

GOING TO TOWN

SUDHIR VOHRA

No redevelopment roadmap



One assumed that the intense publicity and awareness created on Master Plan of Delhi 2021 during

a centre for services and business than just an administrative capital. There has to be a corresponding paradigm shift in the planning process.

What the city now needs is a master plan for redevelopment. We cannot ignore the realities of our time: much of the building stock built 50 years ago has outlived its util-

ity and needs redevelopment; the car is no longer a luxury and yet the bicycle is a mode of transport for a large part of the population. Pressure on land has driven away the concept of servant's quarter and yet we need help to maintain our homes. While we want our cars to get bigger

and buy weekend SUVs, we don't want to sacrifice our gardens and park them inside our plots. Concepts like still floors, common services and facilities are still considered utopian; we still believe in owning everything individually, forgetting that collective cooperative ownership of assets has its own advantages.

for recreation, leisure or play. The ministry of urban development today faces the challenge of recovering its credibility in matters of urban governance. It has to accept that the planning methodologies of the past have failed to deliver and to re-visit the planning process itself so that Delhi can move from a failed development model to a revitalised redevelopment future.

While MPD 2021 does talk of redevelopment at many places, it has no roadmap to explain how this goal would be achieved. It does not specify how such redevelopment shall take place; how the urban local bodies shall be empowered to facilitate such a process; how the DDA's powers would be restricted, if at all; and how technology would be harnessed to improve municipal and planning governance.

It also fails to recognise that the DDA has become a white elephant which the city can ill-afford any longer and does not address the issues of devolution of the DDA's role to the Delhi government. On the other hand, it remains prescriptive in many ways — it specifies FARs where there is no need to and does not address the increased need for dwelling units. It clothes itself with irrelevant micro details, forgetting the larger picture completely.

Like its predecessors, it might become an irrelevant un-implementable document. Perhaps sooner than we can imagine.



the past few months would stir the ministry of urban development into looking at the document with a new vision. Unfortunately, MPD 2021 — whatever we have seen of it so far — that has now been cleared by the group of ministers of the Government of India betrays no such effort.

It is clear from the mess in the city that the planning process followed for the past four decades is flawed. MPD 2021 should have been restructured completely instead of making it a patchwork document.

To begin with, it conveniently ignores the fact that large tracts of land which it describes as urbanisable have already been urbanised — millions are living on these lands, most without any civic services and without any responsibility towards the city they earn their livelihood from. These masses cannot be wished away though they are occupying unplanned parts of the capital. This reinforces the fact that the planning process has failed us during the past four decades.

Which brings us to the second point: Isn't the time not ripe now to examine the planning process itself? The economics of the city has changed. It is becoming more

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Huge tracts of lands have been consumed by low-rise unauthorised developments leading to the urban sprawl we see today. If density figures are compared with other similar cities, we have some of the lowest densities of population with very little public land being available

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