

Developing the infrastructure of Chandigarh

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Chandigarh |

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Installation of an air purifier at Transport Chowk. (Source: Internet)

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Chandigarh was designed with an ideal of providing fundamental services of life to all its inhabitants so that they can lead a comfortable and dignified lifestyle. Well-planned sectors, roads, interconnectivity between walkways, open spaces, gardens and special attention to aesthetics were established as the major features of this city. Residential units kept well guided from fast moving traffic, surrounded by peaceful environment and nature was the life visualised for about five lakh residents of the city. Le Corbusier had envisioned 'One day people will visit Chandigarh to see the part wherein one does not see the automobile; where one sees nature.' But presently, after a journey of more than six decades, Chandigarh is facing a two-fold problem of conserving the legacy of its modernist heritage along with trying to adapt and expand to meet the challenges posed by an escalating population with ever-changing demands.

Overflowing traffic on roads burdening the transportation network, constant struggle between mushrooming and demolition of slums, regular increase in demand of vital amenities like water and electricity supplies, climate change and unregulated built development are just some of the pressing concerns of the present day. With the development and growth of Panchkula and Mohali, Chandigarh has metamorphosed into the epicentre or focal point of a larger landmass, causing further escalation in the degeneration of the once ideal city.



The formalisation of the cycle tracks complete with lighting along the tracks, floor signage and provision of regulatory traffic signals has helped in promoting cycling throughout the city. (Source: Internet)

With an aim to focus on the future of the city beautiful, the city administration is stressing that with the growing population it is extremely crucial to enhance and upgrade the infrastructure and meet the emerging and rising demands of residents. The administration has recently, quite actively, planned some initiatives to upgrade open spaces, rejuvenate under-utilised areas, improve the quality of environment and instill walkability.

Some of the important initiatives are:

1. Installation of an air purifier at Transport Chowk (surveyed as the most polluted traffic junction) to improve the air quality and health of the people.
2. The formalisation of the cycle tracks complete with lighting along the tracks, floor signage and provision of regulatory traffic signals has helped in promoting cycling throughout the city.
3. I-Buses and Smart Bikes: Initiative of providing smart bikes is one of the major projects taken up for action by the administration under the Smart Cities umbrella. A

noticeable change has been witnessed in the city with people actively using these rentable bicycles for commute. The service of electric buses in the city with an aim to introduce a clean mode of transport and reduce vehicular pollution is a wonderful step taken by the UT administrators in making the city's transportation system environmentally sustainable.

4. Rejuvenation of Sector-17: Considering a noticeable fall in the popularity of the city centre, the administration, through different departments, took up multiple projects to reinvent the public plaza. The creation of the underground multilevel parking in Sector - 17, sorted the parking issues to a large extent. Realizing the potential of underground infrastructure, another project in the form of the Sector-17 Underpass enabled a direct connectivity between rose garden and Sector-17. The key concept of the project was to enable connectivity while reviving deserted public areas. It is safe to say that the underpass has been quite successful in achieving both.

5. Upgrading Chandigarh airport to international standards in recent times augmented the physical connectivity of Chandigarh to the world and fulfilled a long-term need and considerably enhanced export potential of this region.

6. Recycling of material is being promoted in the city. There are reports that the Chandigarh Administration has initiated steps to convert the existing RCC roads into bitumen roads where conscious usage of plastic waste will be incorporated. This would, in turn, also benefit the ragpickers of the city. The latest addition to the list of initiatives is the manufacturing of bricks from recycled concrete and demolition waste for public construction work.

Even though Chandigarh is witnessing multiple positive inclusions, it is extremely important to shift attention from planning for automobiles to planning for citizens and this can only be done by the combined efforts of both the government and the citizens. It is time for the residents of Chandigarh to be conscious about the need of a healthy environment and to educate oneself about the ways in which one can sensitively achieve

this. This will not only help the administration to provide for better public facilities but also make it answerable for the shortfalls.