

COMMUNITY & STREETS: DISCUSSION SERIES

(26th OCTOBER – 15th NOVEMBER, 2015)

BACKGROUND

Given the nature of the present urban expansion and exponential inward densification of typical urban precincts in Delhi, coupled with the rapidly growing personal vehicle population per capita, middle income urban neighbourhoods face an unprecedented challenge of rampant vehicular occupation and a complete loss of public realm. In addition, most of such residential “colonies” were designed without pavements and designated parking in mind (mostly since everyone cycled at the time they were planned). Very little is being done by either private or public sector for looking at a comprehensive methodology to reorganize the public realm to cope with the existing issues of pedestrian / NMT access and localized parking demand management, in an integrated manner. Such a situation also poses questions on what impact huge investments made by the city towards public transport upgradation and improvement of arterial roads for “smoother traffic”, will have if the neighbourhoods themselves are in a gridlock.

AAPKI SADAK is a project conceived by Ashok B. Lall Architects (ABLA), in partnership with other independent organisations; Innovative Transport Solutions (iTrans), Oasis Design Incorporated (ODI) and Sandeep Gandhi Architects (SGA), Mriganka Saxena (HTAU). It is a community engagement led process

SDMC to breathe life into ‘Aap Ki Sadak’ project

EASY ACCESS The pilot project aims to decongest busy roads and is restricted to a stretch in Malviya Nagar

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NEW DELHI: After many hiccups and hurdles, the much awaited project ‘Aap Ki Sadak’ may soon be implemented. Conceived way back in 2013, the project aimed to make the streets smarter and involved decongesting areas by redesigning the roads and making them pedestrian-friendly and accessible for all. The pilot project was supposed to launch from Malviya Nagar and included redevelopment of internal roads for smooth traffic flow based on the suggestions of local residents and Residents’ Welfare Association (RWA). However, due to lack of consensus between the area representatives and authorities, the project could not see the light of day.

Now, the South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) is planning to rework on the project and is coordinating with consultants to draw a final action plan before taking it up with other agencies for implementation. The project will be restricted to one single road in Malviya Nagar and based on commuters’ reaction, it will be introduced to other roads.

Somnath Bhatti, the area MLA, informed, “I have spoken to Uday Kumar, the deputy commissioner of SDMC (south zone) on this issue. To start with, we have picked up the redesigning of the road connecting gate no 3 of Malviya Nagar Metro station to the roundabout (near bus stand) and Khirki extension (via Nirankari School). For this construction, a portion of Delhi Development Authority’s (DDA’s) land near gate number 3 of the Metro Station was sanctioned. The entire stretch, once developed as per the plan, will give residents of Khirki extension and Malviya Nagar an easy access to the Metro station.”

He continued, “Encroachment over the stretches is a big problem and a reason for traffic congestion and long jams. That is why we aimed to widen and redevelop the stretches and make them accessible for all.”

The concept Aap Ki Sadak was presented by an NGO and executed by teams consisting architects, urban designers, streetscape specialists and mobility experts. They worked together and took suggestions from the residents of Malviya Nagar, Khirki extension and Sheikh Sarai to develop a plan for the improvement of their streets. Not just decongesting the roads, they aim to bring an environment-friendly connection to public transport.

Atul Kapur, a resident of Shivalik who was present at the initial meetings, said, “The project is good and will help in clearing the roads. But, its implementation looks difficult as in the past when the concept was introduced there was lack of consensus between the area representatives.”

The experts prepared the design proposals and a detailed project report was presented to Unified Traffic and Transportation Infrastructure (Planning & Engineering) Centre (UTTIPEC).

The UTTIPEC comes under DDA and promotes pedestrian inclusion and public transport in the development of the city. Later, the traffic and infrastructure body advised the corporation to go ahead with project. The SDMC had then met RWAs and other agencies and area representatives to ensure that the streets will be accessible to all the users and not just vehicles.

The meetings were based on interactive methodology so that the feedback from the residents and other key stakeholders (implementing agencies) could be received faster and consensus was swift.

“But even after two or three public meetings, where members from various agencies were also present, a conclusion could not be drawn and there were differences in opinions. Finally, the project was left midway. However, seeing the ever-increasing problem of encroachment and traffic congestion in the area we have planned to rework on the project. But we will be coordinating with consultants only.” informed Mukesh Yadav, SDMC spokesperson.

they say

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MUKESH YADAV, SDMC spokesperson

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ATUL KAPUR, Shivalik resident



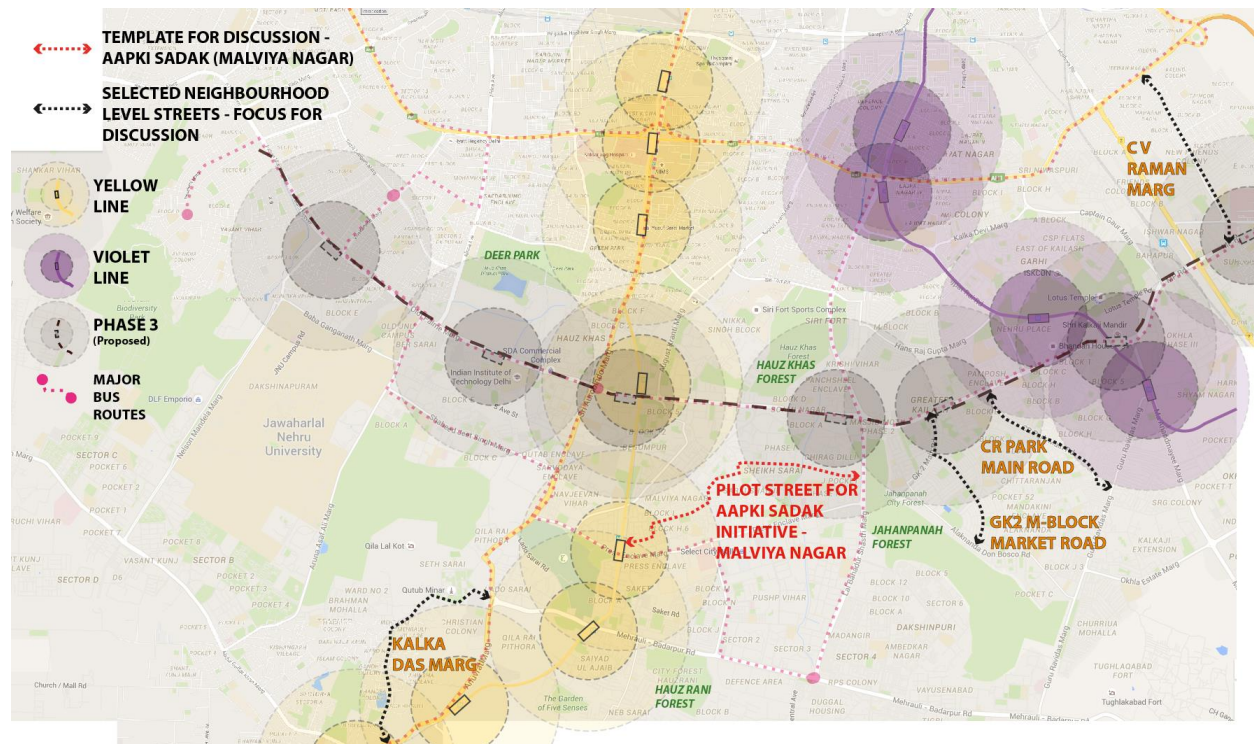
Conceived in 2013, the project aimed to make the streets smarter and involved decongesting areas by redesigning the roads and making them pedestrian-friendly and accessible for all. SANCHIT KHANNA / HT PHOTO

with detailed surveys and technical design support to arrive at practical solutions. UTTIPEC and the LG have approved the project ‘in - principle’ and the SDMC have formally adopted the project, with implementation to be taken up shortly. The Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) and the Ward Councillor have acknowledged this desire by residents. In turn, the residents are encouraged to give their support for executing the proposals.

DISCUSSION SERIES – COMMUNITY & STREETS

In the context of the Aapki Sadak Project being implemented shortly in Malviya Nagar, the team had undertaken a broader discussion with other neighbourhoods of South Delhi in collaboration with URJA. The series brought together “the experts” and “the users” for a series of roundtable discussions on real issues surrounding their streets and public realm. The idea is to initiate a broader dialogue, reaching a much bigger audience of resident bodies, currently absent in the city, particularly with regards to mobility and the access to public realm.

EVENT	VENUE*	DATE*
Launch event with convenors and ward coordinators of URJA	India Habitat Centre	26 th Sept
Mehrauli – KALKA DAS MARG	School	
New Friends’ Colony – C V RAMAN MARG	B-Block Park	17 th Oct
Greater Kailash 2 – M-BLOCK MARKET ROAD	M-Block Park	24 th Oct
C R Park – C R PARK MAIN ROAD / EPDP ROAD	C-Block Park	31 st Oct
Wrap up Session with RWA members of URJA and technical experts	India Habitat Centre	15th Nov



Map of South Delhi showing the streets selected for the discussion series

Following the series of intense neighbourhood meetings, it is time to reflect on the process & outcomes in the background of the Aapki Sadak project and with strong commitment to forging ahead!!

Wrap-Up Session: OUTCOMES & WAY FORWARD

VENUE : MAGNOLIA HALL, INDIA HABITAT CENTRE [IHC], Lodhi Road

DATE : SUNDAY, 15th November, 2015

TIME: 10:30 A.M - 4:30 P.M