

Main Bhi Dilli campaign Press Statement on the Board of Enquiry and Public Hearing on MPD 2041 by the DDA

The phase of submitting suggestions and objections to the draft Delhi Master Plan 2041 officially ended on 23rd August 2021. The DDA received a record number of objections and suggestions from civil society organisations, workers unions, activists and citizens. The DDA has reviewed 33,000 objections and suggestions and has now set up a Board of Enquiry and Public Hearing.

Faulty communication, no time to speak

At present, the mode and manner in which the DDA is planning to conduct the critical phase of public hearings is highly inadequate. The [public notice](#) refers only to online meetings held using the Webex platform, and the schedule for the 18th and 20th of October lists over 1000 names each for one hour slots throughout the two days. This gives each person less than a minute to voice their concern! There seems to be no serious expectation of substantive citizen participation. Intimation for hearings is being sent to people over email and SMS, entirely in English, leaving many unaware of this critical opportunity to engage with the authorities on the master plan.

Till now, only around 17,000 names have been [listed](#) while over 33,000 submissions were made. The DDA must ensure that everyone is given an opportunity, with no exclusions. Yesterday (18 October 2021) members of the Main Bhi Dilli Campaign physically attended the first session in which over 1000 names were called in quick succession. Of these, only one person responded who was also not clear about why the meeting had been called. It is clear that DDA's current method of holding public hearings is not only inadequate and inefficient, it is actively creating barriers for a meaningful public dialogue on the upcoming master plan.

Sectoral and spatial thematisation desirable

After requests from the Main Bhi Dilli Campaign, the DDA has made public a list of 16 categories under which meetings are being held. We welcome this move but . The meetings on 18 and 19 October cover "other" comments (17162 in, total), however the list of names for meetings beginning on 25 October have still not been made public.

Without the division of slots according to the issue or chapter of concern being made publicly available, citizens and people's organisations who have filed specific objections and suggestions for different sections of the plan will be unable to effectively prepare and present their points. Spatially organised lists could have been an efficient way to include a number of vulnerable neighbourhoods across Delhi (housing rehabilitation sites, riots-affected areas and bastis).

Digital divide remains a blind spot for DDA, silencing the majority

Earlier, the DDA had facilitated the Main Bhi Dilli Campaign's demands to allow suggestions and objections be filled offline, as many citizens do not have access to or familiarity of using the internet. The campaign had mobilised 25,000 offline suggestions and objections at the DDA office. We are disappointed that the DDA continues to not undertake proper public consultations on such an important document which will impact the lives of 22 million citizens over the next 20 years. As CoVid19

restrictions have been eased in the city, the DDA can and should hold Jan Sunwayi sabhas across various wards and districts in the city so that valuable citizens' suggestions can inform the coming Master Plan.

Demands and suggestions

We hereby request for the following in order to make the process of public participation truly meaningful and substantive.

- The meetings should be held physically at the DDA office and at the district or ward levels to ensure public participation.
- A detailed schedule must be shared with proper categorisation of sessions and the expected format for these meetings.
- DDA must ensure that every individual gets appropriate time to speak and converse in the hearing. The mode of communication must be in Hindi and English both.
- DDA must reactivate the helpline numbers and assign a dedicated person to assist people who have any concern or query regarding the process of the public hearings.
- The DDA should clarify to the public who the members of the Board of Enquiry are and their role in responding to and disposing of the suggestions.
- The DDA must make public a comprehensive list of all suggestions and objections that it has received along with their status of inclusion or non-inclusion in the final plan.



Main Bhi Dilli campaign is a citizen's collective aiming to make urban planning in Delhi more social, inclusive and participatory. For more information, please visit our website <https://www.mainbhidilli.com/> / Email: mainbhidillicampaign@gmail.com

Twitter: @mbd2041 / Instagram: @mainbhidilli_campaign

Contact of Coordinators

Malavika Narayan - 83779 74331

Harshal Gajjar - 97270 64061

Rashee Mehra - 86187 35908

Shalaka Chauhan - 98119 26369