

Reimagining CR Park: A new paradigm for community living

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As India continues to evaluate its urban centres to strategically place them in the future development trajectory, citizen driven projects to create places for contemporary communities can turn probability into purpose. Making and managing the shared public spaces, in such cases, can easily become a group activity, inculcating citizen stewardship. Communities need two drivers for bringing about change: **zealous community leaders** and **active public spaces** to meet, learn, play and express. CRPark is fortunate to have the energetic leaders that we met at **CHALO BODLAI- Dialogues for change**. And our proposal for re-imagining CRPark, the pilot venture to improve public realm, provides a vision which stakeholders would identify with and officials would find convincing enough to execute.

Unlike many Indian cities, south Delhi is fortunate to be interspersed with **large open spaces, planned market areas, institutions** and broad **streets** which are the **ASSETS** of the neighbourhoods. We analysed various connections here: between institutions and communities, public realm and people, street as traffic corridor and street as place, market as a place for exchange of goods and exchange of ideas. Hence we have tried to merge the dual sided connections into multilayered resolution through urban design framework for a new paradigm of community living that can **LINK, ACTIVATE, TRANSFORM** and **ENHANCE** the precinct.

First design strategy is to **LINK** these **ASSETS** through active, accessible and walkable **streets** to **energise and mobilize** the community to allow CR Park to become a **collective neighbourhood**, restoring inclusivity and community spirit.

Secondly, **ACTIVATE** the **ASSETS** through interventions and program infusion. Activated streets and public space edges help abate **safety** and security concerns. Streets are dotted with parklets for seating, reading, play or simply hanging out to see people and be seen! Walls around parks are replaced by green hedges, for visual and physical **permeability**. Walls of private properties are perforated and converted to green walls to filter air pollution. Edges of schools and community centres are activated by reclaiming parking space and introducing low cost interventions that can afford activities.

The precinct thus activated will **TRANSFORM** into a better place, physically and environmentally, to have less traffic and more people and trees, less hard paved and more permeable surfaces, less pollution and better air quality, less traffic and safer places, less encroachment and more **addas**.

“Everyone has the right to live in a great place. More importantly, everyone has the right to contribute to making the place where they already live great”. The people can **ENHANCE** the place with local art installation, exhibitions of its history or simply with trees and planters. Our proposal provides several spaces that encourage incorporation of local art and culture, street play and music performances by people, family and children activity area and much more through ‘**lighter-quicker-cheaper**’ community led cost effective ideas

Eka Haat Bazaar

The inspiration for the design of ***Eka Haat Bazaar*** as a small oasis of socio-cultural activities, an '***adda***', is born from the conversations with community. The place is designed as a dynamic destination where its **edges**, **courtyard** and **terrace** are transformed to house activities such as gathering, play, festivities, performances, food court, '***chai-pe-charcha***' and a place for exchange of **ideas for community appraisal**.

Temporary interventions around the market focus on reclaiming space from parking and encroachments. This can be done with **planters**, **seating** made from packaging boxes attained from market shops and creating more space to meet and greet. The **signages** of the shops can be organized and standardizing to create visual harmony. Permanent interventions include re-organizing the fish market and building **steps and ramps** to make bazaar universally accessible. Steps allow seating for events or can be used for resting between shopping and eating *puchkas*! The **terrace** can be made accessible and converted into **small museum** to showcase '***haat bazaar itihas***', playspace, library and can be anchored with a **café** so that the place can be maintained and managed. The ground along the streets and courtyard can be intercepted with plantation, seating, carom and reading nooks and foodcourt.

Bipin Chandra Pal Marg and public space edges

Currently, the streets are dominated by fast moving vehicles and parking, which make it unsafe and leave no scope for active social life or pedestrian amenity. We propose transforming the functional yet drab artery into an active '***adda***' that showcases CRPark's **vitality, diversity and identity**. The 18m right-of-way of BCPal road is reorganized into a holistic experience providing space for efficient traffic movement, recreation, sports and innumerable prospects for social connection.

Temporary interventions on the street include **road dieting**, **playstreets** and **pop-up markings** for cycling & pay-and-park zones. The road space for vehicles is **right-sized** and reallocated to better serve the pedestrians. Benefits of such an intervention include **reduced crossing distance** for pedestrians, slowed traffic speed and more space for walking and activities. **Playstreets** are streets with lesser entries to buildings and can be closed to through-traffic intermittently with consensus from residents to create **safe space** for children and families to cycle, skate, skip-hop, jump, be joyous and active! COVID 19 has surged need for **cycling infrastructure** thus **cycle lanes** can be created by marking road with special paint. The BC Pal road is made pay-and-park zone to **generate revenue** and discourage free on-street parking.

Permanent interventions include wider sidewalks with **streetscape**, **traffic calming** and **parklets**. Wider sidewalks activate the streets as public spaces and are known to **enhance health and social life**. Traffic calming, much needed to **prevent overspeeding** on BCPal road, includes road dieting, narrowing turning radii around corners, curb extensions and table-top crossings. Appearance of crossing can be changed by colored asphalt or pavers to create visual interest and alert drivers. **Parklets** can be designed as vibrant spaces with seating, plantation, cycle racks, vending and play opportunities.

Our proposal is about public space transformations that would **inspire people** to engage in improving places they share and can indeed reinvent the human connections as investments in precious public spaces should be **inclusive, sustainable and result in overall well-being**.