle to the Inner Circle have been redeveloped as green belts which are pedestrianized and cyclable.

The centrally located Public Square will be connected to all ends of Delhi and would also provide various facilities like Retail, F&B, Public Conveniences, outdoor sitting and recreational areas, without the cacophonous disturbances of car horns and traffic. Cycle tracks are proposed on both sides of the roads.

All transportation layers shall be shifted underground wherein the first level would accommodate the pedestrianized retail zone. The second level shall provide parking for buses and the third and fourth levels would provide car parking. Beneath these newly developed layers, the existing layer of metro (Blue line and Yellow line) shall function. This idea would change the face of Connaught Place as a centrally located Intermodal Hub connecting all modes of transport and encouraging walkability and cyclability.

Chandni Chowk: Creating Inter Modal Hubs

Just like Connaught Place, Chandni Chowk is also considered the soul of Delhi and is synonymous with the city's culture and socioeconomic conditions. Cities are fundamentally about people, and where people go and where people meet are at the core of what makes a city work. Evidently so, the public spaces of a city are much more important than the buildings. Enjoyable public spaces are the key to planning a great city as that is what makes a city come alive.

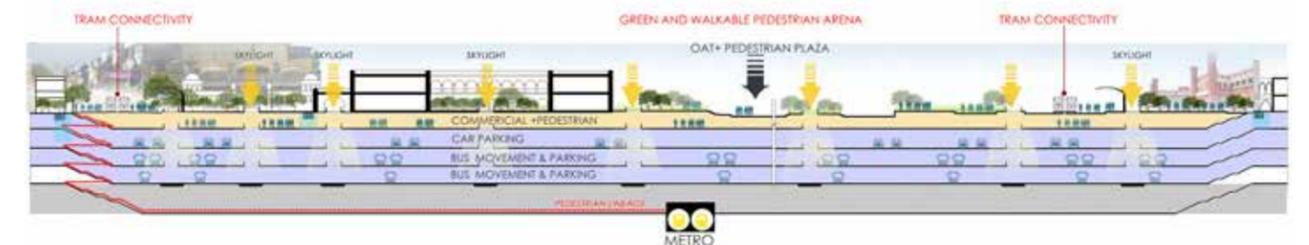
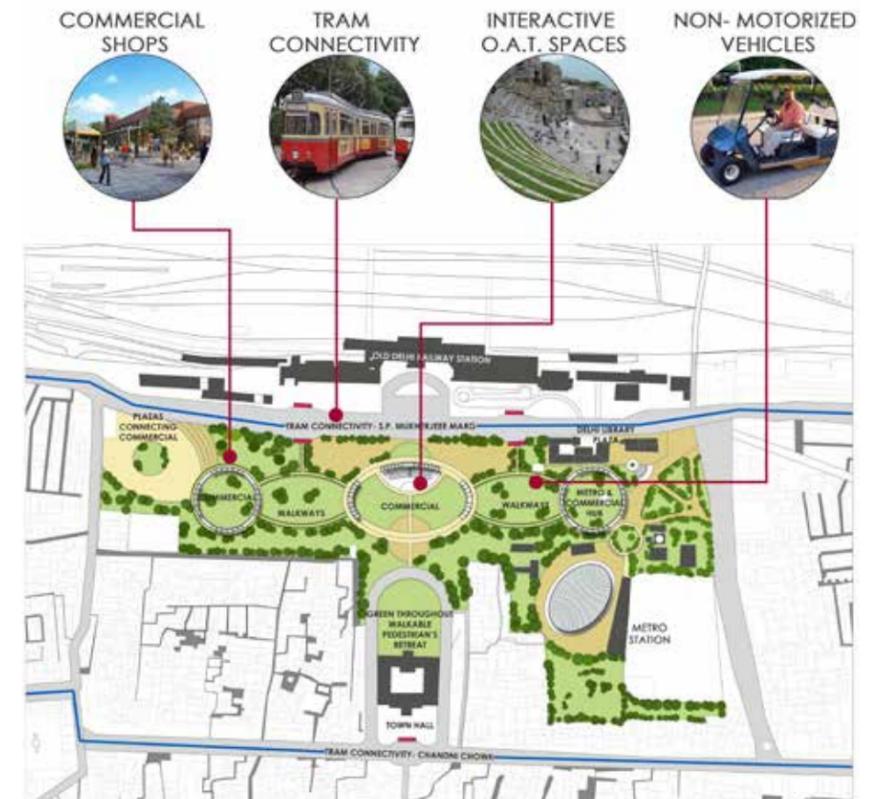
It was here that Delhi flourished as one of the greatest cities of the medieval world; a city of great art and architecture, language, cuisine, poetry, the performing arts, recreational activities like kabootarbazi, patangbazi, various craftsmanship, and a sense of social interaction. Chandni Chowk is famed world over for its secular street housing and diverse mohallas and lanes. The tram connectivity was once the highlight of this area.

“Vibrant, Charming City- Famous for being Chaotic and Crowded”

Today, Purani Dilli is a moving mess of handcarts, rickshaws and pedestrians on sunken roads with electric wires hanging overhead. Hundreds of neglected buildings, many of them heritage structures are modern day death traps. Rampant encroachments, both residential and commercial congestion, civic neglect and illegal parking have slowly destroyed the area. As the population is growing, Chandni Chowk is on the verge of choking as people face problems in their day to day commuting on the Chandni Chowk roads and situations become even worse at the time of rains.

Chandni Chowk can be stated as one of the best examples of the unfathomable drama of change. Earlier known for its admirable street planning, today the chaotic bundles of the commercial hub jolt our city.

Thus, with the aspiration of giving the old charm of Dilli 6 back to its residents, we have picked the Jahanara





Lajpat Nagar: Socio- Cultural, Commercial, Inter Modal Hub

Lajpat Nagar Central Market has been taken as the space for intervention in this proposal. A concept of 'Introvert Planning' has been applied to restructure the market wherein the shops are on the outside and a central walkable plaza serves between the shops.

The Alankar Cinema Road and Veer Savarkar Marg have been elevated, below which the central retail plaza is developed. This concept of planning is aimed at relieving the market space of increasing volumes of traffic. The issue of insufficient parking has been solved by the means of providing underground parking by going down two levels below the ground, completely eliminating the issue of encroachment by parked cars on both sides of the road.



South Extension : Redirecting the Movement of Traffic

South Extension is one of the most famous 'traffic destinations' in the south of Delhi. With the array of traffic contributors including buses, autos and personal vehicles, the market stretch is usually chaotic.

To release the overload of traffic, the Mahatma Gandhi Marg has been picked up as the intervention area. The main road which brings people to the market has been elevated and the parking area is provided below the ground level for the market goers, to free the rest of the space from the bottlenecks. Three levels of parking have been provided and the ground level has been freed of any traffic movement. Thus, the market space is only restricted to pedestrian movement, making South Extension an organized retail and commercial hub which is completely walkable. The space below the elevated roads is redeveloped as a retail plaza which also has skylights to utilize maximum daylight below the ground.





Redevelopment of Nallah as a Walkable and Cyclable Route to Connect Neighbourhoods

We have targeted the Drain that runs from Mehrauli upto the Yamuna River crossing through Sarai Kale Khan to be set as an example for future proposals of developing nallahs into walkable and cyclable green tracks.

The idea is to develop the road as a pedestrian walkway and cycle track, over the nallah, surrounded by green landscape on both sides . 30% of Delhi's population owns bicycles, but nobody can say how much of that percentage commutes through them, due to lack of cycle tracks all over the city. This track would be segregated from the main traffic by creating pavements and permeable green belts at raised levels. It is also to be noted that the main road is elevated above the cycle track at the points where two roads intersect. Through this ontogenesis, we aim to achieve a singled out way of commuting for pedestrians and cyclists, to encourage walking and cycling, thus indirectly reducing pollution and traffic and reassuring a healthier lifestyle.

