

Regeneration of the Oldest and Prime Central Business District (CBD) at Dhaka, Bangladesh

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Abstract— This paper explores the regeneration procedures of the oldest and prime Central Business District (CBD) "Motijheel" situated at Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh. Dhaka is 8th among the megacities and it is characterized by high density and overcrowding, environmental degradation, severe traffic congestion and haphazard planning. To keep pace with the modern developed world, Dhaka needs to adopt proper planning process and techniques. Motijheel is a busy, dynamic business and commercial center, but becomes calm and lifeless after office time. The growth of Motijheel is also enormous but it is not in accordance with proper planning systems. The purpose of this paper is to identify the major problems that obstacle its real flourish and to adopt a considerable and vibrant regeneration plan for the area. The preliminary result of research shows that there are several numbers of underutilized plots, too much on street parking; hawkers occupied footpaths, undefined bus stops and lack of public open spaces and greeneries. This paper suggests several planning proposals which can make the area more vibrant and diversified. There are provisions for proper land use zoning, integrated traffic circulation and parking regulation, provisions for open space and greeneries and public interactions. The main vision is to make this place more vibrant with commercial activities keeping pace with other compatible activities. Finally, the paper explains the policies that can regenerate the place with all kind of modern amenities with a lively and healthy working and living environment.

Index Terms— CBD, context, mobility, regeneration, sustainability, theoretical approach, vision

1 INTRODUCTION

URBAN regeneration is a process of redeveloping the land with diverse and compatible land uses in the urban area.

An urban neighborhood or business district is improved and rehabilitated with the modern amenities to keep pace with the rapid development process. It can include demolishing old or run-down buildings, constructing new, up-to-date housing, or adding new features. Urban regeneration is often called urban renewal [1].

Motijheel is one of the prime administrative divisions of Dhaka city. It is the oldest and prime commercial place of capital city known as Central Business District (CBD). This place has a long historical background. According to Ahmed (2009), "In the second half of the 19th century the Nawabs of Dhaka developed the area on the western side of the racecourse and built large building complex and gardens called Shah Bagh. Besides Shah Bagh, the Nawabs (family of Khwaja Alimullah) developed *Dilkusha* and *Motijheel* area in the north eastern outskirts of the city, where they build garden-houses as pleasure resorts. But with the pace of time and many ups and downs it turned into a desolate fringe of marshes and swamps. Further it came to be earmarked as the commercial area in 1954. From that time several business organizations and private and public companies found their administrative headquarter at Motijheel Commercial Area [2]. In 1972 Bangladesh Bank was founded in front of Shapla Chattar and its importance started to become higher and higher by the establishment of headquarters of many other public banks and share markets. Though Motijheel C/A has been developed in a planned way, with the rapid growth of urbanization, high population and gigantic increase of land value has emerged a need for regeneration of this traditional commercial area. It has to response to the global economy with vibrating economic activities as well as retaining the flavor of traditional city center. More im-

portantly the regeneration process seeks to undertake the creation of meaningful and imaginative urban public spaces that would play the role of social reconciliation.

1.1 Objectives of the Paper

This paper aims to review the present condition of Motijheel C/A and find the way out for regeneration work. So, the objectives are set-

- To identify the existing problems and constraints of the Study area
- To make an adaptive regeneration plan of the study area

1.2 Literature Review

Literature review is very important to perceive a clear concept about the study. For this reason several study papers, books, journals and some papers from internet have been reviewed to get the basic idea about regeneration process, theoretical approaches, objectives, key factors, consequences and some case studies of city centers regeneration projects around the world.

1.3 Theoretical Approach

Regeneration as defined by Taylor (1995) is about the development of operation strategies to improve the areas from deprivation and taking out positive action to retain the confidence of the area. In this sense, the word regeneration is similar to a 'repair work', which indicates the physical, economic and social re-integration of disadvantaged areas [3]. Thus, urban regeneration is a process of upgrading the urban society, which can include rehabilitation, modernization and renewal of the urban constructions. It also includes purifying the environment of the residential areas to satisfy the demand of inhabitants ensuring sustainable development [4].

Following from the definition of 'sustainable development'

and 'sustainability', urban regeneration faces a new perspective. The objective of urban regeneration in the context of the 1990s is a wider one. Skelcher (1996) presents the main approaches to the new urban regeneration agenda [5]:

- Enhancing the physical condition of localities, these involve environmental improvement, development and redevelopment of land and property.
- Stimulating the local economy with activities such as training and enterprise support to business in order to increase the skills of the unemployed.
- Tackling social and community issues such as community safety, adult literacy and health promotion.
- Developing the longer term future of the locality by strengthening the community's potential for self-government by sustainable urban regeneration [4].

These objectives are highly correlated with the study, which has created the basement of this study.

1.4 Case Studies

Several case studies on city center regeneration process have been checked out for the help of getting practical knowledge about the study. Two of them are mentioned below-

1.4.1 Central Perth Redevelopment Project

According to Central Perth Redevelopment Scheme, 2012-Perth is the capital and largest city of the Australian state of Western Australia with an estimated population of 1.83 million living in the Perth metropolitan area (5,386 km²). The Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority (MRA) was established in 2011 by an Act of the Western Australian Parliament. MRA is a State Government Authority responsible for redevelopment of land within its jurisdiction. This area is known as the "Redevelopment Area" MRA's Redevelopment Area is currently made up of seven inner-city project areas- Claisebrook Village, EastPerth Power Station, Riverside EastPerth, New Northbridge, The Link (Northbridge and Perth), Perth Cultural Center, Elizabeth Quay.

These principles of design schemes are on the basis of:

- Places for people
- Critical Mass
- Quality Design
- Diversity
- Connectivity
- Environmental Integrity

1.4.2 Journal Square Redevelopment Plan 2060, New Jersey

According to Journal Square Redevelopment Plan 2060, Journal Square is a business district, residential area, and transportation hub in Jersey City, New Jersey. On November 25, 2008 the Jersey City Municipal Council determined that Greater Journal Square Study Area to be an "area in need of rehabilitation. This redevelopment plan focuses on Journal Square, the PATH rail station and bus depot, as well as the surrounding neighborhoods within walking distance, comprising an area of approximately 211 acres, 57 city blocks and approximately 1600 individual parcels. The purpose of the Journal Square 2060

Plan is to foster the redevelopment of Journal Square, Jersey City's central business district, by providing for transit oriented development of new housing, offices, commercial, and public open spaces within walking distance to the Square and transit facilities, returning Journal Square to a flourishing central business and shopping destination [6].

Redevelopment Plan Objectives:

- ✓ Re-establish Journal Square as a Jersey City's primary central business district.
- ✓ Make sustainability a theme of future development and redevelopment.
- ✓ Integrate open space into the Area by incorporating a system of parks, plazas, and natural amenities.
- ✓ Promote a pattern of mixed and multiple-use development.
- ✓ Encourage the adaptive reuse of existing structures (Journal Square Redevelopment Plan 2060, 2010).



Fig. 1: Perth City Center Redevelopment Plan

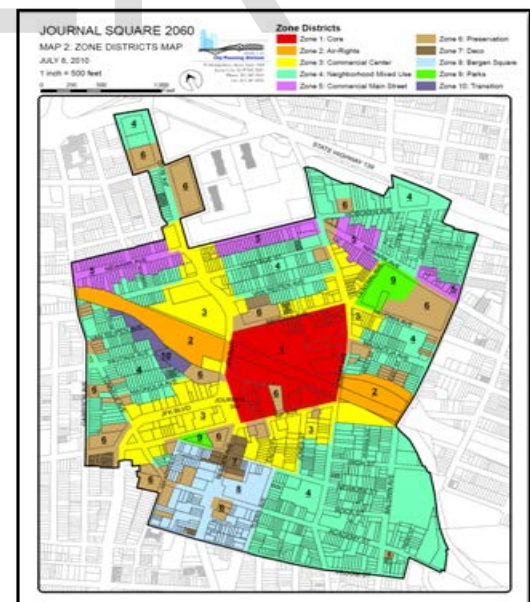


Fig. 2 : Zone District Map of Journal Square Redevelopment Plan 2060

2 METHODOLOGY

The paper has been drawn on the basis of a methodological and sequential process. The methodology used in this study is mainly data collection and analysis base.

2.1 Study Area Selection

Selection of the study area was done on the priority basis. Though there are many residential and commercial places in the Dhaka city, which can be brought under regeneration scheme, Motijheel is the vital zone of economic activities as well as mixed land use. There are lots of banks, headquarter of government and non-government agencies, share markets, football clubs, life insurance companies as well as residential and recreational spaces. As a result, the significance of this area overwhelms the other places to a great extent. For this reason, regeneration process should be applied to make this place renewed and bring new leaves to the old tree. Objectives were set out with this purpose. After the selection process, both theoretical and practical ideas, literatures and case studies on different city centers were reviewed thoroughly. Those literatures were created the base for the study.

2.2 Data Collection and Analysis

All the necessary information and data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. The methods of data collection were mainly field survey through check lists and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). A Reconnaissance Survey was conducted first in order to find out the socio-economic pattern, major disorders and physical condition of the study area. From the field survey, information on road width, on street and off street parking, parking space, traffic flow, no. of bus stops, land use, building height and no. of storied, per square feet rent of space, formal and informal business activities, drainage, waste management, open space condition were noted down. A discussion with the stake holders and local business personnel was arranged to get their opinions, expectations and problems. The map of study area, information on building height, floor wise parking ratio, set back and FAR information were collected through several secondary sources. Data analysis was done with the help of statistical analysis tool software. Frequency distribution, graph and charts were formatted to accomplish the analysis work.

2.3 Planning Proposals for Regeneration

The paper has a particular vision for Motijheel C/A and it was set out after the accomplishment of the analysis task. Considering all the analyzed information and the set out vision, planning proposals and regulations for regeneration were constructed. The existing policies and acts about housing, building constructions, parking regulations, open space conservation was considered with importance and given priorities. The planning and design criteria was based on land use zoning, provision of modern amenities, integrated traffic circulation, provision of greeneries and bring out lively as well as comfortable living and working environment to the space. Finally overall findings and recommendation were given.

2.4 Study Area Profile

Motijheel commercial area is situated at the heart of the Dhaka City (The General Post Office, called Zero Point. It is under Motijheel Thana. Administration Motijheel thana was established in 1976. The Thana consists of five wards and 35 mahallas. Motijheel is also close to Kamalapur Railway Station, the main railway station of Dhaka. Motijheel Thana covers an area of 4.69 km² (Motijheel, 2013). According to population census of 2011, the total population of Motijheel City District (Thana) is 210,006. (Population Census, 2011). Whole Motijheel Thana is not taken as study area. Considering scope of regeneration study area has been reduced down to area bounded by red border.



Fig. 3: Layout of the study area

Motijheel has most number of offices and business institutions than any other part of the city. Large numbers of corporate headquarters are situated here. Government and non government banks, insurance companies, travel agencies, brokerage firms, news, magazines, print and other media publishers and large numbers of other commercial offices are located here.

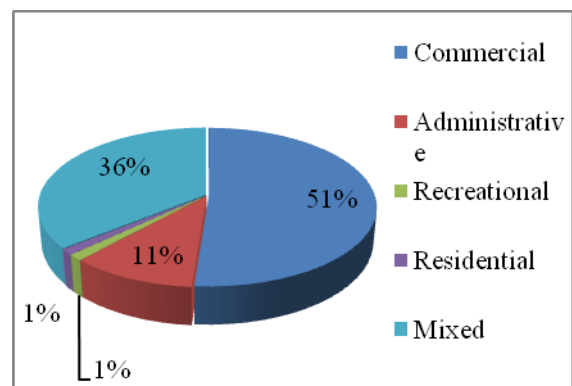


Chart 1: Landuse Pattern of Motijheel C/A

Land use of Motijheel C/A is predominantly commercial. 51% of the total buildings are commercial, 36% are mixed land use and 11% are administrative buildings. The buildings are largely between 3-10 stories. Only 2.7% buildings are above 20 stories. So, as a CBD, Motijheel lacks skyscrapers or high-rise buildings. This area also lacks recreational facilities and residential buildings greatly (Field survey, 2013). However, land value of this area is very high in compare to other areas of the city and land price is also increasing very fast in this area. A study shows that land price has increased by 17 times within a time period of 13 years (from 2000 to 2013) (Ahmed, 2009).

3 SCOPE AND CONTEXT OF REGENERATION IN MOTIJHEEL

Due to rapid process of unplanned urbanization, Motijheel is confronted with numerous problems. A number of problems have been identified from field survey.

Imbalance land use and underutilized plots

Commercial land use is predominant in Motijheel. Residential land use is only 1% which makes this area lifeless when office time is over. There are a number of underutilized plots. Many One and two storied buildings are neighbored with skyscrapers. Gaps between buildings are narrow which blocks fresh air and light passing.

On street parking

The parking facilities of the commercial buildings are insufficient. Only few selected buildings have their own parking lot, which is not sufficient for meeting up the parking demand. Vehicles are parked on street in large numbers. Almost every road has on street parking. One row of on street parking has been made legal here on both sides of the roads. But people park their vehicle even in two rows. This reduces carriage way width for traffic movement which in turn leads to traffic congestion. Some road for example Dilkusha road has been given up for parking purpose only.



Fig. 4: On street car parking and motorbike parking on footpath (Source:Field Survey)

Footpath Markets

All of The footpath and pedestrians way are almost occupied by the hawkers and informal shops. It impedes the pedestrian movement.



Fig. 5: Footpaths are occupied by hawkers (Source: Field Survey, 2013)

Undefined Bus stops and haphazard Rickshaw movement

There are only 6 formal bus stoppages (Field Survey, 2013). But all the buses move all around the ways and stops here and there. Buses pick and drop passengers stopping anywhere. Haphazard rickshaw movement causes traffic congestion during pick hour.

Lack of public open space and greeneries

Motijheel was once a place with open land and water-bodies. But it has turned into a congested overcrowding space where the open space is rare. Though, several football sporting clubs (e.g Mohamedan Sporting Club, Brothers Union) have their play fields (70,663 sq.ft). For general people there is no open space for public gathering and refreshment. Again, there is huge lack of greeneries and plantation.

Lack of recreational place

There is only one Cinema Hall named "Modhumita" (12349 sq.ft) and there is no other recreational facilities. There is no shopping mall in Motijheel. People buy their daily necessities from footpath markets here. Restaurants also target day time customers only.

Disorder in waste disposal

The waste disposal and drainage system is very poor in the study area. The city corporation bin is placed on a side of a road and filths are spread here and there. The Drains are almost filled out and it becomes over flooded during monsoon.



Fig. 6: Waste-bin placed on the side of a road (Source: Field Survey, 2013)

Above mentioned problems have created following scope for regeneration in Motijheel:

- Low height buildings between high rise buildings and underutilized plots create scope for new development and bring a balance in building height.
- Introducing a well-integrated traffic system and road network with maximum provision for public rapid transport and pedestrian movement.
- Integration between motorized and non-motorized vehicle. Provision of designated bus stops at suitable places.
- Provision of much urban greeneries and public open space.
- Providing parking facilities to reduce on street parking and hence traffic congestion.
- Provision of separate place for small retail shops and informal shops and restaurants.
- Provision of recreational facilities.

4 PLANNING PROPOSALS

The main aim of that project is to introduce a new era for Motijheel Commercial Area by facilitating the sustainable urban renewal through its regeneration scheme. And also infuse the city with extravitality, life and character. The visions regarding the project are based on delivering design and development excellence through creating a great public environment, high quality buildings, connecting people and places and ensuring a successful mixture of land uses and activities so that Motijheel can become a dynamic and affluent commercial hub of Bangladesh within 2030.

Vision 1: By 2030 Motijheel will be the dynamic and affluent commercial hub with modern facilities and amenities

Vision 2: Proper height and land use zoning should have to be provided in our study area to remove the haphazard condition

Vision 3: Integrated Transport Facilities with effective road network and fluent circulation

Vision 4: Maximized provision of greeneries

Vision 5: Provision of lively, comfortable and aesthetical places for people

The following design principles are proposed to fulfill the vision of the project-

Vision 1: Motijheel will be the dynamic and affluent commercial hub with all modern facilities and amenities

Motijheel area is one of the greatest economic assets for the

people of metropolitan Dhaka. Redevelopment must be planned, designed and managed to ensure the area as an appealing and welcoming place for people to live, work, play and visit. In order to provide opportunities for enhanced social interaction, economic prosperity and a quality environment some principles have considered (i.e. places for people, quality design, critical mass, diversity, connectivity and environmental integrity). Development in accordance with the principles will ensure the sustainability of the study area and will enrich the area's role as a premier destination for people to work, visit, live and recreate within a vibrant, attractive, commercial and mixed land use setting.

TABLE. 1: PROPOSED LAND USE OF THE STUDY AREA

| Offices | Commercial offices | Mixed land uses | Shops |
|--|---|---|--|
| Administrative office, central, provincial and municipal offices | Insurance Company and brokers of share market | Mixture of shops, administrative and commercial offices | Shops, side-walks café, restaurant, hotels |

TABLE. 2: PROPOSED LAND USE OF THE STUDY AREA

| Residential areas | Recreational areas | Open Space | Services |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Only for employees | Cinema Hall, Art Gallery, Theatre etc | Cinema Hall, Art Gallery, Theatre etc | Petrol Filling, Mosque |

Vision 2: Proper height and land use zoning should have to be provided in the study area to remove the haphazard condition

To make this vision successful, the study area has been divided into seven suitable zones.

Zone 1: Core Zone

Zone 2: Pedestrian Precinct

Zone 3: Football Club Zone, Zone 4: Commercial Zone

Zone 5: Residential Zone, Zone 6: Share Market zone

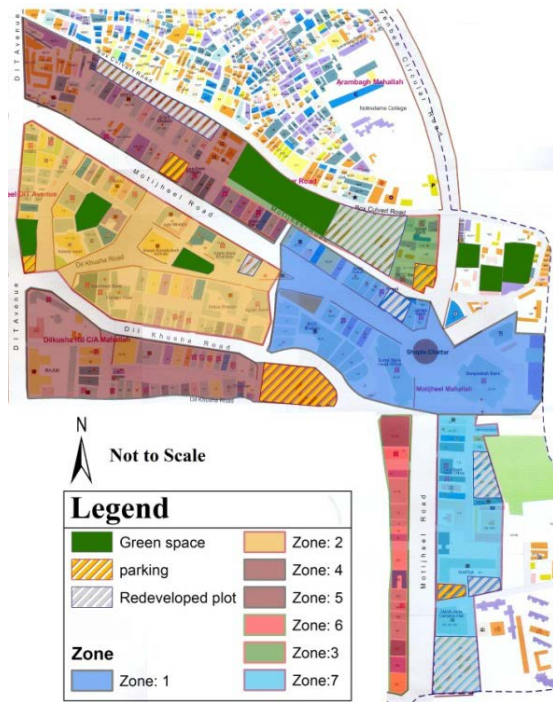


Fig. 7: Proposed design map of the study area

TABLE. 3: ZONE WISE INFORMATION

| Zone Name | Area Katha | Roads | Special Features and Uses |
|-----------|------------|-----------------------|--|
| Zone 1 | 366 | Primary Road | Headquarters of all the Banks and other institutions |
| Zone 2 | 408 | Pedestrian Walkways | Attractive boulevard |
| Zone 3 | 227 | Secondary Road | Multistoried building for all the clubs |
| Zone 4 | 388 | One Way and Secondary | An active and intensive use of parcels |
| Zone 5 | 182 | Secondary Road | Provide residents for employees |
| Zone 6 | 75 | Primary Road | All offices related to share market |

Other rules and regulations

1. All the buildings should follow the setback rules.
2. Rooftop gardening should be done in all the buildings.
3. Roads are designed with detail landscaping.

4. Green open spaces are provided.
5. Housing for workers is provided.
6. A retail market and Kutchha Bazar is provided.
7. Stock exchange & Brokers' offices are generated in a specific area.
8. Some buildings are preserved (WAPDA Bhaban, Modhumita Cinema Hall).

Vision 3: Integrated Transport Facilities with effective road network and fluent circulation

As Motijheel Area is always remains stuck with lots of Vehicular traffic and private cars, there are too much congestion during the peak periods and working hour. So the vision is to create a congestion free Motijheel in 2030 by making an easy, safe, desirable, and convenient mode of transportation and also to reduce automobile dependency by encouraging high density development in close proximity to mass transit with low automobile parking ratios and with bicycle, parking requirements and pedestrian precinct.

The traffic circulation plan includes different types of roads, sufficient parking facilities, pedestrian way and footpath, over bridges and underpasses and provision of signage including bus stop, zebra crossing, stop sign etc. As traffic congestion is the major problem in this area during peak hours, more emphasis is given for road network.

Primary Roads:

Main roads connecting "Doinik Bangla Morh" and "Shapla Chatter" and roads from "Shapla Chatter" towards "Gopibag" are in this category. This type of road is designed with proper plantation.

Secondary Roads:

Box Culvert Road should be widened for Bus. This road will remove some pressure on primary roads. Buses from Kamlapur can go through this road directly to Doinik Bangla Morh. Hence through traffic should be reduced. Box Culvert Road will be a two way road whereas, other two roads, one from Gulistan to Motijheel and another from Motijheel from Gulistan will be one way roads.

Traffic Circulation

Two way traffic movements along Motijheel Road around Shapla Chatter and Box Culvert Road are designated. Dilkhusa Roads will be one way traffic movement:

Pedestrian Way

Footpath is provided along the roads for safety movement of pedestrians.

- No. of Pedestrian precinct: 2
- ROW: 20 feet to 40 feet

Road length

- Shapla Chatter to Doinik Bangla Morh: 1345 feet
- Shapla Chatter to Gopibag : 985 feet
- Box Culvert Road: 1600 feet

- Proposed one way road near Bangabhaban: 1141 feet

Parking

On street parking is another problem in our study area. On street and haphazard illegal parking of car and buses disturbs the movement of traffic and creates congestion. Sufficient amount of parking lot is proposed in the design to remove congestion created by roadside parking. A well maintained parking lot renders the area a tidy look.

The main characteristics of parking includes the following:

1. Four multistoried buildings are provided so solve the parking problem in each individual zone.
2. A green parking zone already exists in the study area. Proper beautification of the area should be done by the responsible authority. This area is preserved for future development.
3. No on street parking is allowed in our design.

Present Parking Area: 35 katha (1700)

Monthly Parking Rent: 10 tk(Per car per hour)

Vision 4: Maximized provision of greeneries

There is huge lack of Greeneries in the study area. Sufficient amount of plantation should be provided along the roads, roof tops, green building skins and other open spaces to create sustainable urban greenery in Motijheel.

Open space provides a range of benefits to citizens of a community, beyond the benefits that accrue to private landowners. Parks and natural areas can be used for recreation. Open spaces provide aesthetic benefits to surrounding residents and workers. And in rapidly growing urban and suburban areas, any preserved land can offer relief from congestion and other negative effects of development.

Once there were much open spaces and water bodies in this place which have been filled up and occupied by building structures. Our vision is to rejuvenate the spaces and water bodies so that there will be integrate open space into the Area by incorporating a system of parks, plazas, and natural amenities and a fresh environment and lively space which can be also used for recreation. To fulfill this vision, a sufficient amount of land for open spaces is provided. The proposed design contains large area of green land(parks), green parking facilities, beautiful green divider of road, roadside gardening, rooftop gardening, pedestrian precinct zone contains a huge amount of greenery, green space in front of special features and football club zone with a large area of greenery.

Present Green Area: 27 Katha

Proposed Green Area: 65 Katha

Regulation for Open Space

Purpose of this regulation is to create Motijheel area as a healthy and environment friendly place, where people can breathe in comfort and find a space for relaxation after tire-some office hour. "Open space and wetland protection act 2000 Bangladesh" must be followed strictly [8].

Vision 5: Provision of lively, comfortable and aesthetic places for people

To fulfill this vision, a set of features have been provided in our study area. Pedestrian precinct, beautiful nodes, open spaces, recreational facilities and rooftop gardening has been provided in our area to make the area lively, comfortable and aesthetic place for people.

Pedestrian Precinct

A zone is provided which has a diverse and successful urban environment. The major objectives of the zone are as follows:

- a) Facilitating the successful operation of Entertainment Precinct as a mixed land use urban environment.
- b) Facilitating the ongoing operation and new development of Amplified Music Entertainment Venues on the core area.
- c) To create an aesthetic noise free place.
- d) Reducing land use conflicts between commercial and entertainment development
- e) Create places for retail shopkeepers and buyers.

This zone contains only the pedestrian path. No road is provided for traffic flow. Only a single layer of road is provided for the movement of cars which have parking space in precinct zone. This parking space will be beneficial for the users of precinct. This zone will serve an important role in providing entertainment to workers and visitors of the area, particularly evening and late night entertainment through live music, dancing, cultural activities and dining. Facilities including sitting, walking, cycling, gossiping and especially for retail shopping is proposed here. Road side café has been provided in every corner of the zone.

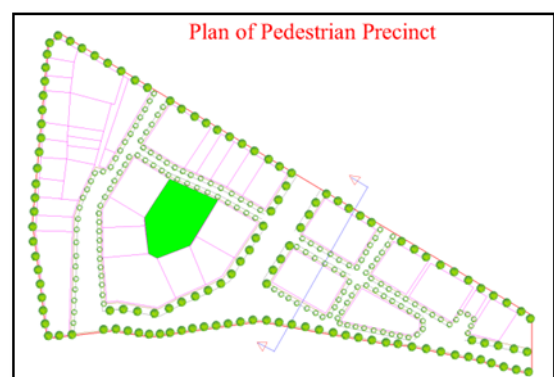


Fig. 8: Plan of Pedestrian Precinct

Node Enhancement

The study area contains three important nodes. These are at Doinik Bangla Mohr, Shapla Chattar and Balaka. The proposed design of the node will enhance the beauty of the study area. Those will be the legendary city elements of the study area. A circular over bridge in Shapla chattar is proposed for safety movement of pedestrians.

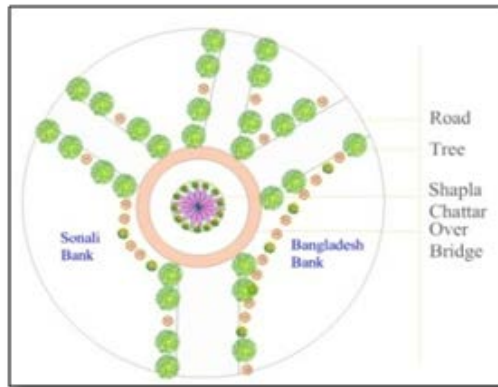


Fig. 9: Plan of Core at Shapla Chattar

Recreational Facilities

Restaurant or Café for Fast Food, Cinema Hall, Amusement & Gaming Centre, Art gallery and theatre is provided in this zone for recreation purpose. Modhumita Cinema Hall is already established in our study area. We will provide a multistoried cinema complex in our area.

Regulation for Recreational Space

The purpose of this section is to create Motijheel C/A as a lively and entertaining place for people who abide and work here.

Table. 5: Regulations for Recreational spaces

| Permitted use | Accessory Use | Prohibited Use |
|--|---|---|
| (a) Parks (b) Restaurants (c) Cinema hall (d) Amphitheatre (e) Community Center (f) Art Gallery | (a) Fences and seating walls (b) Landscape features (c) Improved Open Space (d) Signs (e) Rooftop Recreation (f) Sidewalk Cafe | (a) Surface parking as a principal or accessory use (b) Drive-through pertaining to restaurants, banks and other drive through uses (c) Gas stations, service stations, auto repair and other automobile related uses (d) Billboards. (e) Any high structures |

Waste Management

The whole waste management system will be brought under a central control and an integrated waste management system will be established in our study area. For this purpose sufficient amount of dust bean will be provided.

5 MAJOR FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The whole study of us has some major findings:

- ✓ Motijheel C/A has much potentiality for regeneration.
- ✓ The related authority can take this regeneration project as a guideline for their purpose and make an adaptive decision for the application of this plan.
- ✓ The factors, which influence and control the key activities of the Project Area, must be brought under regeneration plan.
- ✓ The whole planning process should be divided into some strategic steps to fulfill the project much effectively.
- ✓ The final step should be the “Development Management Control” by the authority, so that plan can work properly.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

Proper steps and intervention from Government and Planning Authority can make this plan much successful. By 2030, the physical and demographical growth of Dhaka City will be beyond limit. The population will reach the pick. This huge amount of manpower should be brought under proper utilization. Otherwise, Bangladesh will be burdened with miseries. And Dhaka will be the most affected part of it. If the Regeneration Plan of Motijheel can be brought under proper application and Management Policy it will be much effective for the prosperity of Dhaka.

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