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Here's how to better Bangalore: Reduce pressure on city by developing neighbouring cities(Appeared in DNA Newspaper on June 21st 2010)

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Bangalore has expanded from 175sq km in1971 (with about 20 lakh population) to about 800sq km today (of 70 lakh plus population), bringing urban sprawl and dispersal of development. Due to this, motorists have to travel longer distances to meet their daily needs, most being done with personal vehicles

Bangalore renewal planning strategies must integrate land use and transportation to improve economic and social environments, based on sustainable development for the city that is suffering from haphazard growth. To manage a city's growth, zoning and growth management, along with appropriate use of available land for public infrastructure, is essential. Infrastructure development should be inclusive and quick. Collaborative ways of strategic planning, implementation and monitoring of goals are viable alternatives. Compared to large scale road widening to decongest traffic, it is better to maximize accessibility of an area by practicing inclusive design. Regarding good transport integrated planning, which attempts to place higher densities of jobs or residents near high-volume transportation (like metro, BRTs and circular railway), needs to be done with inter-modal connectivity.

Planning authorities must encourage higher densities with higher floor area ratios to reduce per-capita infrastructure costs. Parking requires small garages near high density areas, and historic, religious or social centres need to be integrated into renewal plans. Successful urban renewal plans, supported by regional planning in neighboring cities like Tumkur, Mysore, Kanakapura and Hassan, will help reduce congestion. Development of tier II cities like Bellary, Belgaum and Hubli-Dharwad, with large-scale, job-creating industries can reduce migration of people to Bangalore.

Environmental conservation, along with development of parks and playgrounds, must be given utmost importance. Water supply must be taken up very seriously through rejuvenation of the Arkavathi catchment, storing more water at TG Halli reservoir, and adopting rainwater harvesting techniques. Restoration of old buildings, roads and basic infrastructure like power, water and sewerage is very essential. Environmental planners must focus on smaller energy production systems and waste disposal plans. Tax benefits must be provided for green buildings and adopting green technologies. Attempts should be made to reduce noise pollution. Fire, flood, and other emergencies can often be mitigated by identifying secure emergency evacuation routes and building emergency centers.