

Masterplan '21 to get more muscle

Loopholes To Be Identified Within Two Weeks

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New Delhi: The draft masterplan 2021 may get more muscle. Optimum utilisation of space around the Metro stations, focus on densification of the Capital, road space management and emphasis on more regulated parking, all this and more is on the cards post-review.

The National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) which has been assigned the job of "peer review" by the Union urban development ministry to seal the loopholes in draft, hopes to finish the review and submit its report with suggestions in two weeks' time.

On why DDA's much-delayed draft masterplan 2021 was being put through this review, Union urban development minister for state, Ajay Maken, told *Times City*: "There is nothing unusual in this exercise, peer reviews are common world over. We wanted some expert opinion on the draft for some 'out of box' thinking. The current draft has certain deficiencies that need to be addressed and also the plan needs to be made more realistic."

"For instance, some areas where unauthorised colonies exist currently have been shown as 'urbanisable areas' in the draft. The makers of the draft justify this saying that they have not shown the unauthorised colonies as these are illegal. But I feel that since these colonies exist, they should be portrayed in the draft so that the document is close to the ground reality," Maken asserted.

The minister also feels that the chapters on transport and water supply are inadequate keeping in view the future needs of Delhi. Environment also needs some work. He asserted on densification as a



CAR SEVA: Regulated parking will be one of the plan's focus areas

key concern for the ministry which the NIUA is looking at closely to be able to amalgamate in the review report.

NIUA director, Dr Shree-kant Gupta said: "Currently Delhi is more of a horizontal sprawl and the review is trying to address the need for densification." The idea is to make place for more people in the same area which would mean vertical growth of a city into high-rise buildings and in-

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crease in floor-area ratio. It is assumed that densification will also make services cheaper as more people will be concentrated in the same area.

On the issue, Ajay Maken said that since the population of the city is likely to shoot up to 23 million by 2021 from the 14 million figure of the 2001 census, densification is the only way out. "We will have to go vertical to accommodate all these people."

The institute is also looking at issues like development

around the metro stations for optimum utilisation of space for commercial purposes while keeping the peace of residents in mind. Besides focussing on transport, NIUA is also addressing issues like parking and road space management as the city has no road space policy as yet. The institute has to suggest how the Tejendra Khanna Committee report's recommendations can be amalgamated with the draft plan.

Dr Gupta pointed that NIUA's brief also involved giving suggestions to make the document more readable. "Ideally, a plan should highlight the broad principles on which a city is to be developed. But if one sees the current draft, it has a lot of detail and the main highlights at times are found buried in there. Also, the tone of the document is open ended on certain issues which may leave scope for different interpretations," Gupta pointed. Almost six weeks into the review, NIUA plans to finish work on the plan within two weeks and submit its suggestions to the ministry.