

KIDS REDRAW OLD CITY

Schoolchildren have proposed a host of solutions to decongest Chandni Chowk while retaining its old-world charm

Ruhi Bhasin | TNN

When it comes to a facelift for Old Delhi, the young could well show the way. Class XI students of 15 schools from across the city are at present working on their vision for redeveloping Chandni Chowk.

Finding solutions to problems like congestion in the Walled City, the teenagers have proposed underground parking, solar-powered trams, centralised eating areas, ducting of service lines, conversion of *havelis* into hotels as the way forward. All this while retaining Chandni Chowk's old-world charm.



NEW SCHOOL OF THOUGHT

15 schools have been shortlisted on the basis of their essays on redeveloping Chandni Chowk. Each team will now have to design a 3-dimensional concept model



Photos: Yogesh Kumar

tels, trading and residential areas. Said Nehrika Singh: "Our decongestion plans do not allow private vehicles in commercial areas, proposes solar-powered trams, ducting of service lines and tongas with four guides to show people around."

Many of the students have never visited Chandni Chowk but plan to do so soon to get a feel of the place. They have been provided with facts and figures as design criteria for



Centralized eateries and solar trams are some of the suggested solutions

the competition. They have to come up with a list of three activities for social and recreational land use as provided in Master Plan-2021.

Kanika Magan from Apeejay School, Noida, said their plan would ensure better infrastructure while giving due importance to heritage. "As far as heritage goes, our plan proposes converting *havelis* into hotels and the Town Hall into a library," she said.

Emphasizing on green buildings in Chandni Chowk were schools like Navy Children School, Chankyapuri and DAV School, Gurgaon. Said Dr Kavita Chauhan, a teacher at Navy Children School: "Solar panels can be put to use in chowk areas so that the area is self-sufficient in power."

The competition has been organised by the department of science and technology and Bentley Systems.

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The 15 schools participating in the Future Cities India 2020 competition have been shortlisted on the basis of an essay written on redevelopment of Chandni Chowk. The students will now make a 3D concept model and the final presentation will be made in January 2010.

Last year's winners — students of Manava Bharati India International School, Panchsheel Park — said they wanted to deal with congestion by providing a

separate area for hawkers. Said participant Harsewak Singh: "Our plan will entail a separate eating area so people can land up at one place to enjoy all the delicacies of Old Delhi. We also suggested trams and environment-friendly buses."

Each team comprises four students and one teacher. Apeejay School Pitampura wants to solve the haphazard growth of Walled City by dividing it into four zones, each catering to different needs — markets, ho-

The criteria

- Utilise land to the best advantage
- Propose at least three activities for social and recreational (land use to promote tourism while keeping in mind the heritage)
- Propose a congestion free transport plan. Highlight at least two parking structures and design pedestrian access
- Integrate principles of environmentally-sustainable design

- Facts and figures on Chandni Chowk have been provided as design criteria
- The Walled City was designed originally to accommodate around 60,000 inhabitants. The population now is 4.5 lakh
- The total workforce accessing the Walled City daily is about 4 lakh
- Around 20% of the wholesale trade in Delhi functions from the area, accounting for 12% of employment

- City bus service and Metro are the main means of transportation to the area and provides access to more than 1.5 lakh people
- Adequate parking for about 3,500 vehicles is required in Chandni Chowk for smoother traffic flow
- The site is accessed by many tourists everyday visiting the Red Fort, Jama Masjid and other heritage sites

The problems

- Inadequate infrastructure
- Haphazard growth of Walled City
- Congestion due to encroachments, unauthorised construction and plying of rickshaws, illegal hawking etc
- Crumbling heritage structures
- Inability of civic agencies to move wholesale markets out of Walled City