

our cities ourselves

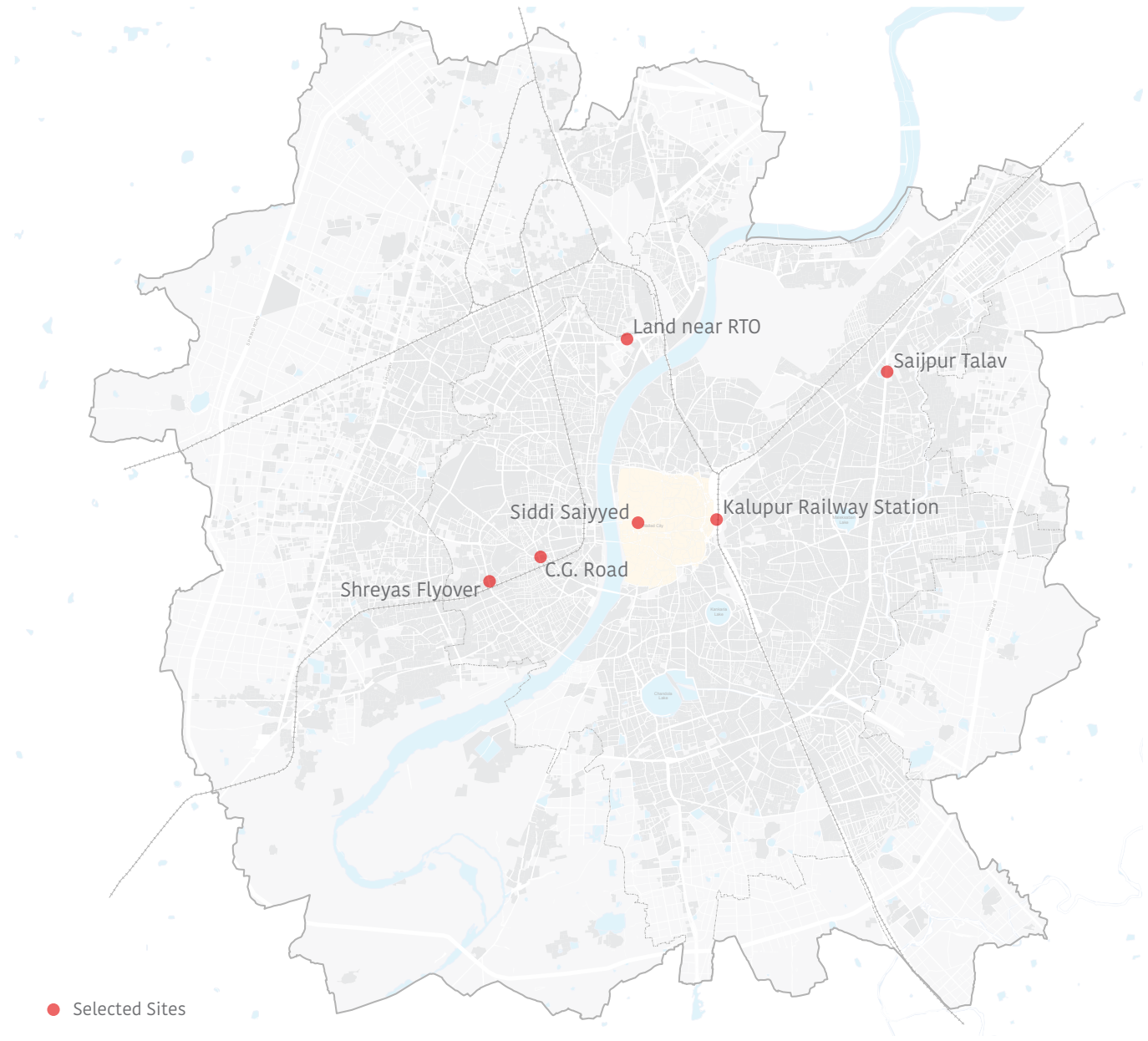
# vision of ahmedabad



## Contents

Introduction	03
C.G. Road	04
Shreyas Flyover	08
Siddi Saiyyed	12
Saijpur Talav	16
Land near RTO	20
Kalupur Station	24
Participating Architects	28
Citizens Council	30
About Our Cities Ourselves	31
Principles for Transport in Urban Life	32
OCO International Travelling Exhibition	34
Acknowledgements	36

# Vision of Ahmedabad



Vision of Ahmedabad is an exploration of what our city can be in 2030. The vision embraces the unique character of Ahmedabad while seeking a more equitable and environmentally sustainable future. Six leading Ahmedabad architects—Kamal Mangaldas, Parul Zaveri & Nimish Patel, Rajeev Kathpalia, Bimal Patel, Aniket Bhagwat, and Apurva Amin—and their teams developed the images that make up the Vision. The architect teams focused on six different sites, exploring how the city's streets and public spaces can become more comfortable and appealing to everyone. The teams met frequently to discuss and debate their proposals. Along the way, they have been advised and guided by a Citizens Council formed by a group of eminent Ahmedabad residents.

The Vision of Ahmedabad was developed as a part of Our Cities Ourselves, a programme initiated by Institute for Transport and Development Policy (ITDP). Central to the Our Cities Ourselves programme are Principles of Transport in Urban Life that seek to highlight the needs of people and the environment in the way that we plan our cities

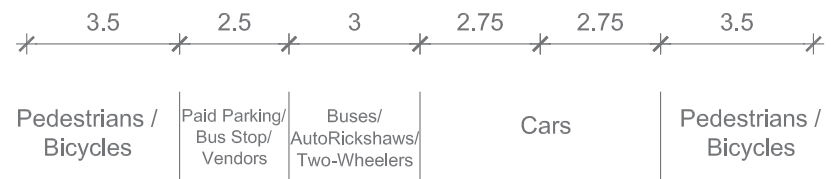
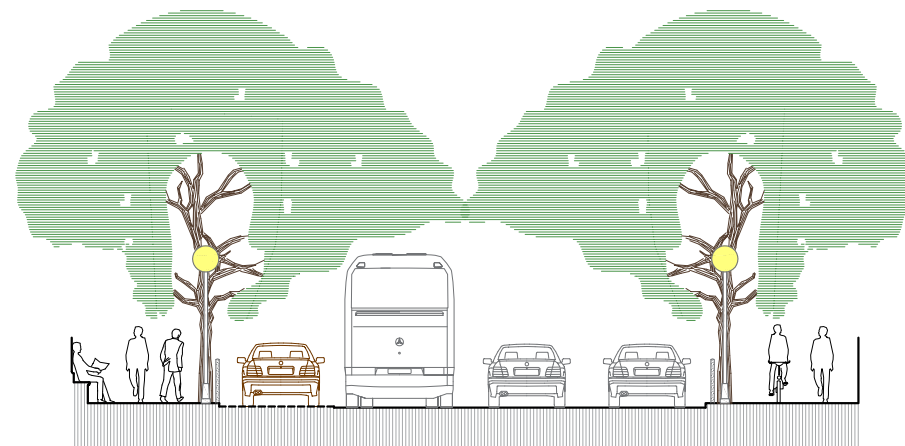
and transport systems. Our Cities Ourselves began with an exhibition in New York featuring vision of ten cities from around the world. The exhibition has since travelled to other cities across the world and is being displayed in Ahmedabad by ITDP in partnership with Environmental Planning Collaborative (EPC). The Vision of Ahmedabad exhibition is being displayed along side this international travelling exhibition.

The aim of this exhibition is to initiate a conversation about the future of our cities. The vision of Ahmedabad, or any city for that matter, is incomplete without the views of its citizens. Awareness and engagement of citizens can mean the difference between a city that withers under the pressure of growing traffic and pollution and one that approaches these challenges with a proactive, determined response. This can be the beginning of a conversation about improving the quality of our lives and realizing a new vision of our cities, ourselves.

## background

# Streets as Green Public Open Spaces

Kamal Mangaldas Architect



18M ONE-WAY STREET

c.g. road



18m wide Mangaldas road is reorganised to create shaded places for people to walk.



The public environment on Ahmedabad's streets is uninspiring and extremely challenging for pedestrians. Haphazard parking is the worst culprit: footpaths are used only as parking spaces. The car-centric design of most streets is unsafe for children and other vulnerable road users. Street trees are largely absent, making it uncomfortable to walk during Ahmedabad's hot summers. Huge, haphazard hoardings dominate and deface the cityscape.

Good streets can transform the entire city. They can become green public open spaces, right at everyone's doorstep. The city will be neat and clean—but with vibrant, pulsating public spaces. The single most important element is the continuous canopy of mature trees on roadsides and medians. The trees offer shade and visual delight. Wide, well-maintained footpaths are friendly toward children, the elderly, and the disabled, and there are seats where people can socialize. Protected cycle tracks make it safe even for novice cyclists to ride safely. Parking is paid and footpaths are reserved for pedestrians. There is adequate space for vendors, with seating, refuse bins, and other facilities. Hoardings are automatically regulated by the trees!

C.G. Road is transformed from a car-centric road to a people-centric street.







Envisioned by Kamal Mangaldas Architect

# Potentially Vibrant Community Spaces under the Flyovers

Abhikram | Panika

Public viewing activities surrounded by vibrant painted surfaces facilitating community identity and spirit.

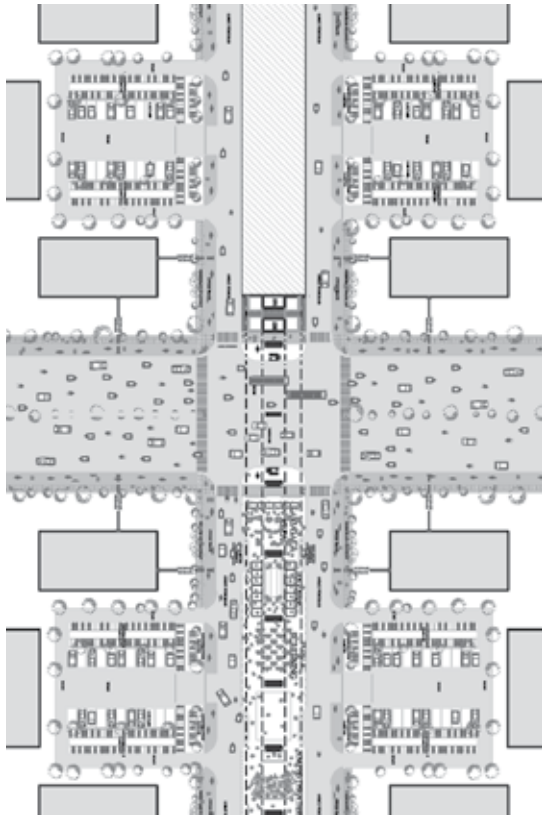


shreyas flyover

The space provides a platform for multifarious community and cultural events like street play, community meetings, folk performances, political rallies and so on. Such a space could also allow other activities such as markets for street food, flowers & vegetables, craft, materials-centric weekly markets, other informal markets, children's workshops, painting & oratory competitions, entertainment events, community needs like public toilets, legal rickshaws & taxi stands etc.



Envisioned by Abhikram | Panika



Traffic congestion and encroachments are demonstrative of the current pressure on the streets of the city. This increasing pressure lowers the quality of life for residents. Interventions such as the Janmarg (Ahmedabad BRT) are the few rays of hope.

Shreyas rail over bridge was built in 2006 and now carries one of Ahmedabad's BRT routes. The 1.5 acres of space below the flyover have attracted some street vendors but remain largely unused. Ahmedabad has more than fifteen flyovers and rail over bridges which have leftover and underutilized spaces beneath them which total approximately 20-25 acres, and more in various stages of construction.

The vision demonstrates how presently neglected spaces beneath flyovers can be utilized to augment inadequacies of the existing conditions and become vibrant community areas. The space between supporting pillars can be used for multiple activities during the day and night. Assuming that the present insufficient width of the roads alongside the over bridge will be revised to include designated cycle tracks and pedestrian pathways, helping to make the new community spaces more accessible and linking them with the nearby Dharnidhar BRT station. Communities around each flyover will be able to decide their own needs & priorities, so as to convert the areas below the flyovers for uses complimenting their collective aspirations.



Exploring the potential for transforming the negative urban spaces under the flyovers into positive, usable and vibrant community areas, catering to the aspirations of the local communities, incorporating vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle segregation.



Envisioned by Abhikram | Panika

# Walkable Ahmedabad

Vastu Shilpa Foundation

Living in a park  
From Patang Hotel looking towards the  
old city



Life between buildings  
From Bhadra Fort looking towards the river



Envisioned by Vastu Shilpa Foundation

Bhadra palace and the citadel complex were amongst the first buildings that were erected in the city core. The monuments and the environment which once made the place are long forgotten. Monuments have become mere traffic junctions. This historic core of the city has become prey to congestion, pollution and overcrowding with a dearth of public open spaces for the citizens.

At the Bhadra and Siddi Saiyyed precinct, one imagines a transformation, a new environment where people are encouraged to walk through parks and gardens, ride bikes and take shortcuts. The Siddi Saiyyed mosque precinct is made pedestrian with tree-lined avenues and spaces for street vendors, making the mosque an anchor of a much needed public space. Sardar Baug is envisioned as an undulating natural habitat allowing for a multitude of activities. Heritage buildings are integrated in the heart of the city where people can come, celebrate and reminisce. Alternative sources of energy are explored; the pedestrian pathways are lined with photovoltaic systems. Water is used as an element of orientation throughout the precinct. The river's edge becomes an extension to the larger park system proposed in the area.







Envisioned by Vastu Shilpa Foundation

## Lakes for Neighbourhoods

HCP Design & Project Management Pvt. Ltd.

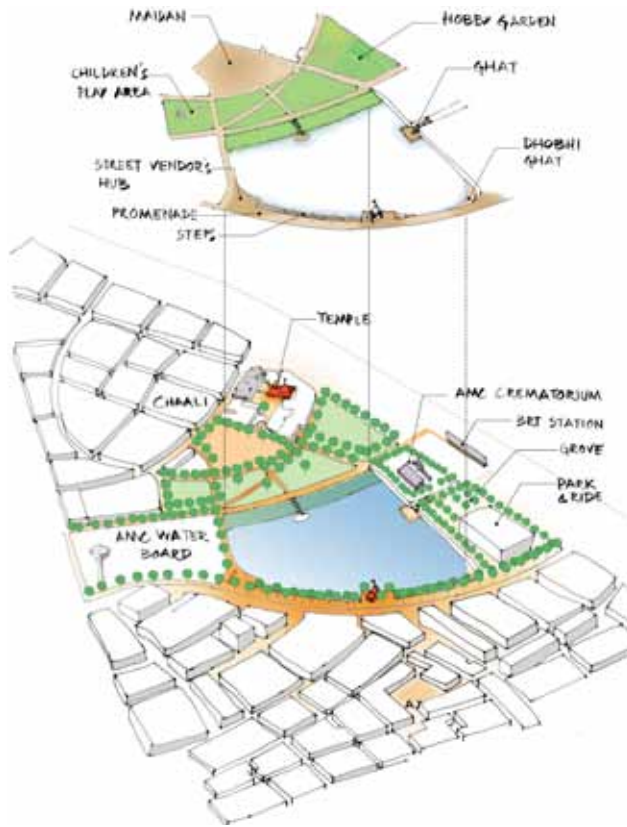
Saijpur Garden  
The park along the lake provides respite from the dense urbanity around.



saijpur talav

Saijpur Ghat  
The crematorium along the lake gets access to the water, creating a place for rituals.

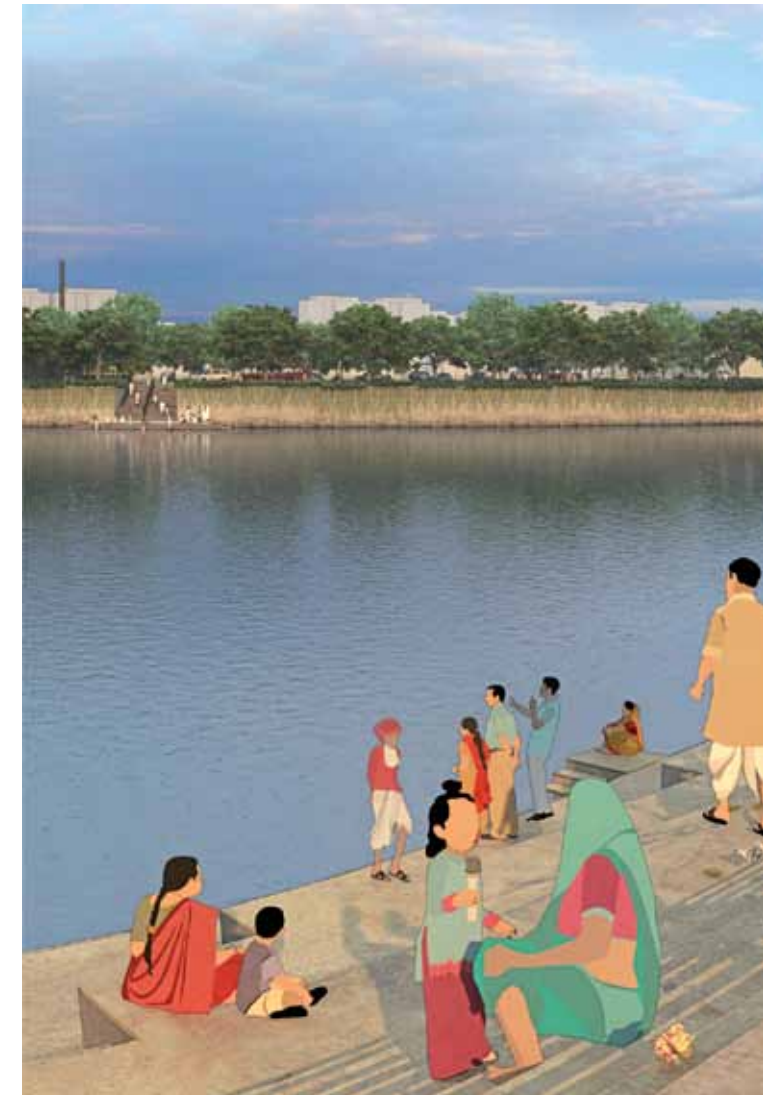




As Ahmedabad has expanded, many historic lakes have been encroached and their watersheds severed. Some lakes have been lost completely. Fortunately, this situation is beginning to change. A 2001 ruling by Gujarat High Court declared that lakes must be protected in the urban planning process. In the past decade, many lakes have been retained even as the city has grown around them. The city has begun developing lakes—often as stand-alone entertainment facilities—but many remain as inaccessible pits of water.

Lakes can be integrated with neighbourhoods, becoming centres for community life. Saijpur Talav, a small lake in northeast Ahmedabad, has the potential to become a significant resource in a part of the city that presently has little accessible open space. The interventions are sensitive to existing uses of the lake, while also creating new facilities such as safe, shaded routes for pedestrians and bicycles linked with the larger transport network in the city. Public open spaces, both landscaped and urban, make the lake an accessible and integrated part of Saijpur.

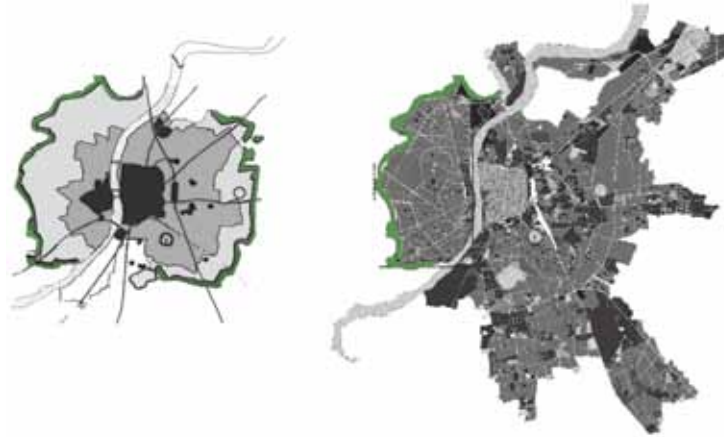
The new tree-lined promenade provides pleasant bicycle route and shaded spaces for gathering while the lake becomes accessible by steps.





# The Green Thread

M/S. Prabhakar B. Bhagwat



What is left of the green belt, will have a series of functions, determined based on the surrounding neighbourhood. The land is examined in detail in terms of topography, hydrology, land-use and transport corridors. All the areas in this belt are pedestrian friendly. Short and long bicycle routes are integral in the planning. The land is imagined carefully, such that low lying areas act as natural soaking areas and areas for water recharge creating ponds, and the noisy road junctions are translated into spaces for open markets, exhibitions and at times, quiet groves. The functions will include flea markets, vegetable markets, food kiosks, festival pandals, sports fields, play courts, public art expression and many such more. Imagine, the land from RTO, through the Chandrabhaga nala, Akhbarnagar char rasta, AEC cross roads, University ground and IIM till the APMC market and then merging with the Sabarmati river, a green thread, bigger than Central Park in New York! And possible to create, today.



Reclaiming and Rejuvenating the Urban Ecology. The last remains of the flora and fauna will find safer domain, to flourish in the wetlands. Citizens of the city can spend their mornings and evenings exploring the green swathes, all within walking and cycling proximity. The thread will connect all parts of the city, making it a key mobility corridor.



Envisioned by M/S. Prabhakar B. Bhagwat

The green belt at one time encircled the entire city, and could have been a continuous thread that wove and connected all parts of the city. The chance was lost because of bad governance, and greed. Of the 2098 acres, only 875 acres in the western part of the city remain. More than 50% has disappeared. All however, is not yet lost.

With 875 acres that are still not encroached upon, it is yet possible to have a green thread connecting the areas from RTO till Sarkhej. If land, that is presently built over illegally, in both the western and eastern part, could be released, the potential to create a truly open ecological resource is immense. Using detailed understanding of topography, surface drainage patterns, local land use, and the new transport corridors, it is possible to imagine this space so that it encourages bio-diversity, and serves as maidans, parks, markets, groves, wetlands, agriculture and grasslands, becoming a thread that is continually traversed on foot and cycle, connecting the entire western part of the city. This is imagined carefully, such that low lying areas act as natural water recharge points; dense residential areas get the green open breathers and the local commerce needs are translated into exhibition grounds and urban open spaces. Understanding the local needs, ecology and movement corridors is the key. The city needs open spaces. It is important to realize that no significant spaces have been added to the city over the last 5 decades and more. This is a great chance.

Beyond pedestrian linkages.

The local residents, children, students, hawkers and visitors will find here new 'maidan', numerous garden courts and plazas. They will traverse the butterfly gardens and groves, and wetlands as a part of their daily experience. The city will find space for hosting and enjoying festivals; all amidst installed and protected nature.







PRABHAKAR BHAGWAT

Envisioned by M/S. Prabhakar B. Bhagwat

Dedicated side parking provided to avoid encroachment on the main road. Wide sidewalks designed to create a hurdle free walk. The elevated terrace plaza and footpath below are connected by staircases at regular intervals.



## Revitalizing Kalupur

Apurva Amin Architects



# kalupur railway station

Sidewalks with street furniture encourage pedestrian activity and public interaction. Dedicated public transportation close to the railway station provides an easy and immediate access.



Envisioned by Apurva Amin Architects

Kalupur Railway Station is Ahmedabad's main rail hub and an important intermodal facility. The station was planned for a smaller number of travellers, and it now struggles to keep up with growing demand. Small-scale shops, offices, and street side vendors enliven nearby streets, but the narrow, encroached footpaths are incapable of serving the large numbers of people who access the railway station by foot. The majority of the prime open space just outside the station is used for car and two-wheeler parking.

The railway station is remade as a mixed-use public facility that serves visitors and walled city residents alike. The centrepiece of the proposal is a large public plaza connecting the railway station's concourse level to surrounding streets. Retail uses are accommodated at ground level, alongside obstacle-free sidewalks. The station continues to fulfill transport-related functions, with rickshaw stands, direct access to city buses, and private vehicle parking. Direct access to Ahmedabad's Janmarg BRT system is provided to encourage people to reach the station via public transport. Activities are distributed among the multiple levels of the new facility in order to make the best use of limited space.



Elevated terrace is developed as an open public space. As a street interface, sit-out spaces and food courts are created for people to rest and enjoy the view. Highrise terminus building is designed to accommodate small scale offices, shops and hospitality areas, giving a sense of identity to the terminus.







Kamal Mangaldas studied architecture in 1950s when International Style was the prevailing dogma. Ornament was taboo; buildings had to be sleek, stark, and titillating to the intellect. “They left me cold,” he recalls. He preferred

buildings that were at least 50 years old—often those that were not designed by architects. He endeavours to create projects that celebrate simplicity and an unobtrusive style. A Pattern Language by Christopher Alexander has been a major influence in his work.

Team: Kamal Mangaldas, Kartikeya Shodhan, Rahil Shah  
Kamal Mangaldas Architect



Parul Zaveri & Nimish Patel, through Abhikram & Panika, their Planning, Architecture, Conservation & Interior practices have been exploring different aspects of urban planning in historic settlements. This has helped them since eighties to develop a deeper understanding of their growth over centuries. The focus of these explorations has been to compare them with similar urban spaces in post-independent India, particularly from the perspective of the quality of timelessness in their uses.



Team: Nimish Patel, Parul Zaveri, Nisha Yadav, Hamed Khalidi, Chinmay Patel, Keya Patel, Md.Shehzad Shaikh, Abbas Kikali, Archit Pathak, Priyami Maheshwari, Sweetu Panchal, Bhavik Patel  
Abhikram | Panika



Rajeev Kathpalia is a partner at Vastu Shilpa Consultants, a professional consultancy practice in architecture, urban planning and design. He is also Director and trustee of the Vastu Shilpa Foundation, a non profit research organization in

environmental and habitat design, and member on the board of studies of several urban design faculties. He has lectured extensively at universities in India and abroad and is visiting faculty at CEPT University, Ahmedabad. His ongoing projects include large urban design and planning projects, high density low income urban mass housing. His concerns on the unprecedented and uncoordinated urban growth in India have lead to his conducting multi-disciplinary design exercises with planning, urban design, architecture and landscape students.

Team: Prof. B.V Doshi, Prof. Rajeev Kathpalia, Piyas Choudhuri, Manasi Pandey, Heejea Lea, Oliver Vickerage, Giovanni A L Perez, Javier Duran Alvarado  
Vastu Shilpa Foundation



Dr. Bimal Patel is an architect and urban planner with more than 20 years of professional experience in both fields. He is a Director at HCP Design and Project Management, a highly regarded architecture, planning and project

management firm in India. He is also the Founder-Director of Environmental Planning Collaborative, a not-for-profit, planning research and advocacy organization that works with local governments and other agencies. He is actively engaged in understanding and transforming urban design and urban planning practice in India to make them more effective in improving the quality of life in Indian Cities. His architectural work has been internationally recognized and published, and Dr. Bimal Patel and the two companies that he heads, HCPDPM and EPC, have been the recipients of several awards.

Team: Bimal Patel, Niki Shah, Aparna Joshi

HCP Design & Project Management Pvt. Ltd.

PRABHAKAR  BHAGWAT

M/s Prabhakar B. Bhagwat is an environmental planning, landscape design, and architectural firm with a lineage of over eight decades. It is arguably the most influential landscape design firm in the country, and recent critical writing, positions it amongst the 50 design firms in the world that have reinterpreted the profession in present times. It also is amongst a handful of firms in the country who have undertaken distinctive and acclaimed architectural commissions that have, at all times, examined typology and pushed the boundaries of design. It has commissions of all scales and complexity across the country. Design at M/s PBB is a collective, collaborative, investigative and intense occupation.

M/S. Prabhakar B. Bhagwat



Architect Apurva Amin believes his profession to be a craft of space making having no boundaries between architecture, interiors & landscape. Functionality, optimum space utilization and ideal response to climate

& nature have been fundamental forces of designs drawn with a contemporary approach. Apurva Amin Architects was established in 1996 since then the firm has progressed through a series of transitions from a single habitat unit to complex large scale projects. The architectural language derived by the firm is a result of constant critical review of its design parameters and a desire to evolve as designers.

Team: Apurva Amin, Jay Chavda, Harshad Mistry, Mahesh Navaghane, Sonik Bhandare, Pulkit Bhavsar, Jignesh Solanki

Apurva Amin Architects

## participating architects

## Citizens Council

The 'Citizens Council' comprising eminent residents of the city provided their input and guidance to the architects in developing visions for different areas in Ahmedabad for 2030.

### Mrs. Bijal Brahmbhatt

Director of Mahila Housing Sewa Trust, an NGO in State of Gujarat, India. Works towards providing improved housing infrastructure and environmental conditions for poor women in informal sector.

### Mr. Rajesh Brahmbhatt

Managing Director, bSafal, one of the biggest real estate development firms in Ahmedabad. Contributed significantly to the recent growth of the city.

### Dr. Ravindra. H. Dholakia

Professor of economics and public systems at IIM Ahmedabad. Was a member of the Sixth Central Pay Commission, and several High Level Committees appointed by Government of India and Government of Gujarat.

### Dr. Sudarshan Iyengar

Vice Chancellor, Gujarat Vidyapeeth, Ahmedabad. Involved with several voluntary organisations. Works in areas of natural resource management, people's institutions and role of NGOs in societal development.

### Mrs. Jayshree Lalbhai

Director of Rachana School in Ahmedabad. Involved in introducing new methods of teaching that make learning a pleasurable and long lasting experience. Also works in the social sector towards upliftment and empowerment of women.

### Mr. Abhay Mangaldas

Entrepreneur working in adaptive reuse of architecture and crafts in Ahmedabad. Founder, The House of MG – Ahmedabad's only heritage hotel.

### Mr. Kartikeya Sarabhai

Environmentalist closely associated with communication initiatives of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Founder and Director of Centre for Environment Education.

### Mrs. Kiran Sethi

Founder of 'aProCh' - an initiative attempting to make our cities more child friendly. Director of the Riverside School in Ahmedabad.

### Dr. (Ms.) Manjula Subramaniam

Gujarat Vigilance Commissioner. Member of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS). Was the Chief Secretary, Govt. of Gujarat. Additional Chief Secretary (Finance), Principal Secretary (Energy & Petrochemicals, Urban Development).



Our Cities Ourselves (OCO) is a Global Collaborative Programme initiated by Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP) to promote a vision for our cities that is more livable, equitable and sustainable. The aim is to engage developers, business leaders, urban planners, transportation experts, and wider public in a dialogue about what sort of cities we want to live in, the sort of street we want to walk along, and the sort of future we want for ourselves and our children.

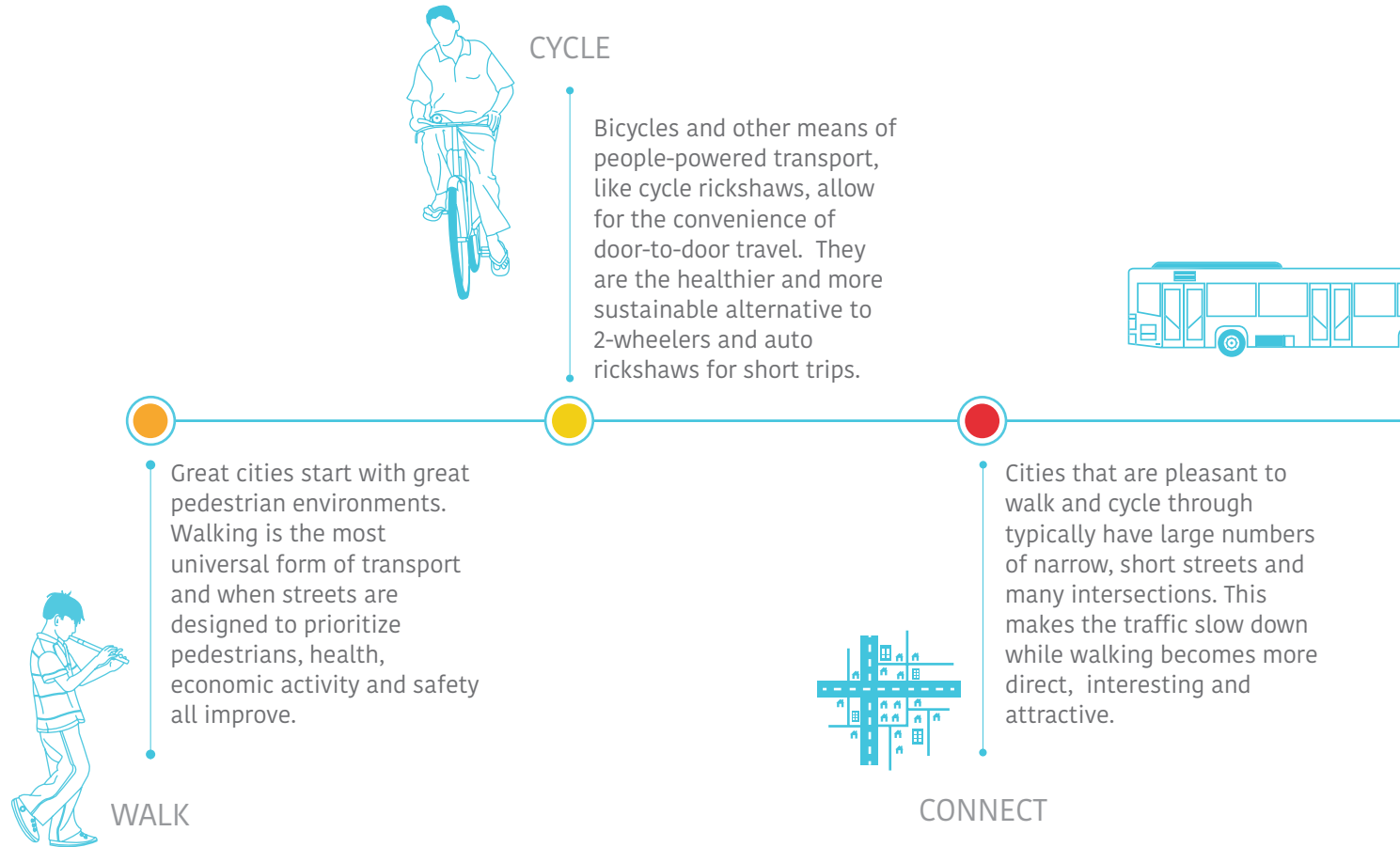
Central to the OCO programme are the Principles of Transport in Urban Life, which inform the urban visions presented in the exhibition. These visions feature the work of ten leading architects who have envisioned ten cities across the world in 2030 and showcase how cities can reap the benefits of integrating urban planning and design that gives priority to pedestrians and public transport.

It is a guide for cities and countries that want to make their cities more competitive and livable, while helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and combat global climate change.

By means of the exhibit and allied events, OCO programme aims to highlight international best practices, successful case studies and facilitate an exchange of ideas and knowledge on various issues of sustainable transport, mobility and urban planning.

## about our cities ourselves

# Principles for Transport in Urban Life



## TRANSIT



Comfortable, safe, high-speed public transport can move millions of people quickly and comfortably using a fraction of the fuel and space required by private vehicles. Systems like BRT are a cost effective, high quality solution for urban mobility.



## DENSIFY

High density is crucial to achieving sustainable and low-carbon cities. Density needs to be matched with the capacity of modes of public transportation. Dense communities use resources more efficiently, reducing the carbon footprints of its residents.



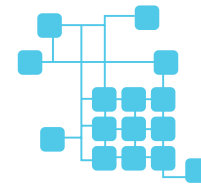
## SHIFT

More private vehicles lead to more congestion, pollution and travel time unless traffic is managed better. Traffic demand management measures like parking management and congestion charging encourage people to leave their cars at home.



## MIX

Integrating residential, work, retail and entertainment activities into one area makes better cities and better places. Mixed income neighbourhoods shorten trip distances and are safer, diverse and more attractive.



## COMPACT

Developments placed far from existing cities are inconvenient and rarely thrive. In addition to protecting agricultural land, compact cities decrease the cost of providing public transport and municipal services, while reducing average daily commute.

## New York, USA

The exhibition in New York opened in June 2010 at the Centre for Architecture in Greenwich Village for a period of 12 weeks and attracted over 10,000 visitors. A series of public seminars were organized in tandem with the exhibition that included speakers such as Jan Gehl, Amanda Burden and Janette Sadik-Khan.

The exhibition and allied programmes engaged a wide audience, including city government officials, architects, urban planners, transportation advocates, and students and led to several successful partnerships with experts and other NGOs such as the Urban Land Institute.



## Mexico City, Mexico

The exhibition in Mexico opened in February 2011 at the prestigious Museo Franz Mayer, an 18th century building in the city centre. The exhibition attracted a diverse audience of more than 15000 people and received widespread media attention.



Our Cities Ourselves fostered increased public as well as government interest in the improvement of Tacubaya - the historic city centre. It also resulted in strong relations with local groups, NGO's and academic institutions such as COMURSA, ULI, ADO, Concentrarte, Muevete X Tu Ciudad and Distrito Global.

## Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

The OCO exhibition in Rio was hosted at the Centro Cultural Correios for a period of 6 weeks, beginning February 2, 2011. Guest speakers at the event included Sir Richard Rogers, an inspirational architect of global standing, and multi-modal specialist Oren Thatcher.



The exhibition and its public programmes reached a wide audience, attracting over 9,000 visitors including the Mayor of Rio de Janeiro. The programme received wide appreciation from several architects, urban planners, transport experts, city officials and other stakeholders such as SECOVI- the largest real estate development association in Brazil.

## Buenos Aires, Argentina

The exhibition in Buenos Aires, Argentina was hosted at Museum of Architecture and Design (MARQ) from April 20th to May 22nd. Several international experts participated in the OCO programme, including noted sociologist Saskia Sassen who spoke about building sustainable cities for a greener future.

Following the exhibition, ITDP partnered with internationally renowned musician and artist David Byrne on a nine-city speaking tour, to raise awareness about the potential for bicycles for urban mobility. In Buenos Aires, eight organizations, including Greenpeace Argentina joined the campaign to advocate for improved cycling and infrastructure in the city.



oco international travelling exhibition



The exhibition for Vision of Ahmedabad and this monograph were produced in September 2011 as a part of Our Cities Ourselves programme.

EPC is a not-for-profit urban planning and policy research organization that works closely with government agencies, non-profits and other partners through collaborative interventions to promote productive, equitable, safe and sustainable living environments.

ITDP is an international not-for-profit organization headquartered in New York, working with cities worldwide to bring about transport solutions that cut greenhouse gas emissions, reduce poverty, and improve the quality of urban life. With projects worldwide, ITDP helps cities improve their sustainable transportation options, making getting around greener, easier, more affordable, and enjoyable for all.

The Our Cities Ourselves programme is supported and funded by the ClimateWorks Foundation and the Volvo Research and Education Foundation

This exhibition and the monograph would not have been possible without the vision, support and guidance of Dr. Bimal Patel (EPC) and Shreya Gadepalli (ITDP).

### **Monograph**

Aswathy Dilip  
HCP Design and Project Management Pvt. Ltd.

Aparna Joshi  
HCP Design and Project Management Pvt. Ltd.

Nishtha Vishnoi  
HCP Design and Project Management Pvt. Ltd.

Rushika Patel  
HCP Design and Project Management Pvt. Ltd.

Chirayu Bhatt  
Environmental Planning Collaborative

Vanishree Herlekar  
Institute for Transportation and Development Policy

Christopher Kost  
Institute for Transportation and Development Policy

### **Renderings & Production Support**

Premsharan Patel  
HCP Design and Project Management Pvt. Ltd.

Amit Upadhyay  
HCP Design and Project Management Pvt. Ltd.

Dipesh Mistry  
HCP Design and Project Management Pvt. Ltd.

Suketu Kholia  
HCP Design and Project Management Pvt. Ltd.

Hiral Yadav  
HCP Design and Project Management Pvt. Ltd.

# acknowledgements

