Towards Compact Cities
"In-between" zones as resource
Case: Delhi

Within the contemporary discourses of urban manifestations, the conditions of cities within the Indian sub-continent, as they enter the threshold of a global era have begun to connect and reverberate with the changing dynamics of cities across the world. The urban condition of many South Asian countries like India is unique in their complexity, plurality and hybridity. Like numerous cities all across this country, multiple layers of historicity juxtaposed over one another and their simultaneous living existences within the urban fabric of Delhi have created complex dynamics of form, function and structure at every instant.

Today, Delhi is being confronted with new challenges of growth and change both from massive internal demands and intense external pressures of globalization. Though it continues to be the political and administrative capital of the country through ages and has retained its stronghold as the 'center of power', today, the city is part of a global political economic scenario and is subject to market based forces of capitalism. At the social and physical level, Delhi is a multilayered fragmented city, with each fragment contributing in its own way to the city fabric. Over time and through continuous juxtaposition these multiple layers of historicity have imbibed processes of hybridization, making Delhi a product of hybridity. Through all its disjointed parts the city today expresses multiple identities and contested domains of existence and realities.

This paper consists of two sections. Section 1 deals with a brief planning history of Delhi along with its connected consequences regarding the issue of urban sustainability. Section 2 offers a discussion on a possible alternative route to the present directions of planning for Delhi's urban future.

SECTION 1: Delhi's Planning Trajectory

Among the major metropolises in India, New Delhi has been the outcome of comprehensive planning efforts through history as the capital state of various empires that have ruled the city all along, visible even today through Shahjahanabad and Lutyens New Delhi in its physical fabric. Our Independence and partition in 1947 led to the need for a creation of an entire administrative machinery at a very short notice and thus to accommodate government employees and institutions, apart from thousand of refugees large areas were developed adjoining the boundaries of the colonial "New Delhi" planned by Lutyens. For more than a decade after Independence, Delhi continued to sprawl in all directions, producing a series of disjointed settlements. "Hasty and disorderly growth characterized the period following Independence in 1947".[1]

As a first step towards planned development of the city after Independence through a series of planning efforts along with an act of parliament, Delhi Development Authority (DDA) was constituted in 1957 and charged with the preparation of a Master Plan along with a team of experts from the Ford Foundation. The first Master Plan for Delhi (MPD) was prepared and finally sanctioned in the year 1962. The growth of city after 1962, controlled by proposals of the MPD, led to the formation of Delhi Metropolitan Area (DMA), defined as the Union Territory of Delhi, with an area of about 800 square miles together with a group of satellite towns. This Master plan was stipulated for a period of 20 years but the next plan due in 1981-82 could not be operationalised due to the Asian Games of 1982 that took precedence to all the development works in the city. Finally, the next MPD of 2001 was prepared and put into operation beyond the Games. In 1985, the National Capital Region Board was set up to plan for a balanced growth of the extended region around the capital. From the seven historic cities of Delhi, the city became a part of the National Capital Region (NCR). The

NCR comprises a total of 33,578 sq.kms, including areas of Delhi (1483 sq. kms) and the states of Haryana (13413 sq. kms.), Uttar Pradesh (10853 sq. kms.) and Rajasthan (7829 sq. kms). The Central NCR (earlier the Delhi Metropolitan Area) as defined in the Regional Plan – 2021, comprises of the notified / controlled development areas of the neighboring towns of Ghaziabad – Loni, NOIDA, Greater NOIDA, Gurgaon, Faridabad, Bahadurgarh and Kundli, and the extension of the ridge in Haryana, having an area of about 2000 sq. kms. As per the latest MPD 2021, at present about 702 sq.kms of the urban area (almost 50% of total area) is estimated to have been developed as built-up areas accommodating a total population of about 13.8 million. On an average, Delhi will see an additional 30% growth in its urban area (about 902 sq.kms) for a projected population of 23 million (about 75% growth) in 2021.
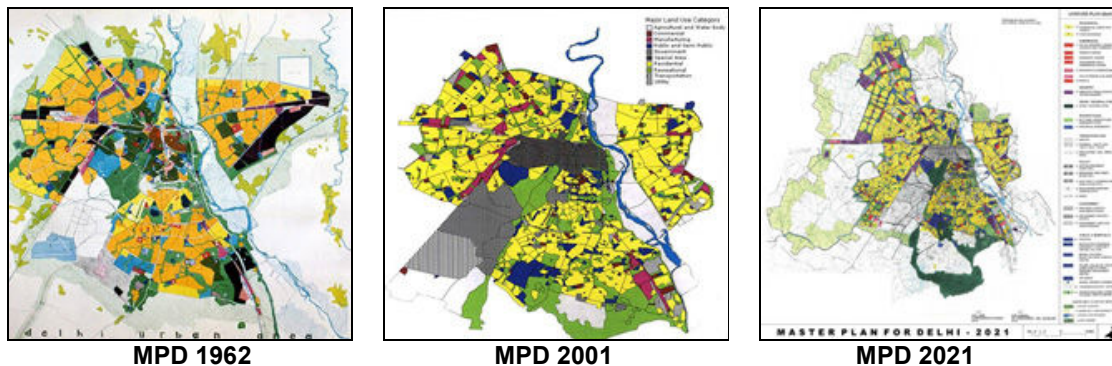
MPD 1962   **MPD 2001**   **MPD 2021**
source: **www.dda.org.in**

Growing at an unprecedented pace, the city is expanding endlessly leading to the blurring of boundaries, with its satellite towns becoming distinctive cities in their own right. In terms of physical growth, what started as a process of suburban expansion has now stretched out to cover a much larger regional scale. "What once could be described as mass regional suburbanization has now turned into mass regional urbanization". The prevailing pattern of city growth has resulted in a 'doughnut' like configuration with rapid and unprecedented growth in the periphery and a 'hollow' center. For Delhi, this situation has been further consolidated due to the obsessive hangover by the authorities of "protecting" the colonial legacy of Lutyens "New Delhi" along with the surrounding areas of government colonies as extremely low density under-used areas in prime central city locations.

From 1962 onwards, modern planning principles were adopted as part of the Master plan process to give directions to the future expansion and growth of the city. To begin with, the planners proposed to restrict the growth of the city by incorporating a 1.6 km wide green belt around the city and diverting the surplus population to the adjacent 'ring towns'. Also new industrial and commercial areas were proposed for promoting growth. "Thus, the DDA saw merit in both earning more revenue through industrial expansion as well as reducing expenses by curbing population increase, without examining the necessary linkage between the two. But it was in 1971 that it became clear that the city's growth is far beyond the conception of planners".[2]

"As the date for yet another Master Plan approaches, this systemic failure of modern planning is evident in the situation as it obtains today. The city today has spread far beyond the confines of the original green belt which has largely fallen victim to land developers, including the DDA itself. The resettlement colonies and industrial areas, that were once supposed to be at the fringe of the city, have been drawn into its ambit. The ring towns are now contiguous urban sprawls and the arterial roads and national highways are the most congested in the region".[3]

The Indian metropolis is inherently a palimpsest with multiple temporal, cultural and spatial layers as against the idealistic and somewhat simplistic distinct zones our planners have conceived them to be, Delhi being a prime example of the same. The historicity of Delhi has multiple layers to it, right from its seven historic cities upto Shahjahanabad, further on to Lutyens' New Delhi, the post – independent developments and finally, the subsequent modern city layers. Each layer has its own saliency and significance and is a resultant of a certain phenomena or a planning process which is visible today in varying degrees of prominence in the fabric of the city. "The cultural landscape of Delhi presents an example of syncretism between customary ways of building and inhabiting, imposed social and spatial forms emerging from Europe's modernity, and the cultural chaos of modernity and colonialism".[4]

Over the years, the planning process focusing on expansion based strategies has added new layers to the existing multi-layered structure of the city constantly overlooking the inherent complexities of existing layers and their inter-relationships. So, whether it is the old city of Shahjahanabad or Lutyens New Delhi, the Post – independent layer or Master plan layers, each of them exists as distinct entities within the fabric of the city. Leap-frogging and lapses in the planning process to recognize these distinct layers have led to failure of our planning policies to make the city compact and sustainable. Every subsequent layer seems to have come up in isolation and negligible inter-relationship with any of the existing layers, as the city keeps growing from a medieval walled city into a fragmented metropolis. "This transformation has been more a palimpsest of plural and contentious processes rather than a linear path from one well-defined form to another. Citizens and officials have shaped Delhi's landscape together. This fractured urbanism (that emerged from the encounters, the familiar and the new) has re–defined the city".[5]

Another fundamental premise of the Master plan was based on the western concept of 'zoning' which outlined a landuse pattern by dividing the city into zones, with a development scheme planned for each zone according to its specific character. "What appeared on paper as a guide for controlled development proved however, to have little effectiveness. There was no control at the regional level, and within Delhi development was disjointed and chaotic".[6]

The urban expansion of the city in terms of NCR has been a spatial distortion as only the towns adjoining Delhi have developed and not the NCR region. The NCR plan envisaged a "balanced" development of the entire region with constituent urban centers developing around individually assigned roles for the region. In reality, however, it was the towns immediate to the city of Delhi that witnessed unparalleled and spiraling urban growth. This situation has completely altered the imagined proposal of an inter-dependent network of urban centers and the regional hinterland, directed towards minimizing migration and displacement. Also, urban expansion in previous master plans had been based on the policy of land acquisition and disposal of land by DDA. Quite contrary to the intention of the policy, the approach resulted in the creation of large number of unauthorized colonies due to a substantial time gap between acquisition, development and disposal of land. These encroachments characterize a substantial part of Delhi today. It is presently estimated that around 60 percent of the poor inhabitants continue to live in these sub-standard housing with no services. Such a picture of lop-sided regional development and disparate inner city conditions reflects the fragile level of sustainability that currently confronts the city.

In the arena of global political economic relationships, Delhi being the capital center of decision-making is in intense discourse with some of the major players of the world economy and is being influenced by the new political and economic processes of the global system. At another level, it is fast becoming a huge market for the globalized consumerist world. Over the last few decades, all across the world there has been a shift from the centralized, rational, singular framework of Modern city planning towards trends of market

based, consumer driven, decentralized, Post-Modern approaches. Though Delhi clearly exhibits similar aspirations this phenomenon is yet to be reflected in the Modernist planning framework of the city, thus creating a disjunction between development policies and societal needs for change. Prevailing planning policies are under tremendous pressure to address changing realities connected to this shift.

Forces of globalization through transnational systems of capital and resource flows and increasing demand for urban space with unregulated and sudden expansion have ushered in a tremendous pace of change and instability across all its urban regions. The recent 1990s era of liberalization seems to be reflecting the colonial legacy of asymmetrical power relations between the expansionist urban elite and the subjugated hinterland where the intended and the un-intended city is undergoing fundamental transformation. "This critical perspective seems to be relevant in the Indian context in general, and in the context of Delhi's urban growth in particular".[7] The city positioned as a node in the circulation of global finance seems to be de-linked from real domestic priorities. This has put a heavy strain on urban land and other resources which are increasingly freed from less productive uses such as small scale manufacturing or housing for the poor and deployed for high tech modes of accumulation and consumption, whether material or symbolic of affluent. The cities at its own periphery have also been scripting the very tale of post-industrial development and change. Even inner city areas which have started experiencing the forces of globalization are viewed as potential sites for commercial revenue. Global influences can be seen in terms of changing functional structure especially with respect to district centers in the city which are displaying a trend of shift from office or work environment to new forms of entertainment and re-creational avenues of commercialization leading to privatization of the public domain. This situation is the resultant outcome of the planning bias towards upper and middle income groups in the city. From the urban poor perspective, the physical transformation of the fabric in terms of metros, malls, multiplexes, flyovers, expressways, 5 star hotels and hospitals, gated localities etc clearly reflects the shift from 'public-good' to 'private gain' witnessed by the city over the last few decades of planning.

To summarize, so far, the present Master Planning process in Delhi has by and large been a top-down approach which focused on expansion based strategies including concepts of functional zoning, neighborhood planning, hierarchical commercial centers, etc. However, as stated earlier this centralized controlled planning system through strict zoning of functions seems to be in clear conflict with present city demands and ground realities while thrusting the entire sphere of the metropolitan developmental pattern towards an unsustainable future. Viewed from the dual perspective of compactness and sustainability, erstwhile planning directions for Delhi have been continuously traversing the opposite path. The development of the city beyond urban limits through 'new' areas of expansion characterized the pattern of growth through three decades of planning between the 60's to the 90's, often sacrificing fertile agricultural land as well as engulfing numerous villages from the surrounding hinterland. During the post-liberalization era of the 90's, unprecedented and rapid growth of the cities immediate to Delhi's borders re-inforced the marginalization of economically weaker groups, devastated agrarian economies and embraced blind compulsions of global market forces. From the beginning of this millennium such indications of un-sustainable, un-controlled growth also affected inner city vacant areas that succumbed to global demands of consumerism against proposed centers of work and social amenities. The forthcoming latest MPD 2021 with its ambition to make Delhi a "world class city" seems to have further established this growing and disturbing trend through all its policy formulations for planned development of the city.

So where does Delhi's future lie? Or more appropriately, could future directions for developing Delhi move closer towards notions of compactness and greater sustainability? The following section in this paper discusses a possible approach as an alternative to the singular, pro-elitist, top-down 'macro-development' model followed vigorously so far.

SECTION 2: Reading the City (within)

"Delhi is a city of many cities: imagined, lived, and controlled, the landscape has been re-created, rebuilt and made meaningful by the daily acts of inhabiting as well as planned interventions".[8]

Delhi's Master Planning framework is based on a hierarchical system of developmental zones addressing different levels of population needs starting from the neighborhood; the community, the district and further to the zonal and city-level. For each of the identified planning units, policies and decisions are to be correspondingly articulated through the overall Master Plan document at the broadest level and then through Zonal Development Plans (ZDPs) to Local Area Plans (LAPs), and finally Layout Plans for detailed guidelines and regulations. As of now, even after six decades of planned intervention, DDA is yet to delineate and operationalise the next level of planned hierarchy, namely the ZDPs. Further articulation of specific areas and localities through the next two levels has not been commenced yet! It is here that the seeds of disjunction between the planned imagination of the city and its existent realities primarily lie. Over the years, numerous instances of misinterpretation, "illegality", conflicts and contestations have plagued the path of urban development and growth in the city.

The second, and probably, the more significant problem of the planning scenario of Delhi lies within the chosen perspective itself, with which the city is constantly imagined. As a two-dimensional process of guiding future developments, the Master Plan has been seen as a document from the "birds-eye" perspective of seeing the city only as one singular 'whole' without reference to its individual 'parts'. This "over-view" of the city's development paradigm has continuously failed to connect with the prevailing dynamics of urban realities at ground level. Whenever efforts have been made to identify the complexities of the city, planners have conveniently chosen to discuss urban problems oscillating between opposing binaries like, urban – rural, old – new, local – global, nature – city, legal – illegal, public – private and so on, often positioning themselves on one side of the resulting debate and contestation. Such a position becomes immediately exclusive and remote to the ever changing nature of urban life and promotes, both at the conceptual as well as the physical levels of implementation, a scenario of fragmented, isolation of opposing conditions within the city.

Against this prevailing trend of imagining the city, this paper discusses a third perspective taking a "mediatory" position of the **"in-between"[9]** at all levels of conception, discussion and production. Such a shift could then allow the inclusion of divergent view-points nested within each of the above binaries and contribute to the formulation of a more sustainable discourse for our urban future.

Over the years, the disjunction between the planned legislative frameworks along with its corresponding "legal" development pattern as against societal needs at the ground level has resulted in transformation of the physical structure of the city. This has led to formation of planned/ unplanned 'physical' gaps within the fabric of the city. These voids have often been resultant of political decision making or various planning policies adopted by the city. It is the recognition of such layers that have yet to find adequate and focused attention by planners, designers and architects alike. Such areas or "in-between" zones posses their own specific physical, functional and social characteristics. These gaps can be characterized as interstitial pockets between (a) the 'parent' city and an emerging 'edge' city, (b) two distinctive layers of historicity of the city and (c) Individual character districts. Other examples of such "gaps" are (a) Derelict industrial areas within the fabric of the city, (b) Low-density areas (primarily old government housing in central city area) and (c) Urban villages (result of planning gaps around the villages, some engulfed within the urbanized limits and others at the periphery of the city).

At a macro level, large scale physical displacement and social disruption have been inevitable consequences of this rapid and ruthless 'internal colonization' of Delhi motivated primarily by the quest for additional urban space. Further, NCR city expansion and peripheral developments compressed this marginalized population further and resulted in encroachment and occupation of unaccountable land within the city such as interstitial pockets, derelict industrial waste lands etc. Over time, such areas 'develop' / generate their own directions of urbanism primarily revolving around lived experiences, needs and desires. Characteristics of such patterns of urbanization are considered as a 'problem' to the conventional planning process in a city.

As the city keeps expanding rapidly from its traditional pre-industrial roots to the projected global mega-city of tomorrow, it is imperative that as designers for the city, we look within the intricacies of our urban content that comprise and compose this capital city so as to generate and contribute towards an inside perspective for development change. Such a perspective becomes vital in the present planning scenario where lately, a perceptible shift in planning focus is noticeable from the generation of purely new growth and expansion areas in urban peripheries to the up-gradation, renewal, conservation and revitalization of existing city fabrics from within.

"One of the most challenging developments in cities around the world is renewing and reusing sites that are abandoned, out of use, or have to be renovated to meet current needs at present-day standards. This reuse of sites contributes to the compact city concept, because of their location within the existing city boundaries. Accommodating development demands on these sites means that they remain part of a dynamic urban environment. Emphasizing reclamation and upgrading of urban land reduces urban sprawl and contributes to sustainability".[10]

Locating within one such identified "in-between" zone of New Delhi, as a representative case, the paper now traces the possibilities of exploring an alternative methodology towards inner city re-development for greater levels of physical compactness and social sustainability. In the chosen site, a combined complimentary approach borrowing simultaneously from the streams of planning and urban design is highlighted and reflected upon.


Historically the site had been conceived as a buffer zone between Shahjahanabad and the colonial city of New Delhi. During the conceptualization of New Delhi, the recognition of the Indian city was confined only to superficial proposals and more often than not, a problem of significant magnitude to remain distanced from. The 'walled city' became the 'old city' and was rejected as a big slum. Along the outer periphery of this city, this area was intended to act as a "cordon sanitaire" keeping the unhygienic city away, while the city wall was retained only to restrict its expansion towards the imperial garden city of the British Empire. Trapped between Shahjahanabad, the organic medieval walled city built in 1648 on one side and the lavish New Delhi 'planned' by Edwin Lutyens in 1912 on the other side, this area was an "in-between" left over space during colonial times and, in many ways continues to remain so even after independence.
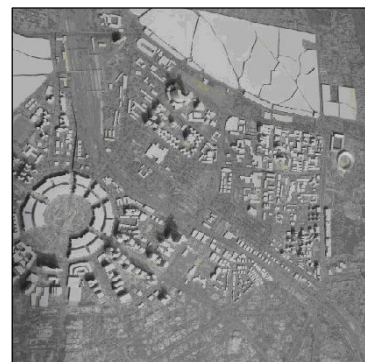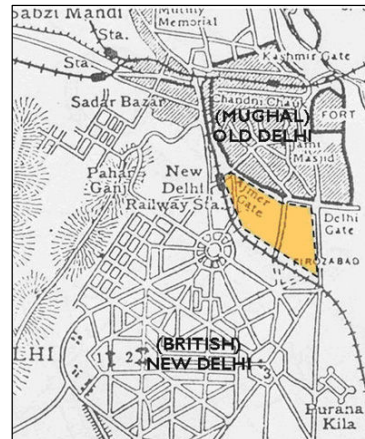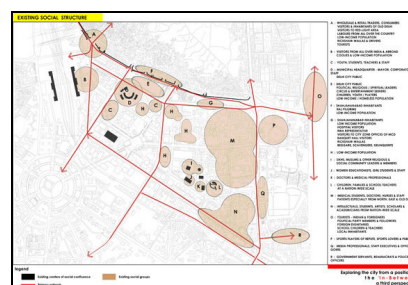

source: author

Today this interface zone lies outside the three existing old gates of the walled city and incorporates the Kamala Market and the Ram Lila Ground, certain inconspicuous buildings, designated green areas, parking lots, a range of city level hospitals, some government housing along with socio-cultural institutions and few interspersed squatter settlements. In 1950's the historic city wall was demolished and replaced by another stretch of commercial office buildings and shops along a new peripheral road now known popularly as the Asaf Ali Road. Along this northern edge, a dense network of narrow winding streets from within Shahjahanabad opens out to this area through the gates and other crevices, as if breathing a huge sigh of relief.

The other side of the green 'buffer' is dotted with high-rise landmark buildings, hospitals and government establishments all built after Independence. Like the under construction 28 storey high Civic Centre for the Municipal Corporation of Delhi, abutting the prominent Jawaharlal Nehru Marg that runs parallel to the Asaf Ali Road, this area has started realizing some of the dreams of Nehru himself who saw these institutions as 'temples of modern India'. The entry to the city for thousands of passengers and visitors daily happen through this eventful string of spaces due to the presence of the main rail station of New Delhi along with the new metro network opening out here. Not only people, but the movement of goods from the numerous wholesale markets and business centers inside the walled city all happen through this city "gateway".
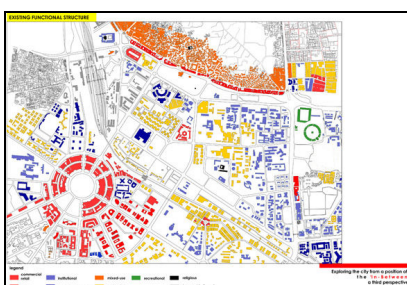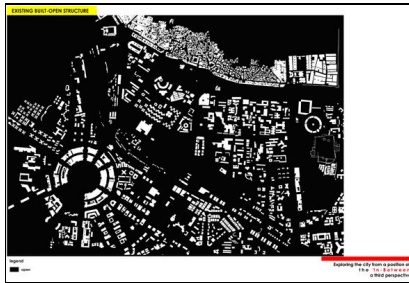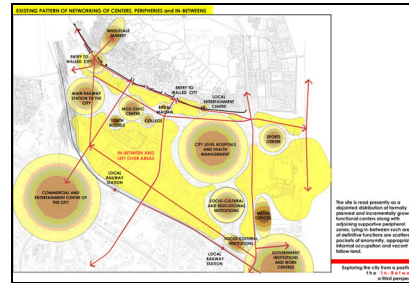

source: author

source: author

The multiple layers of human relationships and inter-dependencies that comprise this kind of place in the city become overwhelmingly complex when juxtaposed with the dynamism of purpose and time within the given space. A node like Ajmeri gate of the Walled city defies any attempt to be described in terms of its diversity of social content that inhabits and occupies this space. Passengers, commuters, migrants, visitors, traders, transporters, porters, vendors, beggars,……a huge section of the urban community as well as the rural hinterland find representation in this space all through the day and right into the night. The railway station and Metro along with all the bus routes cater to visitors and city residents while people from old Delhi pour out of their congested areas through the 'Ajmeri' gate into this place. At night, it is to access G.B. road the (in) famous red-light area of Delhi that the node again gets used and activated.

Another kind of drama, in a far more ritualistic and theatrical sense unfolds at more than frequent intervals at the Ramlila Maidan when during political rallies and religious gathering, thousands of people appear almost from nowhere to set alive a seemingly harmless and indifferent piece of barren land at the periphery of the walled city. Rhetorical speeches, collective chants, vociferous crowds, jostling madness, traffic jams all get witnessed during such eventful occasions in complete contrast to the everyday cycle of routine recreation and passive relaxation that would have deceptively fooled any ordinary passer-by on any other ordinary uneventful day!
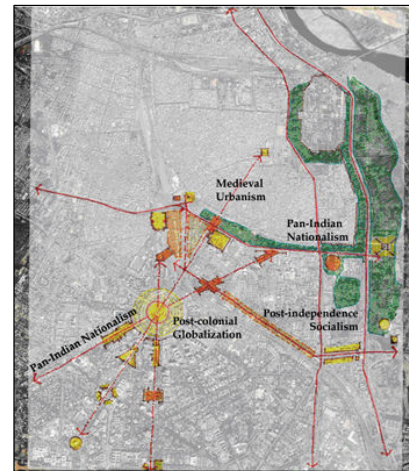
source: author

source: author

The site is thus essentially a spatial entity i.e.; the predominance of space over form / mass that distinguish this area from many other adjoining parts of the city and offers a platform for exploring and addressing multiplicities and pluralities of context and complexity beyond the existing notions of binaries. The site is presently read as a disjointed distribution of formally planned and incrementally grown functional centers along with adjoining supportive peripheral zones. Lying in-between such areas of definitive functions are scattered pockets of anonymity, appropriation, informal occupation and vacant fallow land.

"Cities always have such places of marginality and difference, and they are often very creative and resourceful places essential to a city's continuing development and inextricable from its sustainability. Sustainability in this context must include processes of negotiation, representation, social justice, and the formation of new partnerships which can add different forms of problem solving to the dominant model".[11]

At the level of the city, the site is seen as a large "in-between" area surrounded by zones of multiple urbanisms. One such zone is the zone of **"post-independence socialism"** heralded by Nehru with numerous state institutions for education, health, language, religion and the like. The second identified layer is the colonial city center of Connaught Place which through time has retained itself as the most important central node of the city and reflects the growing expressions of **"post-colonial globalization"** in its retail and commercial activities. Across the site, lies the corridor of **"Pan-Indian nationalism"**, one end of which is constituted of national memorials to Indian leaders (Rajghat, Shakti Sthal etc) and the other end of which is Baba Kharag Singh Marg with representations of arts and crafts from across various states of our country in state emporias. Finally, one encounters the dense, thriving, dynamic historic core of the walled city of Shahjahanabad that embodies qualities of its original **"medieval urbanism"** offering significant lessons to the city as it moves forward in time.

source: author

The selected site offers the potential of an integrated planning and urban design exploration on issues articulated below with specific reference to the varying conditions of "in-between" inherent in the area. Viewed from this perspective of multiple urbanisms and complex inter-relationships, such an "in-between" domain of the site requires a fresh inter-disciplinary approach towards future directions of change. These issues, though specific to the area under exploration, finds resemblance and repetition in other categories of in-between zones as mentioned earlier. Issues at city level could be summarized as (a) Degradation of left-over, ambiguous "in-between" zones as unattended areas leading to negative domains, (b) Lack of definition / recognition of such areas as critical support organs for primary city

operations and (c) Underutilized potential of such areas as possible zones of legible character, image and contribution to contemporary city demands.

Specific to the selected area, some of the issues observed at site level are (a) Existence of multiple sets of primary functions such as railway station, wholesale market, health and educational facilities, institutions and residential enclaves in isolated dispersed and segregated pockets, (b) Large areas of vacant, unoccupied and highly accessible land as resource in the center of the city to cater to contemporary needs, (c) Major part of the site area under ownership with government and public agencies allowing possible design intervention strategies to be feasibly implemented, (d) Strong presence of varied public life in streets and open spaces at various parts of the site suggests possibilities of enhanced people-centric spatial and functional systems in this part of the city, (e) Lack of physical and functional expressions to prevailing lines / zones of association and meaning (which lie blurred / hidden) in various parts of the site and (f) Lack of definition and imageability along city-level experiential corridors.

Issues and complexities that emerge from such an interface and the consequent choices, challenges and dilemmas shall constitute the arena of possible design intervention and demonstration. A strategy for the generation of a 'creative' urban design framework for development shall be explored for directed change of these areas within the city. Such a framework shall incorporate aspects of (a) negotiation, (b) collaboration, (c) assimilation and (d) accommodation of the external demands from the global with the internal desires of change from the local.

This project thus explores the conceptualization and formation of urban space from the intermediary third perspective as discussed earlier. As against the absolute and abstract spaces of history that characterize various parts of the city, this area is re-imagined as a "differential" space[12] within the city. Prevailing issues at both levels of the city and site, give rise to the development of a series of planning and design objectives so as to address the characteristic conditions of this in-between zone in the city. Some of these objectives are seen as follows:

1. Apparent disparities, disjunctions, segregation and ambiguity give rise to the need of formulating a possible **strategy for mediation** including the discourse between 'old' and 'new'
2. The existence of this area as a manifestation of the historic divide or separation between Old Delhi and its newer parts without any significant attention to negotiate this situation gives rise to finding possibilities of **bridging the gap** at all levels of its existence.
3. The enormous intensity and diversity of activities, both at the everyday and ritualistic level within non-designed zones of the urban fabric gives rise to the need and possibility of imagining and conceptualizing a **third layer** of urban elements for design.
4. The potential for additional new development offered by the site along with its location at the confluence of different layers of historicity and morphology asks for a developmental program that engages the notions of **object – place - image** adequately for contemporary societal needs.

As discussed in detail earlier this site offers a platform for exploring and addressing multiplicities and pluralities of context and complexity. It allows for a creative, yet challengiing confluence of urban planning and design expertise to commence an explanatory agenda on such kinds of "in-between" conditions within city spaces.

Planning policies and design strategies are proposed with the idea of compactness and sustainable development at all levels as a primary prerogative. Aspects of 'multiplicity', 'sharing' of resources and 'inter-dependence' are therefore incorporated with respect to

physical, functional and sociological structures towards greater possibilities of sustainability within inner city areas.

As mentioned before, the Master plan as a single planning document has proven to be an insufficient and ineffective tool due to the singular and often elitist (exclusive) perspective of reading the city. ZDP's come closer to the realities of city as compared to the MPD but suffices primarily in addressing broad zonal (qualities) characteristics and connected issues. The average area covered by each ZDP is still far too "macro" for effective management and servicing of diverse city needs.

The project proposes the formation of **sub-zonal level "directional plans"** guiding development towards integrated and differentiated systems of growth and change. This allows for the generation (conception) of integrated and inclusive / inter-related (and differentiated) developmental (patterns) systems. This gives way to the proposal of Local Area Plans which allow for the formulation of specific programs and policies in consonance with local demands and participatory decision making.

The next step involves, releasing urban use & functions from the exclusive and constraining determination of long term fixity & allowing for local level functional additions by community groups towards specific needs. Change of landuse in most local cases (especially in residential areas) could involve a simple consensual mechanism of certified approval by immediate neighbors and citizen welfare groups which could then be considered by the development agency at that "local" level . This may then promote a more community–based and hence a stronger pro- active engagement with each citizen towards aspects of developmental change.

While physical infrastructure - transportation, water, electricity, sewage and sanitation - have started getting due attention by the government triggered by increased market based pressures (including global demands), it is the degree and quality of social infrastructure - education, health, security, cultural, recreation - levels that have constantly escaped attention by city development agencies. The project emphasizes the role of the state in the provision for social infrastructure needs at all levels, scales and categories of urban society to be primary and accountable. Community-based mechanisms for management of such amenities are then formulated along with innovative funding strategies for feasible implementation.

At the design level, the project attempts to delineate a future direction to such areas of complexity by picking up clues, hints and suggestions of prevailing social practices and spatial appropriation. The proposed scheme recognizes the site as a 'critical support organ' in the city with respect to existence of multiple sets of primary functions which as of now exist in isolated, dispersed and segregated pockets. The strong presence of a varied and vibrant public life in streets and open spaces at various parts of the site suggests possibilities of enhanced people centric spatial and functional systems. The project aims to thus promote and enhance 'heterogeneity' and 'mix' at functional, physical and sociological levels. It allows for flexibility and change in purview of parallel initiatives by the city authorities, private promoter and the community, thus establishing a catalytic and supportive functional networking, allowing for "spill-over" and encouraging "sharing" of resources in terms of parking, waste disposal and other service functions.
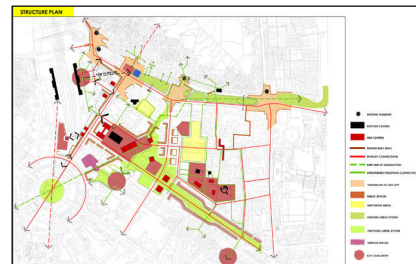
source: author

Using the conceptual framework and design intervention strategies, the project further attempts to generate a series of possible scenarios for development against varying

parameters of generation. Each scenario maintains the pre-dominant importance of simultaneous explorations of both primary and supportive spaces in this part of the city and as exhibited originally by the site while new centers, their peripheries and further zones of in-between are consciously bound together as symbolic layers within this part of the city.

Conclusions

Macro-planning at the level of the city is not enough. Attention at lower levels of planning hierarchy and creating a "bottom-up" location specific strategy becomes a SIMULTANEOUS necessity. The need for an "inclusive" position between contestations and divergent views for our kind of complex city conditions is of vital importance for a sustainable future.

Future imaginations for the city have to find ways of STRENGHTENING the social fabric of urban centers while considering their economic potentials. In today's globalizing world, the ground realities of diverse social aspirations and needs cannot be marginalized any further.

Mere two-dimensional planning using land-use as the primary tool is extremely myopic to today's nature of development demands. An inter-disciplinary approach which, at the very least, entwines planning strategies with three-dimensional urban design explorations for specific sets of issues needs to be formulated. Such an approach should compulsorily find "bridging" resolutions between the various hierarchies of planning domains and emphasis in order to reach towards effective and necessary compactness of our cities.

Divya Chopra,
Architect, Urban Designer
India.

References:

Master Plan – 2021 (www.dda.org.in)
Zonal Development Plan, Zone (Division - 'D' NEW DELHI) (www.dda.org.in/planning)

Books:

1. (Edited by) Deb, Kushal & Patel, Sujata (2006), *Urban Studies*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press
2. Evenson, Norma (1989), *The Indian Metropolis, a view towards west,* New Haven, Yale University Press
3. Evers, Hans-Dieter & Korff, Riidiger (2000), *Southeast Asian Urbanism: The Meaning And Power Of Social Space,* Lit Verlag
4. Hosagrahar, Jyoti (2005), *Indigenous Modernities, Negotiating architecture and urbanism,* London, Routledge
5. *The Public Domain: Sarai Reader 01,* New Delhi, Sarai – the New Media Initiative
6. (Edited by) Lefebvre, Henri & (Translated by) Smith, Donald Nicholson (1991), *Production of Space,* Oxford, UK, Blackwell
7. Miller, Donald & Roo, Gert de (2000), *Compact cities and Sustainable Urban Development,* Ashgate Pub Ltd
8. (Edited by) Read Stephen, Rosemann Jurgen, Eldijk Job van, (2005), *Future City,* Spon Press

Articles:

1. Bavaskar, Amita, "The Politics of City", (www.india-seminar/2001/500)
2. Diggelen, M.W.G. van, & Tijl, D.J., "Urban Regeneration in districst built in 1950s", *Compact cities and Sustainable Urban Development,* Ashgate Pub Ltd
3. Hinsley, Hugo, "Sustainable Inner city renewal", *Compact cities and Sustainable Urban Development,* Ashgate Pub Ltd

4. Menon, A.G.K, "Imagining the Indian city", in proceedings of the Theaters of Decolonization Conference, Chandigarh January 6 – 10, 1995
5. Menon, A.G.K, "The Contemporary Architecture of Delhi: Role of the state as Middleman", Delhi Games, (Edited by) Dupont, Veronique & Tarlo, Emma (1999), New Delhi, Centre de Sciences Humanies, Manohar Publishing
6. Nigam, Aditya (2001), "Dislocating Delhi: A city in the 1990's", *The Public Domain: Sarai Reader 01,* New Delhi, Sarai – the New Media Initiative
7. Roy, Dunu (2004), "Imaginary cities", *Combat Law,* Vol. 3, Issue 3, September-October 2004, *India Together,* January 2005 (www.indiatogether.org/combatlaw/vol3/issue3/fakecity.htm)
8. Sen, Jai (2001), "The Un-intended City", (www.india-seminar/2001/500)
9. Soni, Anita, "Urban Conquest of Outer Delhi Beneficiaries, Intermediaries and Victims: The case of the Mehrauli Countryside", Edited by Deb Kushal, Patel Sujata (2006), *Urban Studies*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press
10. Williams, Katie (Dr.), "Can urban intensification contribute to sustainable cities?: An International Perspective, Oxford Center for Sustainable Development, Oxford Brookes University

Endnotes:

[1] Evenson, Norma (1989), *The Indian Metropolis, a view towards west,* New Haven, Yale University Press

[2] Roy, Dunu (2005), "Imaginary cities", *Combat Law,* Vol. 3, Issue 3, September-October 2004, *India Together,* January 2005
www.indiatogether.org/combatlaw/vol3/issue3/fakecity.htm

[3] Roy, Dunu (2005), "Imaginary cities", *Combat Law,* Vol. 3, Issue 3, September-October 2004, *India Together,* January 2005
www.indiatogether.org/combatlaw/vol3/issue3/fakecity.htm

[4] Hosagrahar, Jyoti (2005), Indigenous Modernities, Negotiating architecture and urbanism, London, Routledge

[5] Hosagrahar, Jyoti (2005), *Indigenous Modernities, Negotiating architecture and urbanism,* London, Routledge

[6] Evenson, Norma (1989), *The Indian Metropolis, a view towards west,* New Haven, Yale University Press

[7] Soni, Anita, "Urban Conquest of Outer Delhi Beneficiaries, Intermediaries and Victims: The case of the Mehrauli Countryside", Edited by Deb Kushal, Patel Sujata (2006), *Urban Studies*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press

[8] Hosagrahar, Jyoti (2005), *Indigenous Modernities, Negotiating architecture and urbanism,* London, Routledge

[9] For a detailed discussion on the notion of "in-between" refer to:
  Bharne Vinayak, "The Solid, the Void and the In-between",
  Ramaswamy Deepa, "Threshold and Transitions: In-between the public and private realm,
  Exploring the urban condition – E2 – contest, (www.groupe-e2.com)

[10] Miller, Donald & Roo, Gert de ( ), *Compact cities and Sustainable Urban Development,* Ashgate Pub Ltd

[11] Hinsley, Hugo ( ), "Sustainable Inner city renewal", *Compact cities and Sustainable Urban Development,* Ashgate Pub Ltd

[12] (Edited by) Lefebvre, Henri & (Translated by) Smith, Donald Nicholson (1991), *Production of Space,* Oxford, UK, Blackwell