

The seven roads of Chandigarh, also known as the Vs

The seven Vs were planned in a manner for the city to have comfortable pedestrian movement, while also permitting fast movement for vehicular traffic

Making of CHANDIGARH

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The present plan of Chandigarh is based on the grid-iron pattern whose structure is defined by a carefully planned road network consisting of seven types of roads. The Seven Vs (Les Sept Voies) are:

V1 roads: These are for fast moving traffic that connect Chandigarh to other towns. They have dual carriage-ways lined with trees and distinctive lighting that makes the approach to Chandigarh heart-warming.

V2 roads: These are vehicular arterial roads of Chandigarh, that are identified as 'Margs'. Madhya Marg and Dakshin Marg are the two principal V2s of the city. They merge into the V1s. Other important V2s are Jan Marg, Himalaya Marg and Uttar Marg.

V3 roads: These make the



Jan Marg in spring. (Right) An old drawing mapping the grid of roads in Chandigarh. CCA

next layer of connecting vehicular roads binding the sectors to the arterial roads. The regular grid formed by V3 roads define each sector's boundary.

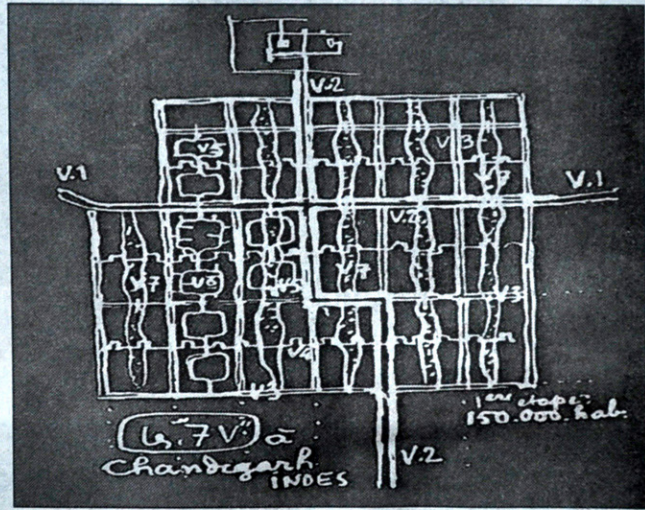
V4 roads: These bisect a sector and have shopping areas and other conveniences located along them. Connections with adjoining neighbourhood were made through these roads, forming one long continuous ribbon from east to west besides the bands of open spaces that cut across the sector in a perpendi-

cular direction. The V4 shopping streets cut through the sectors with shops on their southern side. They are placed keeping in the mind the direction of the sun so that anyone walking along the commercial area will always walk in shade.

V5 roads: These are the circulation roads within a sector. They meander through the sector giving access to its inner lanes

V6 roads: access roads to the houses

V7 roads: These were



planned to be the streets running through the middle of the sectors in the green areas. They are intended for pedestrian movement only. The bicycle tracks are conceptually planned to run parallel to these pedestrian pathways.

The seven Vs were planned in a manner for the city to have comfortable pedestrian movement, while also permitting the

benefits of fast movement for vehicular traffic. Because of this layout, the sectors are easily walkable - it barely takes 15 minutes to go from one corner of a sector to its centre.

Le Corbusier likened this road network to the blood circulation system of the human body. This structured planning of the road network not only defines the urban pattern of

Chandigarh but also filters the vehicular and pedestrian traffic in order to enable smooth movement throughout the city.

THE RANDHAWA TOUCH

It is notable how the character of the road network designed by Le Corbusier was further enhanced by the landscape plan devised by one of the most enterprising custodians of the city, MS Randhawa. Being an ardent botanist, he specified the trees to be planted along the roads in different parts of the city on the basis of their form, foliage, colour of flowers and shape. To give a separate character to the streets, each route is planted with a different coloured flowering tree along with fruit and other trees. The roads are, therefore, clad with avenues of trees acting as a green buffer.

Over the years, however, Chandigarh is witnessing many changes in its movement patterns. As per a recent survey, Chandigarh has the highest per capita ownership of motorised vehicles in the country.

With an extensive growth in

daily influx of cars, from within and outside the city, today Chandigarh is facing problems like heavy traffic on roads, long waiting periods due to congestion during rush hours and increasing demand for more parking spaces especially in the commercial pockets of all the sectors. With the changing scenarios, challenges are rising but with challenges the authorities are trying to come up with solutions too. Some of the noteworthy projects undertaken recently include the laying of cycle tracks throughout the city to segregate the vehicular traffic to promote cycling as a more sustainable and comfortable experience (the cycle tracks were initially there in Le Corbusier's plan as V8s), the creation of an underpass from Sector 16 connecting Rose Garden to Sector 17 (this underpass has reduced travel time between these sectors without disturbing the main routes and has also become a hub of socio-cultural interactions) and introduction of smart and sustainable public transport systems such as

smart bikes available in every sector, e-buses and e-rickshaws.

Le Corbusier planned this beautiful city sixty years ago with a very powerful vision. The road network that forms the structure of the city is one of the most successful aspects of its planning and continues to show the ability to adapt.

But effective management of this change is becoming a necessity now. Various proposals such as flyovers and a metro system, are being put forth by the authorities. It is humbly suggested that keeping the strong heritage value of the city in mind, they should instead look at less intrusive solutions such as a strong public transport system which could include introduction of small buses for peak hours or maybe a tram line on strategic routes.

(The author is an Assistant Professor at CCA. The article is mentored by Ar Saumya Sharma, Assistant Professor, CCA. It is a part of the series of fortnightly articles by students and faculty of CCA on the Making of Chandigarh)