



STATEMENT TO ENSURE EXTENSIVE AND MEANINGFUL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE DELHI MASTER PLAN 2041

The Main Bhi Dilli campaign noted the release of the draft Delhi Master Plan 2041 by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) on 9th June, 2021. The draft document and land use plan has been made available for public scrutiny for the next 45 days and citizens are invited to submit their suggestions and objections. This is a crucial step in the master planning process which has a long-term impact on the development of our city, and was much anticipated as an opportunity for the citizens of Delhi to participate in envisioning our collective future.

However, the campaign notes with concern, the particular time at which the draft has been put out and the mode of engagement that is expected. The most recent wave of COVID-19 in Delhi saw an utter collapse of all our city's systems. Along with the deadly pandemic, people are currently struggling with intertwined crises like unemployment, homelessness, food crisis, education and financial insecurity. At such a time, the Master Plan re-visioning process is unlikely to get sufficient engagement from the citizens whose voice and opinions are being sought. Further, the copy of the draft Plan as well as the mechanism for submitting responses being exclusively online is making it inaccessible to a large number of people.

Citizen participation and engagement in the master plan is mandated as per the DDA Act, 1957 and URDPFI guidelines, as well as the 74th Amendment to the Constitution, and is required for it to adequately reflect the concerns of the people. As a collective which has been working for the past two years to meaningfully engage with the drafting and participation processes initiated by the DDA, we urge the authorities to take the following steps on an immediate basis.

- Allow for an extended time period of 6 months for citizens to submit responses to the draft plan.
- Proactive steps to spread public awareness about the Master plan including regular advertisements in English and Hindi newspapers, radio, news channels and social media. DDA may also take assistance from the Government of NCT of Delhi for translating the material into Punjabi and Urdu which are the other official languages in the NCT of Delhi.
- Educational videos and infographics should be prepared and disseminated by DDA to explain the provisions of the master plan and changes from MPD 2021 in a simple manner so that people are able to understand and engage with it.
- Special efforts to reach out to vulnerable and marginalised sections such as informal and migrant workers, homeless and people living in informal settlements, people with disabilities, women, transgender people, children, youth, elderly, etc. Their specific needs and concerns need to be addressed by involving civil society groups who would be able to facilitate their participation.
- Apart from the online mechanism, the copy of the master plan must be available at all zonal offices.
- On- ground consultation meetings must be organised by DDA officials with all the COVID precautionary norms so that people do not face any technical and language barriers. Zonal offices in Delhi must be utilised as walk-in centres providing a display of the updated master plan map and

information to build an understanding on the same. At the centres, people should be able to file and submit their suggestions/ objections. People should be able to send their feedback through letters, emails and online portals as well.

- Lastly, it is very important to make the process transparent. This would require the DDA to constantly update people on their suggestions, objections, new information and developments by placing all suggestions/objections received in the public domain. .

We urge the authorities to urgently consider and implement these steps to ensure that the public consultation process is inclusive and meaningful. The efforts of the Main Bhi Dilli campaign will continue in order to push for the planning process in Delhi to be participatory in its true spirit. Beginning with careful analysis of the plan provisions and mobilising our network consisting of over forty civil society groups and several individual citizens, we look forward to extensively engaging with the master plan re-visioning process.

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Main Bhi Dilli campaign is a citizen's collective aiming to make urban planning in Delhi more social, inclusive and participatory.

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