

The Royal Route of Mysuru: Challenges and Urban Design Proposal of Mysore Dasara Procession Path

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Abstract: *The Mysore Dasara procession path, a 5-kilometer corridor from the Mysore Palace to Bannimantap, is vital to the city's cultural and economic life, drawing over 1, 32, 234 (Census -2011) culminating on Vijayadashmi on the 10th day in the month of Ashwini, 10 days from October 14 to 23 (2023), 1,35,456 between Oct. 1 and 10 (2024) However, rapid urbanism has led to functional and aesthetic deficiencies that detract from the heritage essence and limit the corridor's utility beyond the 10-day festival. This paper utilizes a comprehensive, documentation-driven methodology to analyze the existing urban environment and identify critical design constraints, including poor pedestrian infrastructure, inefficient Right-of-Way (ROW) distribution, and the challenge of sustaining year-round site activation. The study will propose a strategic urban redevelopment framework anchored in the principles of Tactical Urbanism. Key design interventions include redesigning the ROW to prioritize widened and accessible pedestrian spaces, creating flexible public amenities like Parklets and Pause Points for continuous civic engagement, and integrating interactive art and smart tourism initiatives. Ultimately, this framework seeks to establish a sustainable, inclusive, and pedestrian-centric urban model for Mysuru.*

Keywords: Mysore Dasara, Urban Design, Junction redesign, RoW Redesign, Design proposal Public spaces, Parklets, pause points

Note: All documented images, maps, 3D models, and CAD drawings are generated by the writer for their thesis

1. Introduction

Mysore (Mysuru) is globally renowned as the Cultural Capital of Karnataka, celebrated for its rich heritage and the grand 10-day Dasara festival, which is recognized nationwide. The culmination of this festival is the magnificent "Jamboo Savari" procession, which follows a specific **5-kilometer** route from the iconic **Mysore Palace to the Bannimantap grounds**.

The integrity of this historic route is under stress from increasing urbanism, "The City had more than the expected number of visitors for the Jamboo Savari procession. Over 70000 people watched Dasara procession in front of the Palace; and over 5 lakh people witnessed the procession on the Jamboo Savari procession route"

which is causing the city to lose its core essence of heritage. Given the festival's massive socio-economic impact—bringing in a significant economic influx and attracting millions of tourists—enhancing the urban scape of the procession path is critical to add value. "As Mysuru continues to attract tourists, there is a growing emphasis on sustainable tourism practices. Initiatives are being introduced to promote eco-friendly accommodations, responsible travel, and the preservation of local culture and heritage." (*Travel and Tour World, 2025*) This study is necessary to address the existing shortcomings in urban planning, transportation, and land use, ultimately contributing to the long-term development and the creation of a more livable, inclusive, and sustainable urban environment for both residents and visitors

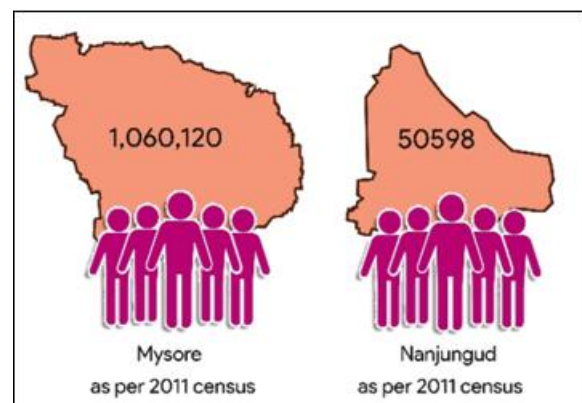


Figure 1: Population of Mysore and Nanjangud (census-2011)

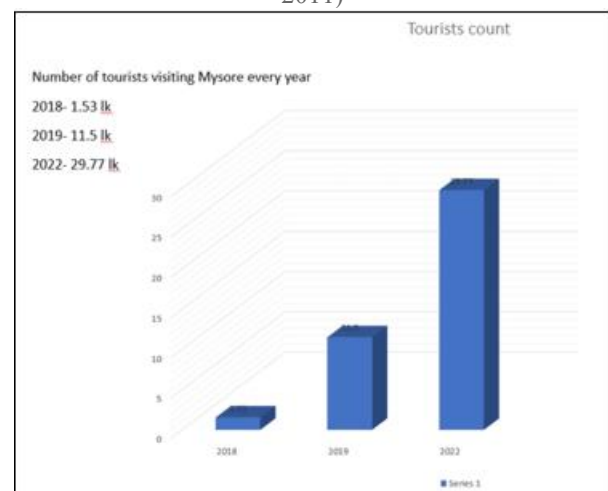


Figure 2: Number of Tourists visiting Mysore

2. Aim

To establish a foundational body of documentation for the 5-kilometer Mysore Dasara procession path, analyzing its current state and constraints, with the specific aim of developing feasible, site-specific urban design interventions that enhance the public realm and optimize the experience during the Dasara festival and throughout the rest of the year.

3. Objectives

1) Redesign the right-of-way (ROW) to optimize functionality and aesthetics.

- 2) Enhance the Dasara experience through innovative urban design elements.
- 3) Create a pedestrian-centric environment for improved walkability.
- 4) Foster inclusive place-making through community involvement.
- 5) Establish a sustainable model for urban development projects.

4. Methodology

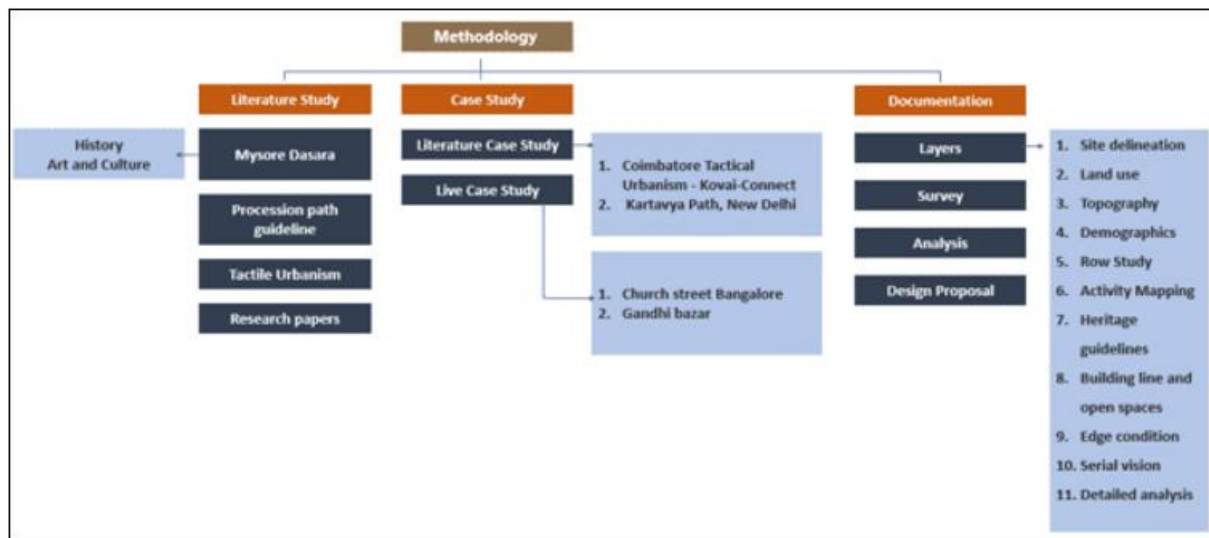


Figure 3: Flowchart of Methodology

4.1 Phase I: Research and Data Collection

This phase is conducted in the following steps; Literature review and case study, understanding urban planning and urban design guidelines through NATCO (National Association of City Transportation Officials, 2013) and URDPFI (Town and Country Planning Organization, 2015) to establish a framework for best practices

Followed by documenting and mapping the procession route from Palace to Bannimantap grounds which involved various layers: Landuse, Built form, Existing amenities and Right of Way development. Understanding the bye-laws for heritage city Mysore through documents collected from MUDA - Mysore Urban Development Authority (MUDA, n.d.)

Primary data collection to understand Vehicular volume for the procession path was conducted as per the guidelines in IRC (Indian Road Congress, 2017) along with stakeholder analysis via questionnaires and interview transcripts

4.2. Phase II: Analysis and Synthesis

This phase is the comparative analysis of national and international and identifying problems and challenges on site, synthesizing all data by majorly focusing on pedestrian safety, Inefficient traffic/RoW, lack of amenities and year round activities for the procession path.

Phase II also included a strategic development of Tactical urbanism & placemaking strategies supporting the objectives of the project.

4.3. Phase III: Design Proposal and Evaluation

The final phase includes a detailed design proposal and a set of guidelines for the 5km stretch of Mysuru Dasara procession path, covering aspects like Re- design of RoW and junction redesign.

5. Introduction to Site

5.1 Mysore Dasara Procession Path

The Dasara procession is a visually stunning and culturally rich event that attracts thousands of enthusiastic spectators who gather to witness the grandeur of the festival. It is a significant part of Mysore's cultural heritage and showcases the city's rich history and traditions.

It is 412 years since Mysore started celebrating Dasara

- The festival began in the 14th century
- It is a 5km Stretch starting from Mysore palace to Bannimantap ground
- Mysore Palace will be illuminated with around 100,000 bulbs

5.2. The Dasara procession path in Mysore, also known as the "Jamboo Savari," traditionally follows the route mentioned below:

- 1) **Mysore Palace:** The procession starts from the grand Mysore Palace, which is beautifully illuminated with thousands of lights for the occasion. The procession usually begins in the early morning.
- 2) **Raja Marga:** The procession proceeds along Raja Marga, a prominent boulevard and one of the main roads in Mysore. This wide street allows for a grand spectacle of the procession.
- 3) **Sayyaji Rao Road:** The route continues on Sayyaji Rao Road, another major thoroughfare in Mysore, named after Maharaja Sayyaji Rao, one of the prominent rulers of the Wadiyar dynasty.

- 4) **K.R. Circle:** The procession passes through K.R. Circle (Krishnaraja Circle), an important landmark in the city named after Maharaja Krishnaraja Wadiyar IV.
- 5) **Chamaraja Double Road:** The procession then moves along Chamaraja Double Road, which is named after Maharaja Chamaraja Wadiyar.
- 6) **Ashoka Road:** After Chamaraja Double Road, the procession turns into Ashoka Road, a significant street that leads towards the Bannimantap grounds.
- 7) **Bannimantap:** The final destination of the procession is Bannimantap, a large ground located on the outskirts of the city. Here, the grand idol of Goddess Chamundeshwari is taken down from the golden throne, and religious rituals and ceremonies are conducted to conclude the festivities.

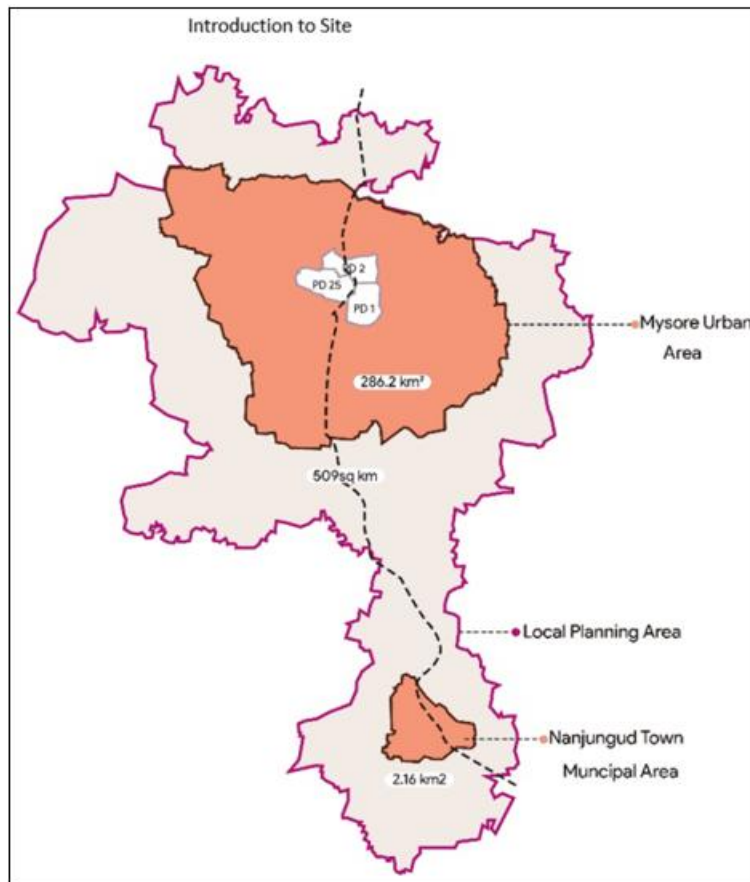


Figure 4: LPA boundary of Mysore & Nanjangud (MUDA, n.d.)

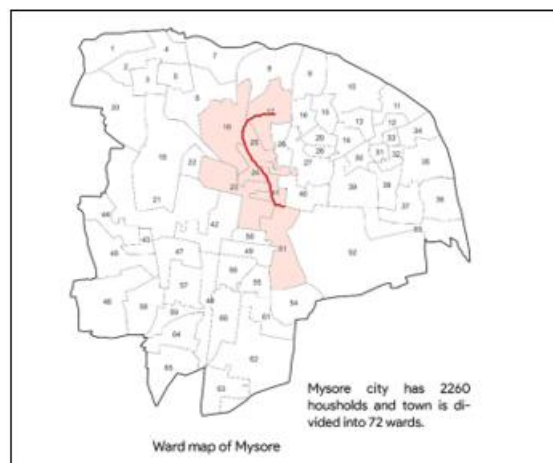


Figure 5: Ward map of Mysore (QGIS_KGIS)

6. Activities Happening in Mysore During Dasara

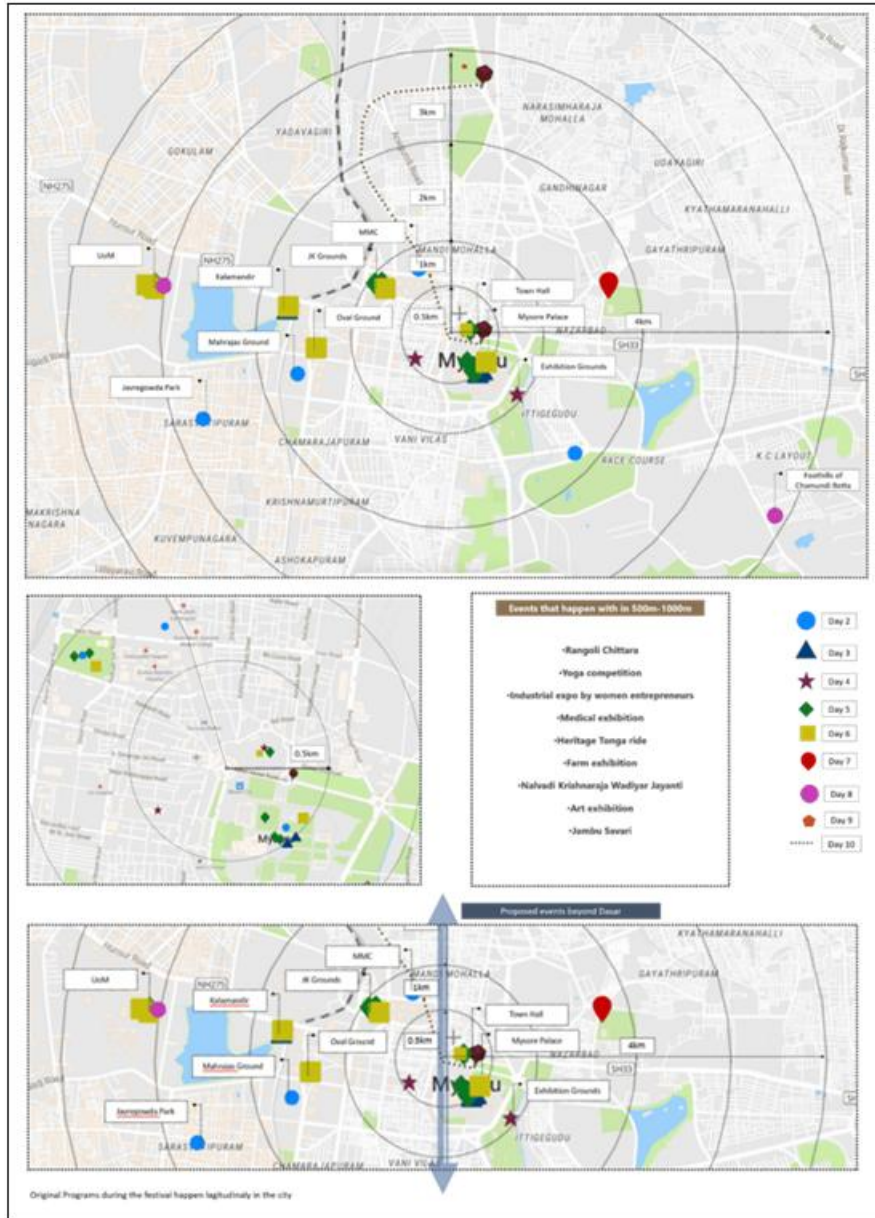


Figure 6: Activity mapping of Mysore Dasara

7. Imageability of Sayajirao Road

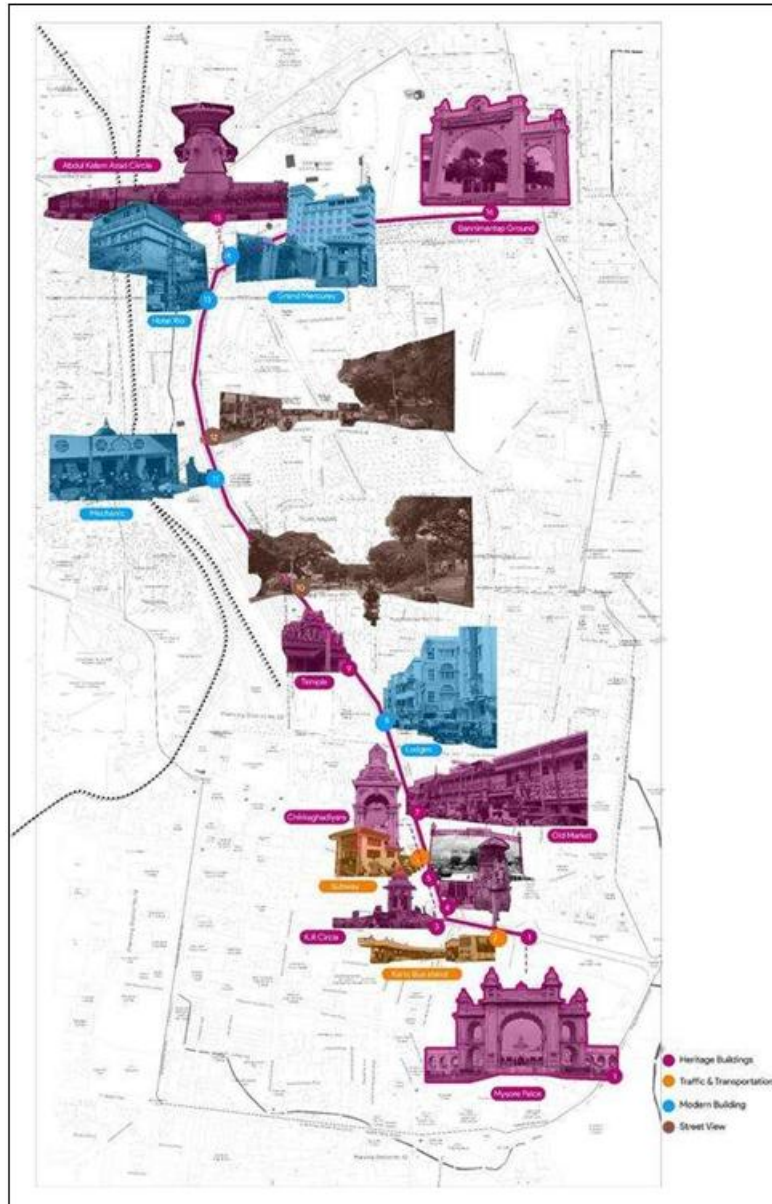


Figure 7: Imagability of Sayajirao road

8. Condition of Roads and Junctions Along Sayaji Rao Road:

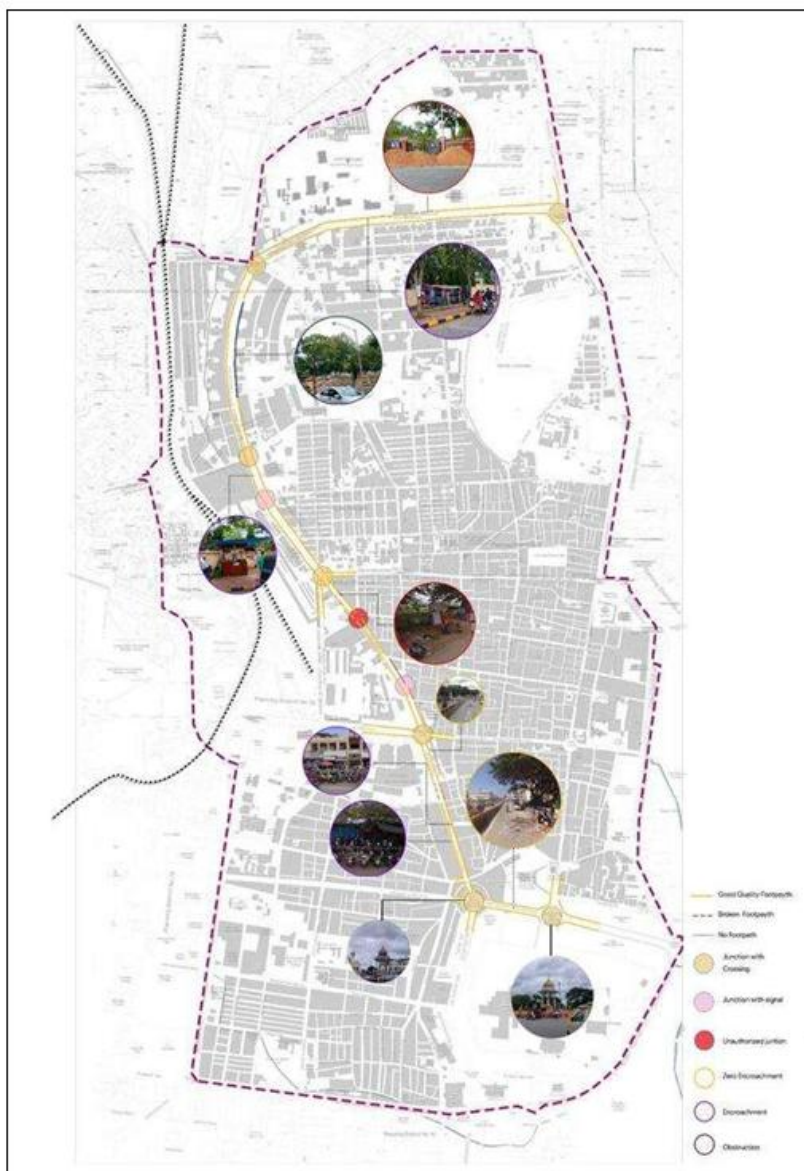


Figure 8: Existing condition of road

9. Activity Mapping of Sayaji Rao Road:

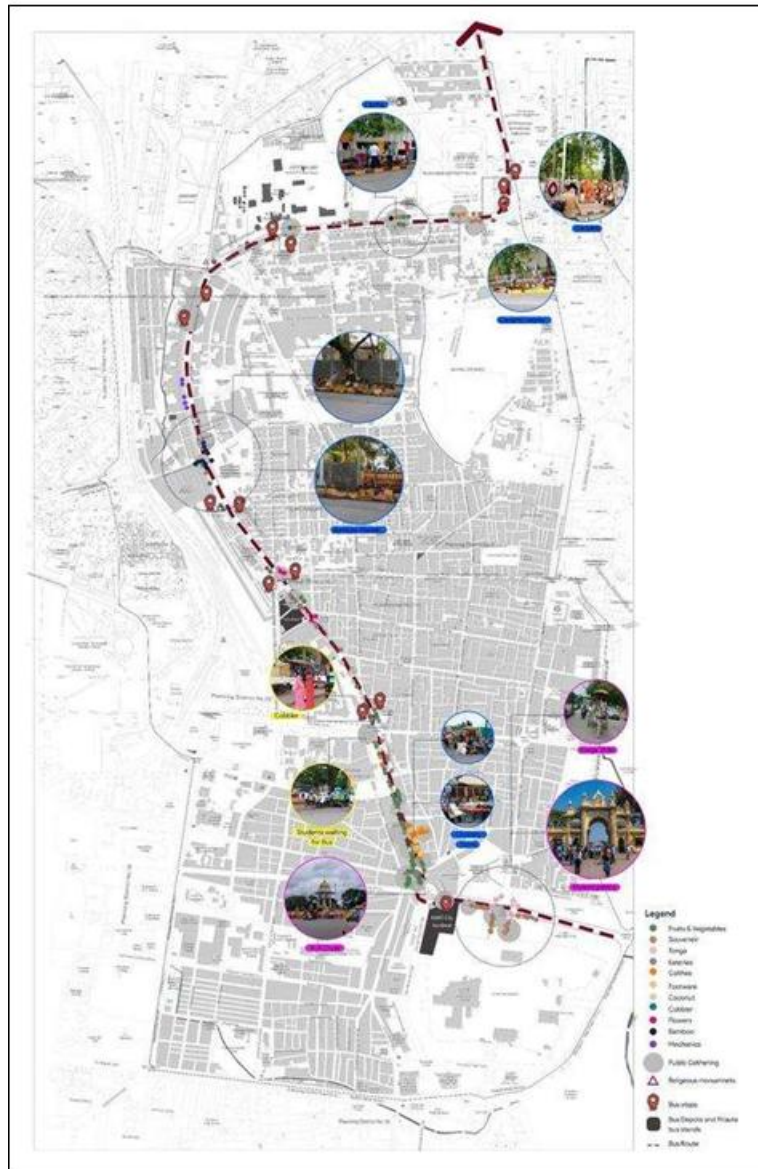


Figure 9: Activity mapping

10. Problems Identified

In a major safety measure ahead of the world-famous Mysuru Dasara festivities, city police and municipal authorities have prohibited public viewing of the grand Jamboo Savari procession from old, dilapidated, and under-construction buildings along the procession route stretching from Mysore

Palace to Bannimantap Grounds. Prominent heritage and commercial buildings such as the Lansdowne Building, structures around K.R. Circle, Devaraja Market, Panchamukhi Circle buildings, and the Horse Stand have been identified as old and unsafe. Authorities emphasized that large gatherings on such fragile structures could pose serious risks. (*Hans India, 2025*)

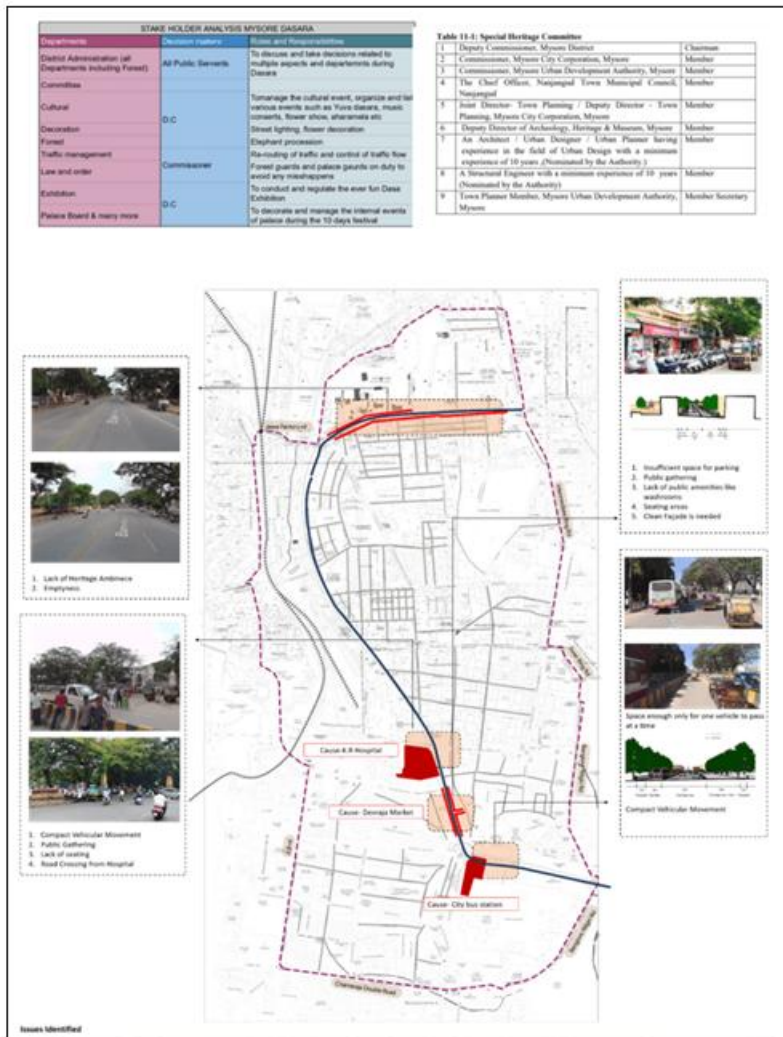


Figure 10: Mapping of problems identified

11. Street Edge Condition Analysis, Sayyaji Roa Road

STREET EDGE An Urban Fabric is made up of:

- Mass - the built form,
- Voids - the open spaces &
- Arteries - the streets

The edge of the built form is what makes the envelope of the street. This is called Street Edge

The 'Edge' is a linear element that is a boundary between the two domains or entities - public and private.

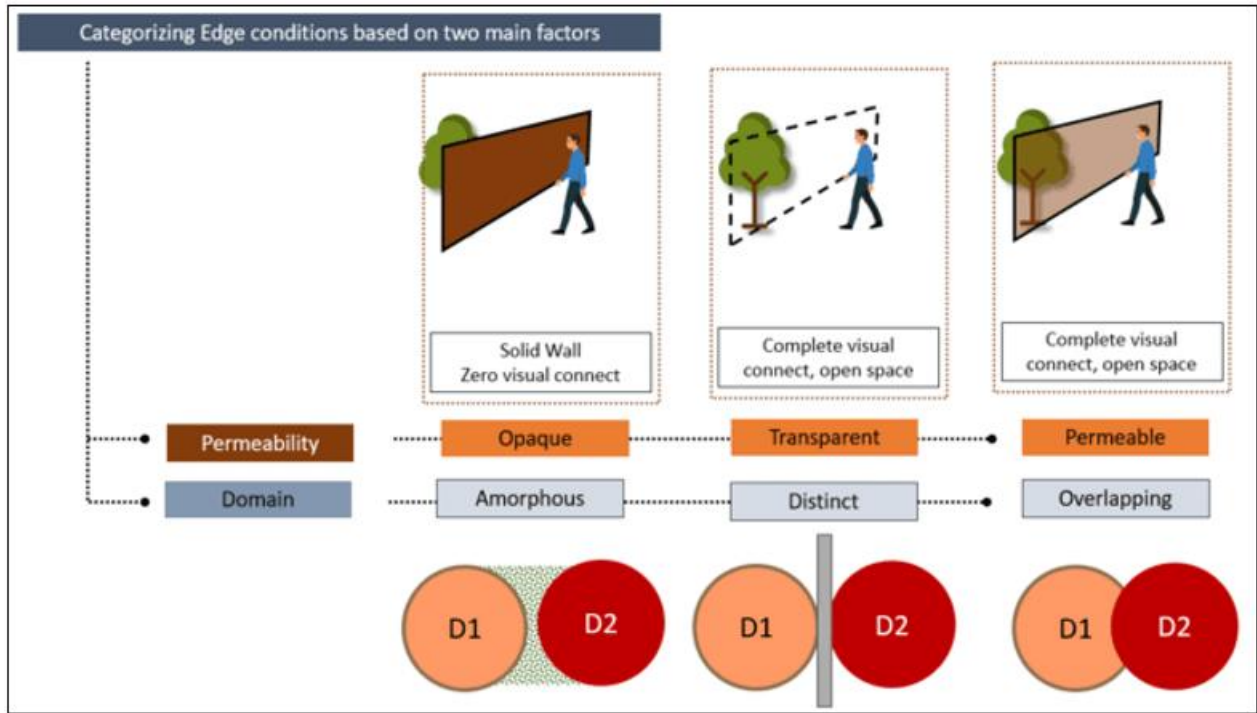
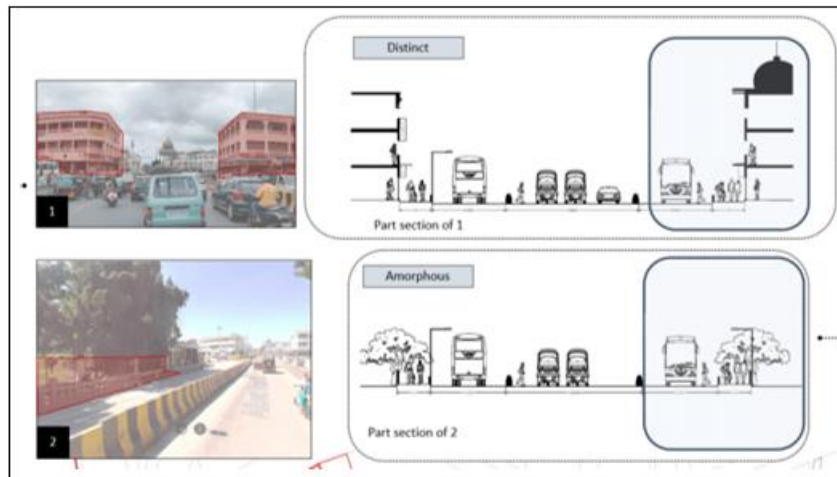
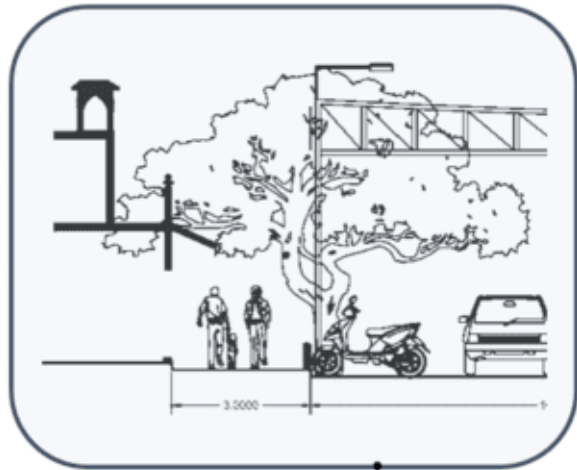
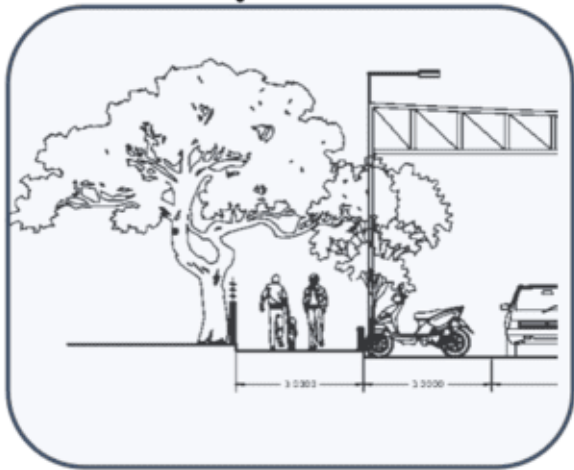
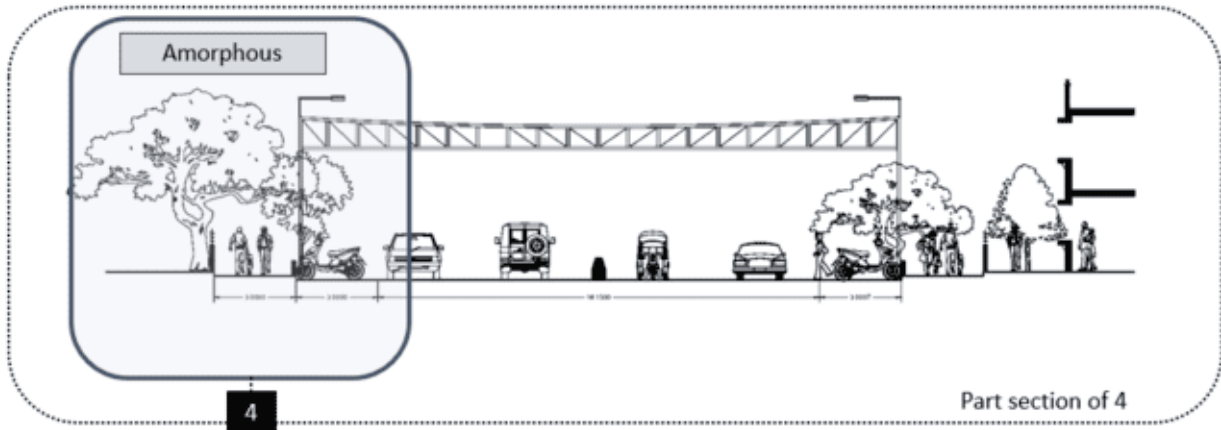
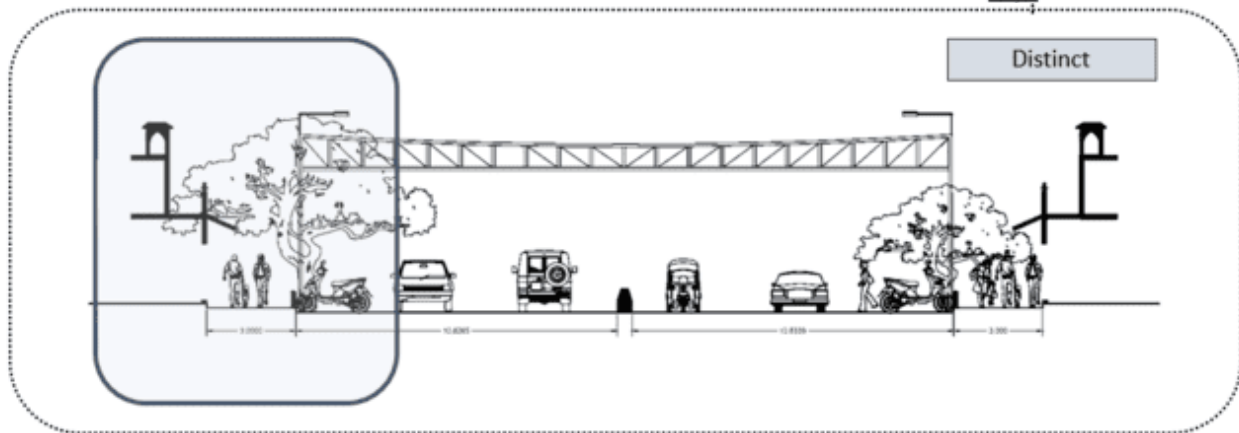


Figure 11: Categorization of edge conditions

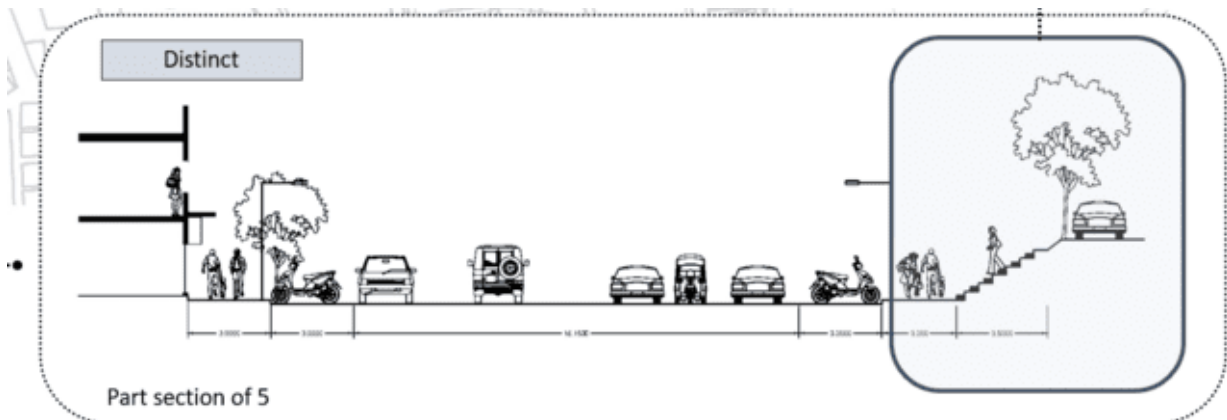


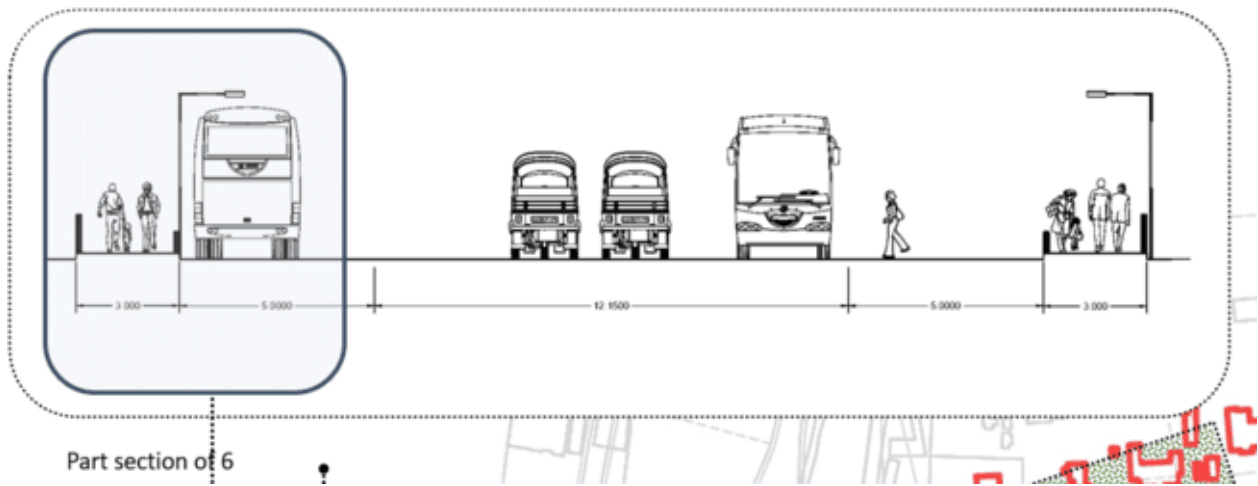


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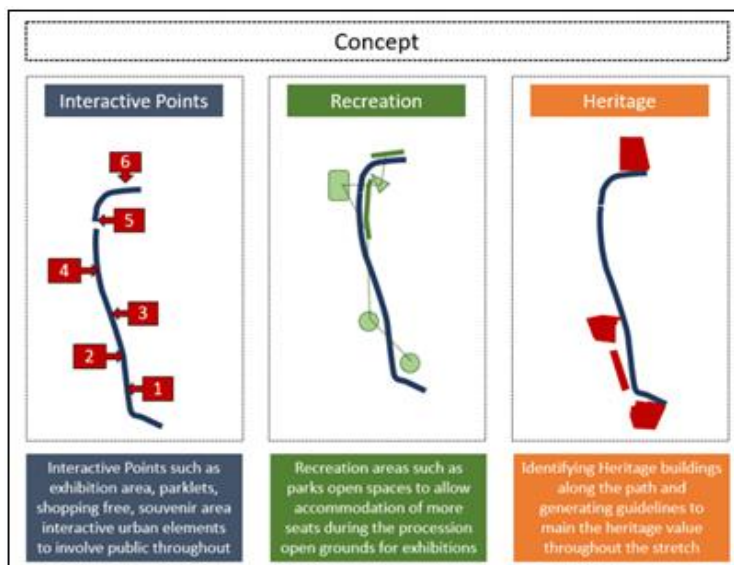


Part section of 3





12. Concept and Design Strategies



STRATEGIES

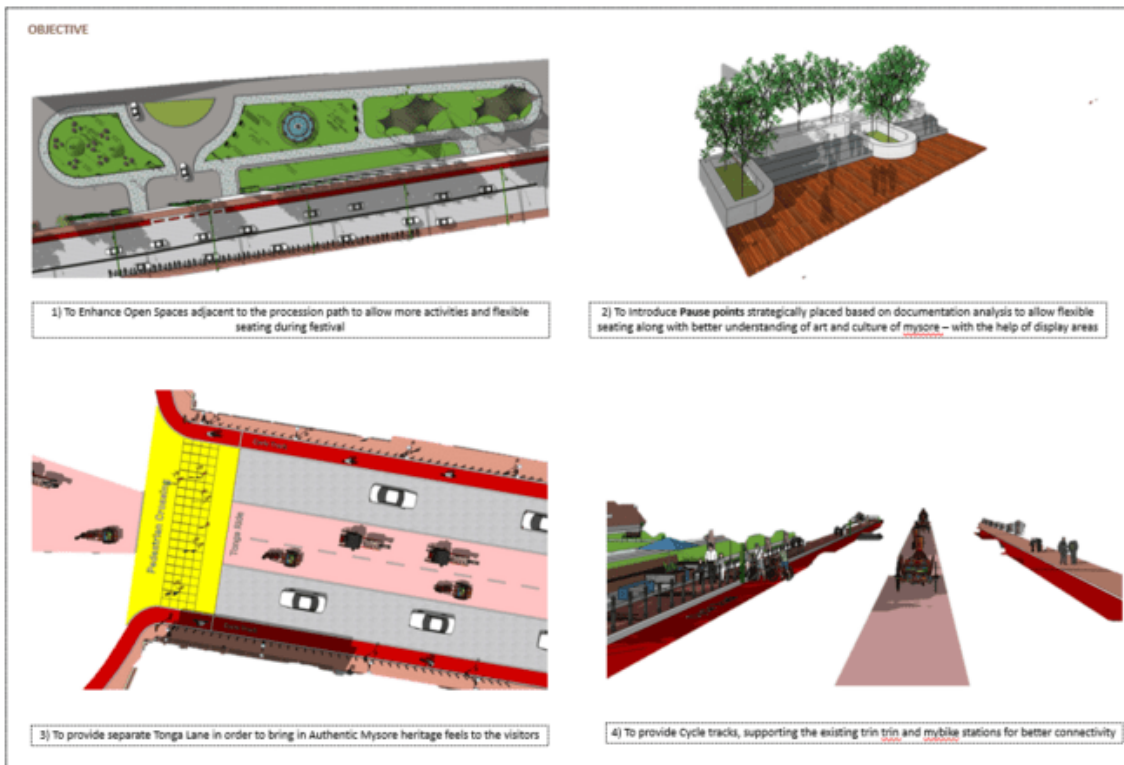


Figure 12: Objectives for the design proposals

12.1 City Bus Relocation:

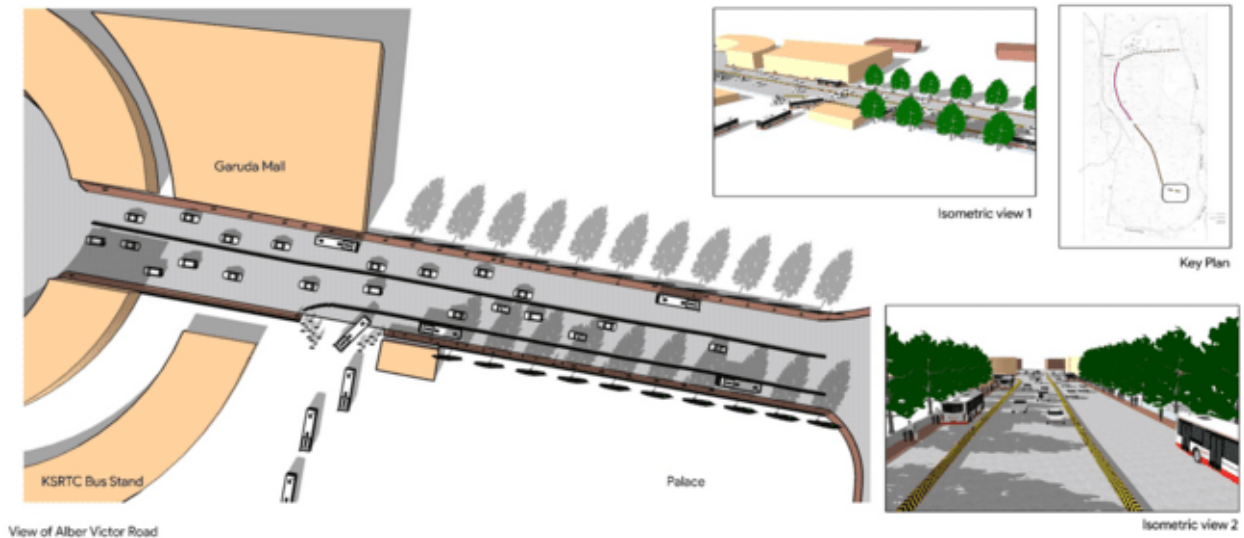


Figure 14: 3D model of existing Albert Victor road

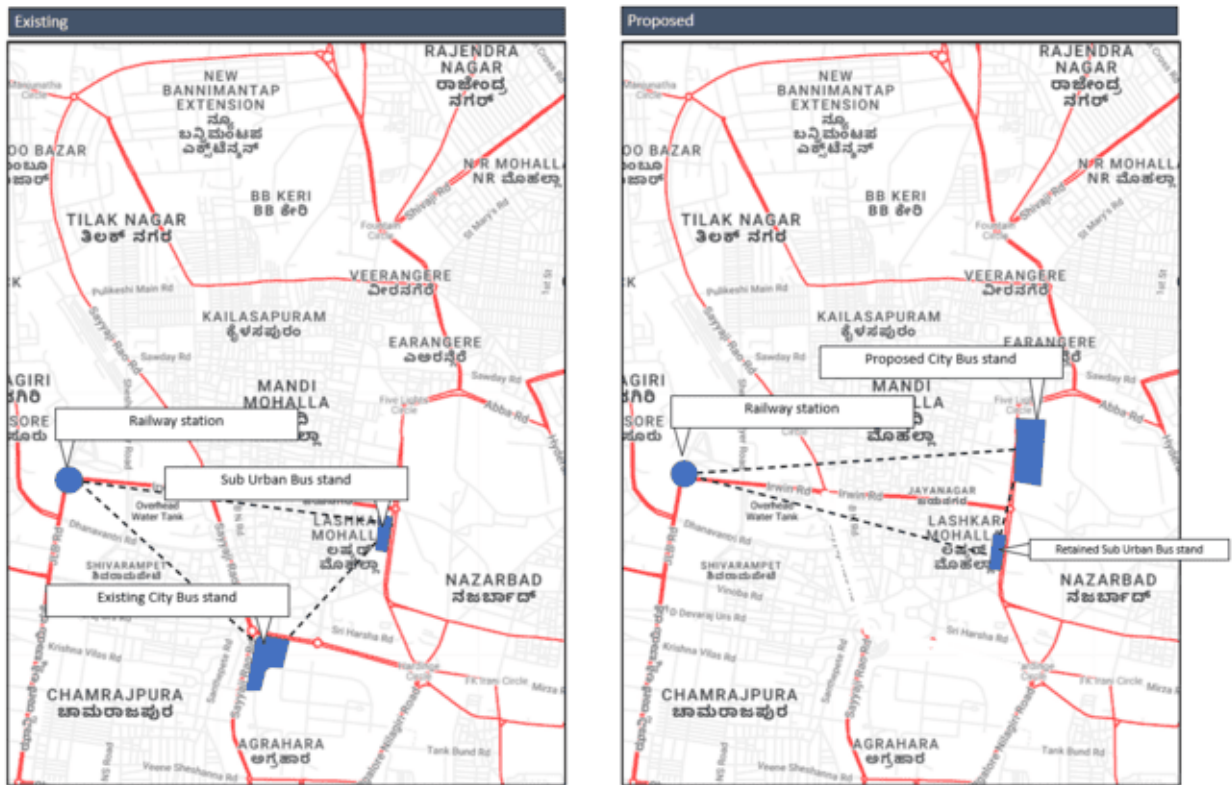
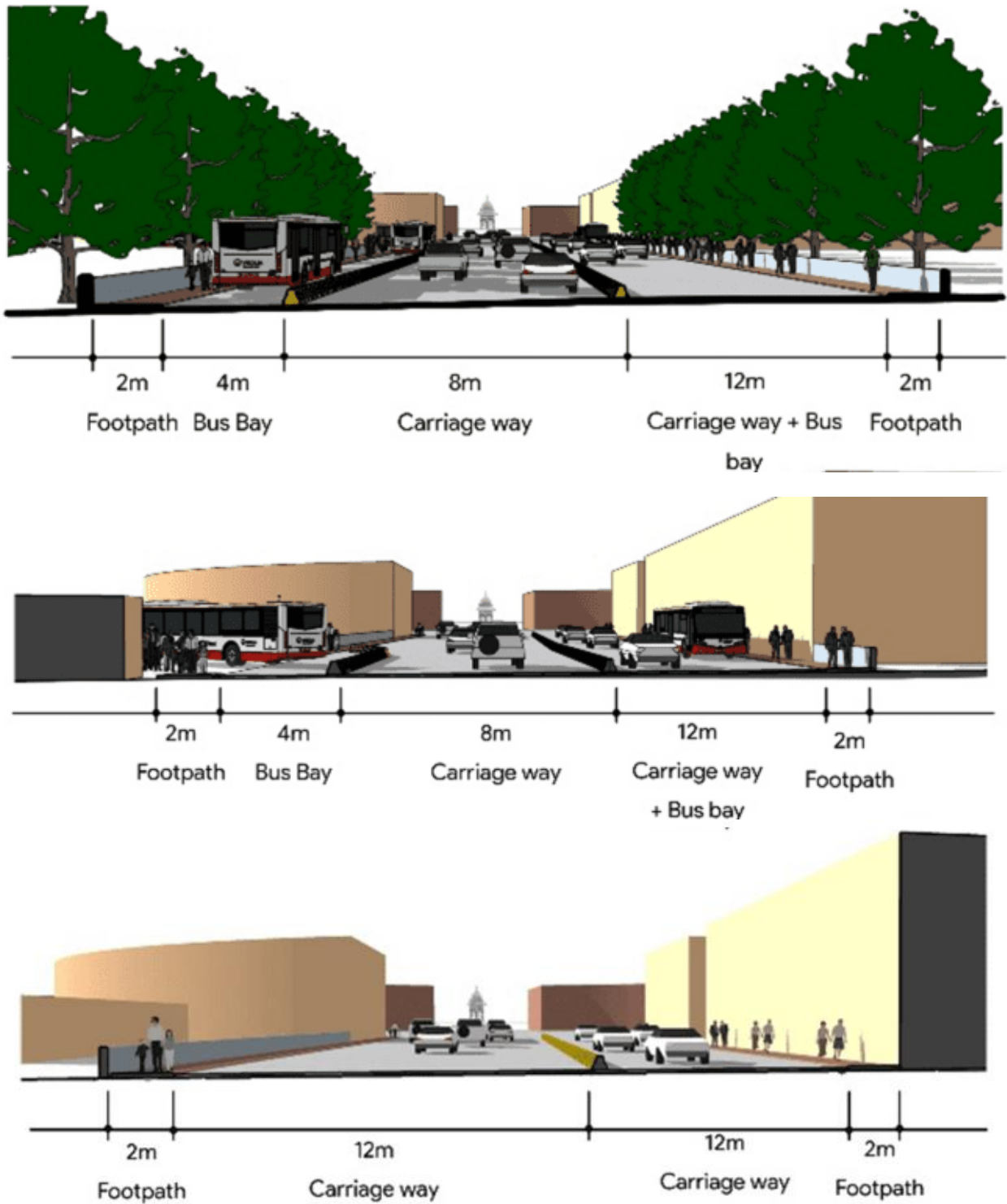
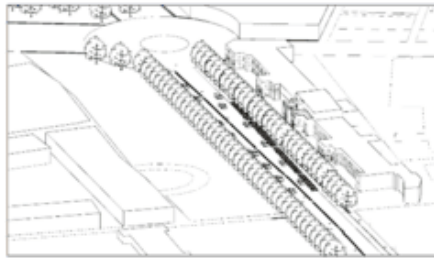


Figure 15: Existing and proposed connectivity of public transport

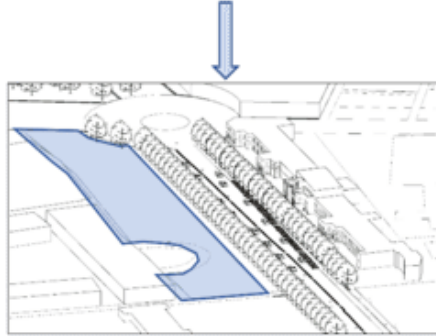
13. Existing RoW Albert Victor Road, Sayaji Rao Stretch:



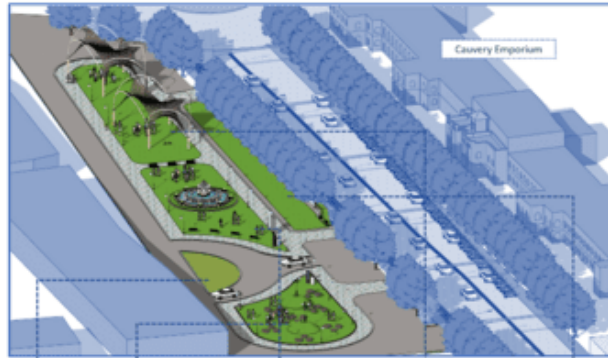
14. Place Making Design Proposals



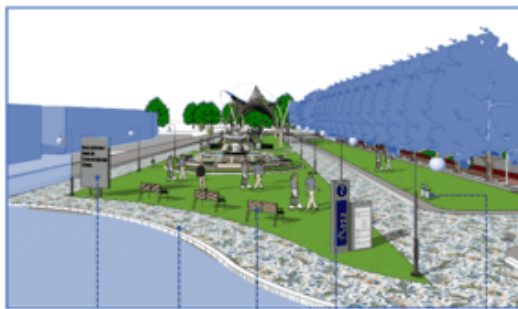
Place Making Intervention Before



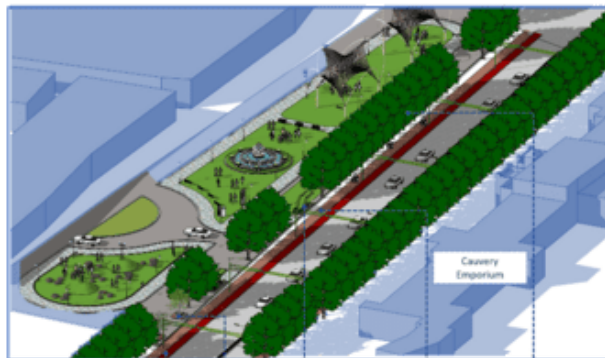
Place Making Intervention After



- 1 Landscape**
For ease of vehicular movement
- 2 Open Plaza**
An open space with seating area to ease public crowd on main road
- 3 Public Fountain**
Bringing back the rich fountains of Mysore to enhance the experience of tourists and residents
- 4 Multipurpose Space**
A shaded area that can be flexibly used as an exhibition area or as a public gathering space based on occasion
- 5 Buffer Lawn**
For future development and to introduce an entry to space



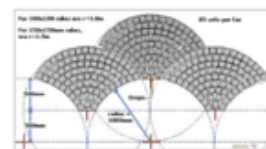
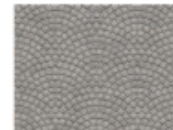
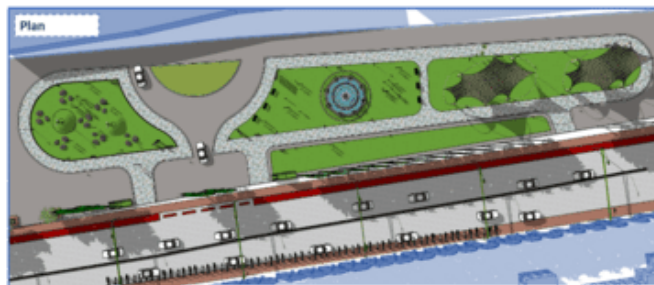
- 6 Information Board**
Details of Mysore and the given area
- 7 Patterned Pavement & Kerb**
Influenced by the Royal patterns and representing Mysore Art
- 8 Furniture**
For the public to relax and enjoy the scenic view of the fountain
- 9 Signage**
Bold Representation of the area and for ease of navigation
- 10 Heritage Street Lamp**
Street lamp representing the heritage of Mysore
- 11 Waste Bins**
Continue to keep Mysore clean

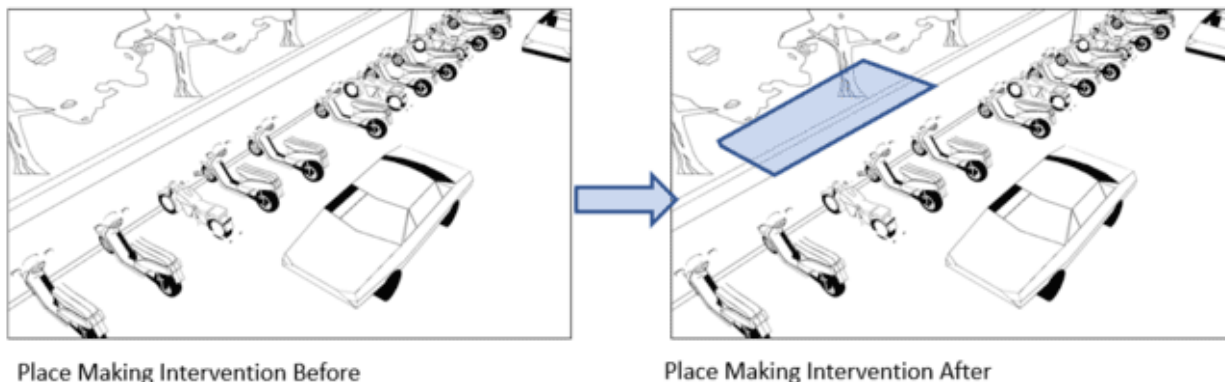


- 12 Cycle Track**
To encourage more cycling in the city
- 13 Seating around tree**
Acts as pause points for public
- 14 Cycle Stand**
At regular intervals for public to park and enjoy the open space
- 15 Pedestrian Pathway**
To encourage walking
- 16 Avenue**
Enhance the ambience of the street



Key Plan
Place Making





Parklets are like tiny oases in the urban jungle! They're small public spaces created by converting parking spots into miniature parks or seating areas. The idea is to reclaim a bit of the street for pedestrians and community enjoyment.

Parklets have been strategically placed throughout the stretch based on analysis done on human activities and public gathering

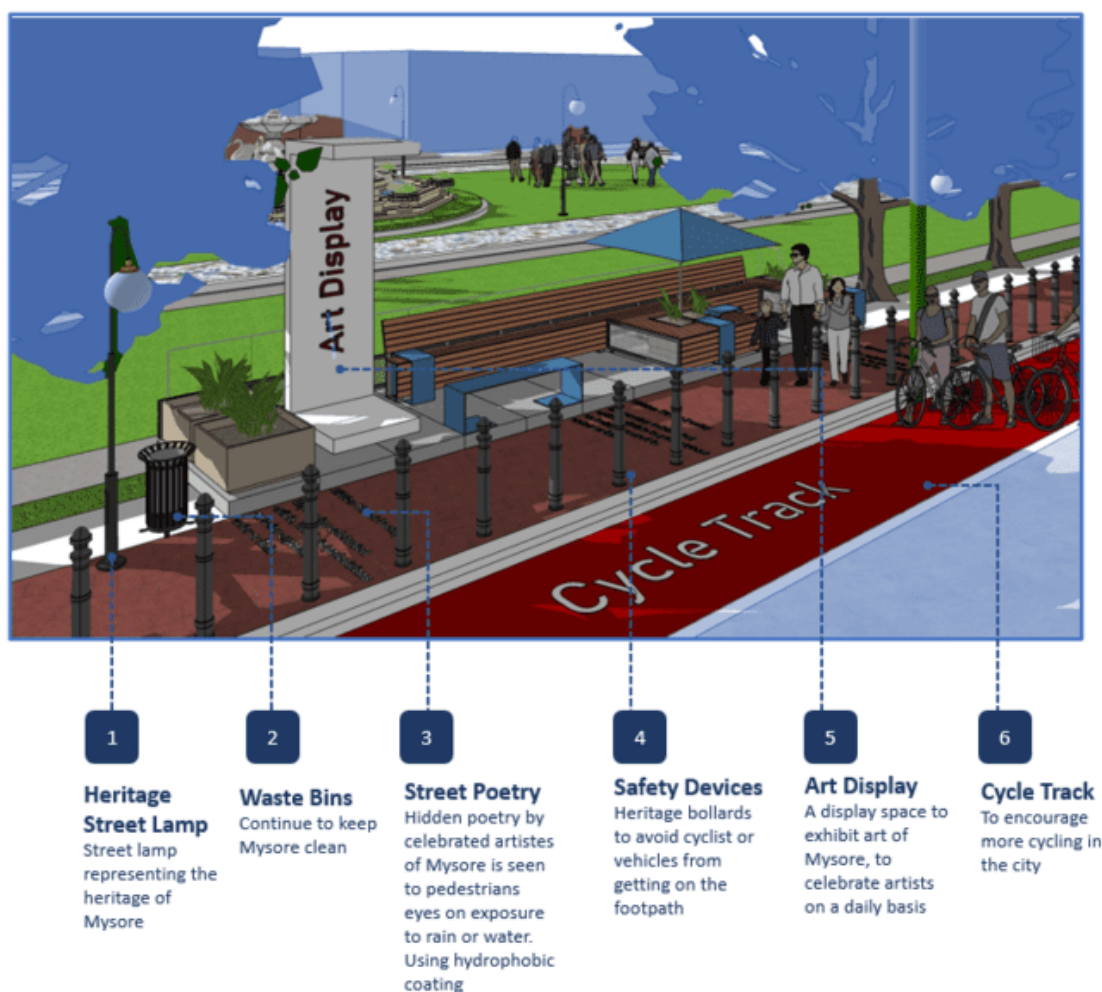
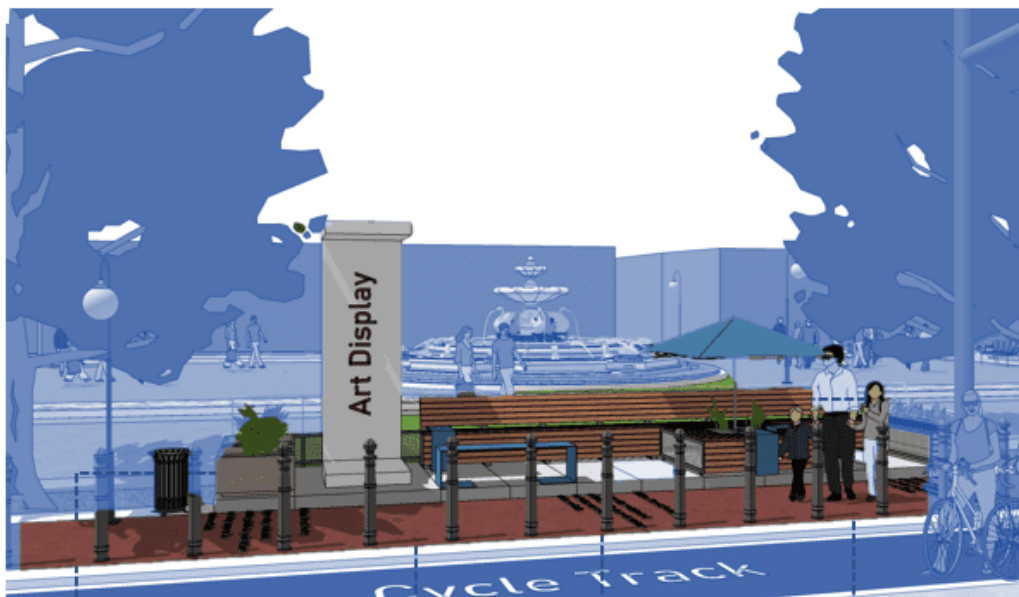
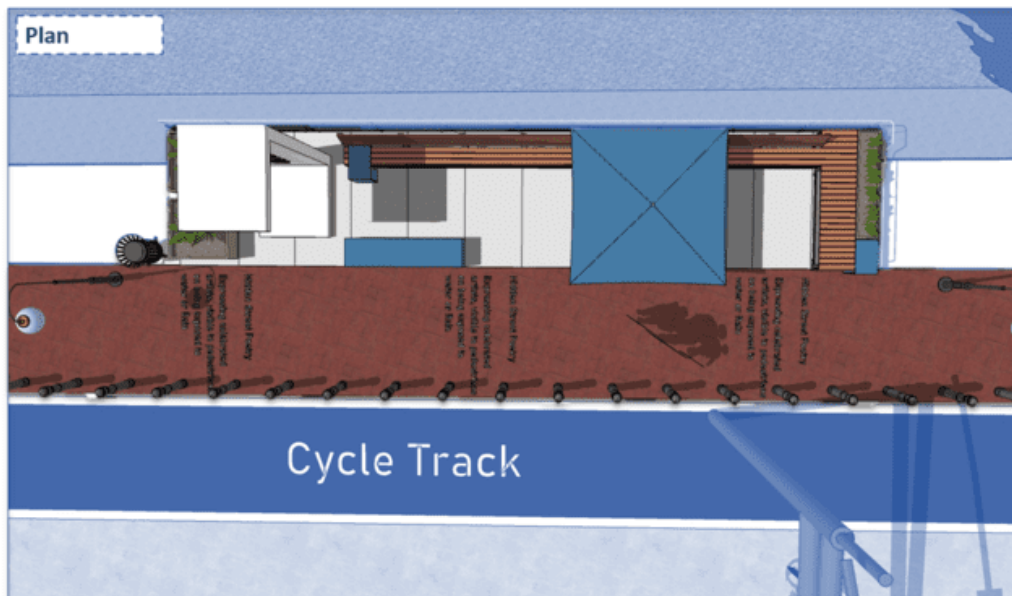


Figure 16: Proposed Parklets type 1



7

Planter boxes
along the parklet to enhance the ambience

8

Accessible Deck
A platform is extended from the footpath, decking is made of concrete

9

Seating/ Furniture
Seating that is flexible to create more interaction

10

Barrier
Art display can also be used as a barrier to create a difference in space

Street Poetry

Hidden poetry by celebrated artists of Mysore is seen to pedestrians' eyes on exposure to rain or water. Using hydrophobic coating. When applied to pavements or other surfaces, it repels water and reveals hidden messages or

images when it rains. It's a cool way to add some interactive and temporary art to urban areas. People can stumble upon these hidden messages as a delightful surprise during a rainy day.

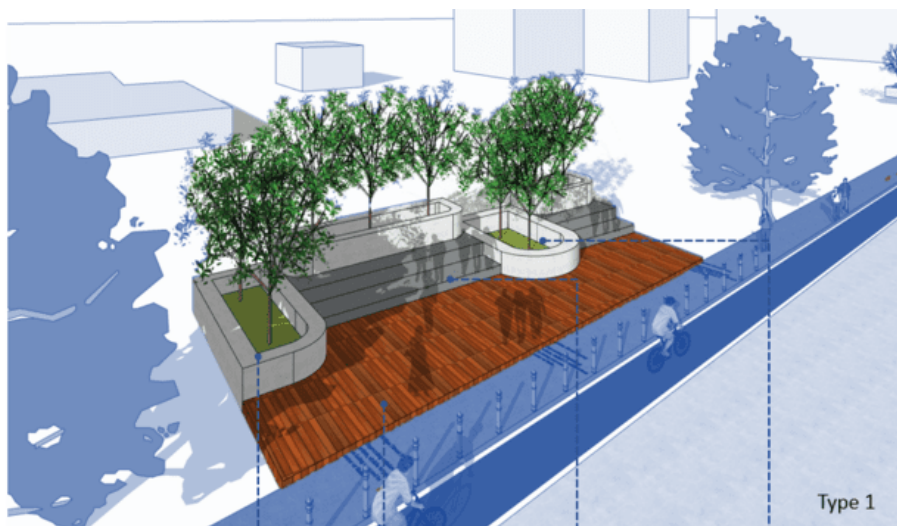


Figure 17: Proposed Parklets type 2 & 3

15. Need for pause points

During Dasara Sayajji Rao road is occupied with pedestrians who await the events unfolding on the street, a pause point at

every 1km stretch will help them relax and find a place to occupy and view the occasion at ease. Apart from during the festival it will also act as a year round active space that can be used by the public for various purposes including relaxation, meetings, fun activities for children and adults equally.



Shaded seating Area

1

Corner Planter

Planters to provide shaded space

2

Deck Space

Gathering space for public
Can be turned to temporary seating space by adding chairs

3

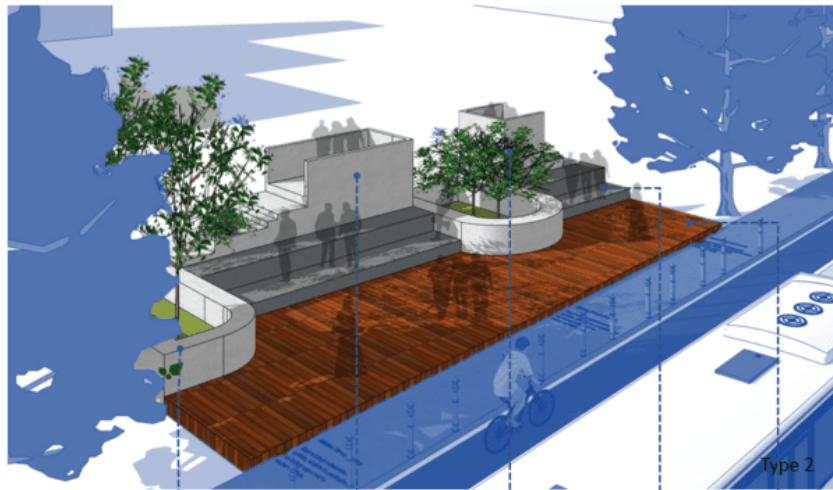
Seating Area

Leisure space for public also acts as extended space during dasara

4

Central Planter

Breaking monotony and acts as seating itself



1

Corner Planter
Planters to provide shaded space

2

Standing Area
Planters to provide shaded space

3

Seating Area
Leisure space for public also acts as extended space during *dasara*

4

Deck Space
Gathering space for public
Can be turned to temporary seating space by adding chairs

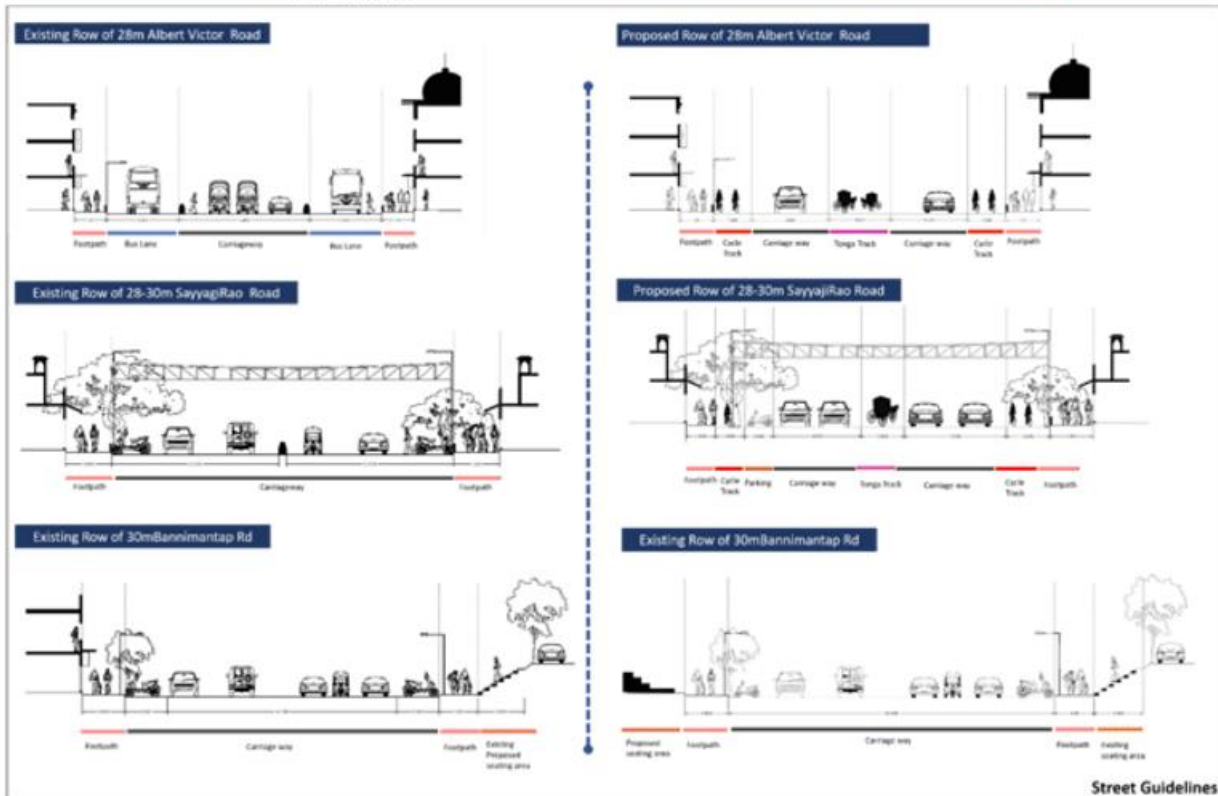
Existing Guidelines

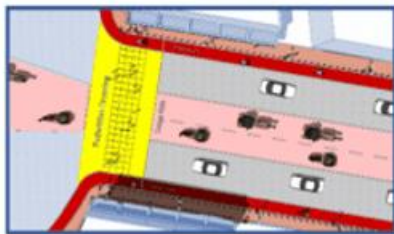
Facade Treatment

Any proposals made in any area/premises along these stretches of avenues or roads shall be in commensurate with the Architectural character of the other already existing important monumental structures

Imageability

features like statues, circles, boulevards, wide roads etc. Scenic beauty is an important character that goes with the city's Heritage. Maintaining this beauty and further enhancing it, is an essential requirement of the development regulation, to protect the Heritage character and Tourism development interests of the city.





Guidelines

16. Three Critical Problems & Three Corresponding Design Solutions:

Critical Problem Identified	Corresponding Design Solution
<p>P1: Poor Pedestrian Environment & Safety</p> <p>The current environment doesn't cater to pedestrians. It's tough to walk around with poor walkability, not enough shade, and very few places to sit. Plus, case studies pointed out problems like the absence of safe crossings.</p>	<p>S1: Prioritize Pedestrian-Centric Infrastructure</p> <p>Make the walking experience better for everyone! We can do this by creating wider sidewalks, adding shaded paths, comfortable seating areas, and accessible public restrooms. The design must focus on keeping pedestrians safe and comfortable, whether it's during a festival or on a regular day.</p>
<p>P2: Inefficient Right-of-Way (ROW) and Junction Design</p> <p>There's a noticeable imbalance in how our streets are used, highlighting a real need to rethink the Right-of-Way (ROW) to enhance both its functionality and visual appeal.</p>	<p>S2: Optimize Right-of-Way (ROW) through Rationalization</p> <p>Rethink the right-of-way by optimizing the roadway and widening the sidewalks for pedestrians. This will involve a thorough Junction Study to assess traffic patterns and safety at key intersections.</p>
<p>P3: Lack of Year-Round Site Activation & Engagement</p> <p>One of the main challenges is keeping the excitement and involvement alive even after the festival wraps up, along with the need for adaptable designs in the open areas along the procession route.</p>	<p>S3: Implement Tactical Urbanism for Placemaking</p> <p>Tactical Urbanism—those quick, budget-friendly, and experimental changes that can keep our spaces lively all year round. Think about creating adaptable public areas like Parklets and Pause Points, and adding in some temporary public art or performance stages. This not only sparks community engagement but also helps build inclusive places where everyone feels welcome.</p>

17. Conclusion

The analysis brought to light three major issues that really need our attention: poor pedestrian safety, inefficient distribution of Right-of-Way (ROW), and a lack of year-round activity at the site. To tackle these problems, the proposed design framework sought to reshape the streetscape by implementing safer pedestrian infrastructure (S1), optimizing the ROW for a more equitable space allocation (S2), and adding elements of Tactical Urbanism, such as Parklets and Pause Points, to foster ongoing community engagement (S3). Notably, the experimental analysis validated this approach, demonstrating that quick, low-cost, and community-driven initiatives can significantly enhance the social atmosphere and improve user experiences.

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