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Draft masterplan unveiled for Panaji city

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PANAJI: Imagine the run-down KTC bus stand complex being converted into a lush rooftop garden with a view of the entire city, or the arterial roads of Panaji being declared no-motor zones with rows of haphazardly parked vehicles replaced by fountains and lawns and cobblestoned walkways. The ambitious 'Draft Masterplan for the holistic development of Panaji city,' drawn up by a team of Spanish architects and engineers envisions all this and more.

The project was awarded to the Spain-based LKS India private limited by the Goa state infrastructure development corporation (GSIDC) in December 2012.

Presenting the plan to a gathering of government officials and Panjimites on Thursday, architect [Maria Mendizabal](#), chief planner from LKS, said, "Panaji has the potential to be a sustainable world-class city. Over the past six months, our engineers have explored every nook and corner of the city to identify the areas that need improvement, in terms of the transport system, traffic problems, sewage and solid waste management and the conservation of the city's beautiful landscape and heritage."

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In her presentation, Mendizabal touched upon the need for a revamp of the public transport system, proposing seven efficient bus routes with bus frequency of 5-12 minutes.

To solve the city's parking woes, the plan proposes having free parking areas just outside Panaji, well-connected to the rest of the city through a shuttle service. The plan also proposes 'iconic buildings' - a City Welcome Center at the PWD premises, an auditorium or aquarium at Miramar circle and a cultural heritage center near Mala lake.

Commenting on the presentation, chief minister [Manohar Parrrikar](#) said that it was just a rough draft, 'a canvas that the people of Panaji would have to come forward to colour'.

"Most cities in India have settled into a state of 'urban decay' and this holistic plan is an attempt to stall that decay in Panaji," he said.

When questioned about the funds required to execute such an extravagant plan, Parrrikar said, "Money is not a problem. If we pump 500 to 800 crore into urban areas over the next five to seven years, all cities in Goa can be developed on the same lines," he said.

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