

News letter of 
**Bangalore
 Environment
 Trust** 'Qdfc-(

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Bangalore's proposed Master Plan 2015

The proposed Comprehensive Development Plan 2015 for Bangalore has been in the public eye since August 2005. It has been a subject of intense debate, apprehension, speculation and worry for the past 2 years. The current spatial settings and permissible land use is based on the 1995 version of the plan.

The proposed Comprehensive Development Plan (2015) - now called Master Plan 2015, is intended to be a "Development Plan" until 2015. The draft was put up for public information and the citizens were expected to give their feedback or register their objections. Even though the time limit given for the public to give their feedback was totally unrealistic, as per the government's own admission, more than 7200 objections were received from the citizens before the deadline. It reflects their concern for the city and its future generations. An officially constituted review committee of experts was appointed to give their recommendations and to interact

with the public. The Review Committee, after interacting with several Residents' Welfare Associations and NGOs, studied in depth the implications of the draft Master Plan and submitted a set of detailed recommendations. The Review Committee had serious disagreements with several provisions of the draft Master Plan.

The final version of the Master Plan has been in a revision stage for the last 22 months. This, naturally, heightens the anxiety of the public. Several rumours have augmented the growing concern that the entire exercise of drawing up the Master Plan was a huge eye-wash and that it was being implemented only to cover up the slips and violations of the previous Master Plan. The discerning public, thus, is left with the impression that the master plan will further augment the wrong doings of the past, and perhaps destroy the very strengths which brought Bangalore to global attention.

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- *In the public eye, a city is not only a geographically described and spatially defined bounded area, but is a living symbol and reflection of the culture, habits, and aspirations of the people who make it.*
- *The selection of a consultant to prepare the Master Plan was neither transparent nor fair since a foreign consultancy group with no cultural or historical affinity to the local people was awarded the contract - without the accepted tendering process.*
- *In the making of the Master Plan, there was no interaction with local populations at ward levels or even with their elected representatives and hence the needs of the people were not taken into consideration.*
- *The satellite imagery used pertains to 2002, while the plan was made in 2005. Every Bangalorean knows how many changes have taken place in the topography and land use in and around Bangalore between 2002-2005. Can this reflect accurately the area being planned ?*

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- *Industry?*
- *Investor?*
- *Resident citizen?*

Any person who has roots or base in a city, whether he is an industrialist or an investor is first a resident of the city. Therefore, it is the resident citizen whose interests should be at the centre of any development plan. The proposed Master Plan however is an acknowledgement of all the violations that have taken place in the past several years and merely attempts to legalise and further perpetuate the chaos created by land use violations in residential areas, valley areas and green belt areas. Worse, it has added complicated and fancy classifications like Mutation Corridors, Transformation/ Development Area, High Tech. Zones and so on and Commercial Axes running right through predominantly residential areas. If this did not create sufficient complication, the plan also envisages further 'Ancillary Activities' in

residential areas, which is nothing short of a free for all commercial exercise, not necessarily adding to the quality of the resident's life. Whose interests have been served in the proposed Master Plan? It is certainly not that of the resident citizen.

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Given the types of activities allowed under 'auxiliary use' in residential areas as per the Master Plan, a resident will have to contend with some or the following in his immediate neighbourhood depending upon the width of his road almost at any place in his street:

- *Neighbourhood shop (Classification C!)*
- *His street may be become a commercial axes*
- *Gym (C2)*
- *Shopping mall (C3)*
- *Restaurant (C3)*
- *Hotel (C3)*
- *Convention Centre/ Banquet hall (C3)*
- *Cinemas and multiplexes (C3)*
- *Exhibition Centres (C3)*
- *Entertainment and Amusement Centres (C3)*
- *Specialty Hospitals (C3)*
- *Auto Garages and Repair Centres (C3)*
- *Commercial and Corporate Offices (C3)*
- *IT/BT/BPO Activities (L2)*

And yes, you may have a rice/grain mill with 5 HP motor running next to your residence.

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He may lose the charm and convenience of his quiet and peaceful residential area, with all the activities of commercial sites which may spring up on his street: a hotel, an eatery, or even a garage, IT/BPO centers or a cinema complex, to mention a few. The noise and pollution from such ventures will be horrendous. Water shortage and accumulated garbage / litter dumps may follow. As far as one can tell, the BWSSB has not made provisions for keeping drains from becoming choked. Moreover, BBMP is lagging behind even now in collecting garbage.

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Simply put,

- A better shelter
- A cleaner source of water provided on daily basis
- Better and more efficient civic amenities
- Greater economic opportunities
- A wider and easier access to services and institutions
- A clean environment with maintainable ecological balance.
- A peaceful, safe and friendly neighbourhood
- Safety from traffic hazards on their neighbourhood roads
- Walkable access to neighbourhood shops from where daily needs can be procured
- Garbage free environment
- Availability of open lung spaces
- Respite from noise and air pollution
- An efficient transport system

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ON (BDAs glossy) PAPER – YES, because the Document has the following VISION 2015 statement based on the following principles:

- Respect the Natural Environment
- Promote Economic Efficiency
- Ensure Social Equity

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- Large swathes of green areas and open spaces have been brought under the classification of built up areas/development areas.
- Topographical changes have been allowed in Valley and tank bed areas
- Most Residential areas have been made into “mixed land use areas” where an almost free for all commercial activity has been subtly permitted under the term “ancillary activities”. This will only lead to more congestion.
- Densification of population per sq.km with no corresponding improvement plan for provision of enhanced services or infrastructure improvement.

There is no mention of a garbage and solid waste management plan.

- The Green belt area has been reduced from 56% in 1995 to a mere 35% in proposed Master Plan.
- Open lung spaces in some areas have shrunk further, from 10% to a mere 3%, seriously impacting on the environment. It is almost certain that even in Paris, which is held as the model for Master Plan (made by SCE for Bangalore) green belt and open spaces have not been allowed to shrink. Why then is it planned for Bangalore?

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- There is absolutely no specified area earmarked for providing appropriate housing space (one aspect) for the economically weaker sections of society in any of the zones. How is social equity to be achieved through the Master Plan without specifically earmarking such spaces?

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- Multiple land use will lead to congestion of roads and open space
- No provision for improvement of infrastructure leading to economic efficiency
- Traffic snarls and congestion will lead to wasteful fuel expenditure
- Traffic congestion will lead to enormous loss of time wasted in traffic jams

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- 1 Revisit the Master Plan de novo by engaging with citizens and Experts.
- 2 Maintain the essentially residential character of residential areas.
- 3 Remove entirely the concept of Ancillary activity like C2, C3, L2 and C4 from Residential areas.
- 4 Identify the type of commerce permitted from residential areas, allowing only such activity that improves the quality of life of the residents. Engage with residents to determine such a list.
- 5 Dismantle existing BDA Complexes, Ward office areas and convert such space for multilevel commercial complexes, including mini malls, convention halls etc. but reserve sufficient space for multilevel parking. May reserve one wing for

office complexes of Service Providers like BESCO, BWSSB, BBMP and such.

6. Where BDA complexes are not located, earmark separate space for putting up commercial complexes on the lines mentioned in (5) above.
7. RTO's offices for testing staff should not be permitted in these complexes.
8. Enlarge the jurisdictional area of BDA to include peripheral areas where satellite townships should be established to accommodate IT/BT, ITES and BPOs in an all inclusive manner.
9. While enlarging the area of BDA, increase the green belt coverage as well.
10. Integrate an Infrastructure Plan with the Master Plan.
11. Put in place an effective enforcement authority for effective implementation of bye laws.
12. Protect environment, and protect and create more water bodies, if necessary by acquiring all available open spaces.
13. Increase lung spaces and increase green belt area, if necessary by extending the jurisdiction of BDA.
14. Shed the concept of mutation corridors along main radial corridors connecting the city with satellite townships, as this will further clog the road communication lines going out of the city.

Maj. Promod Kapur



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