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[New Delhi](#)

## **DDA's indifference to Master Plan criticised**

Staff Reporter

*Authority charged with undermining public participation*

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- ◌ *Date for submission of comments and suggestions should be extended*
  - ◌ *Vague projection of Delhi as a "world class city"*
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NEW DELHI: With Delhi Development Authority not giving any acknowledgment or public response on whether and how it would treat over 20,000 objections filed on the draft Master Plan of Delhi 2021 by concerned citizens and groups, an alliance of voluntary organisations, Sanjha Manch, has charged the Authority with seriously undermining the issue of public participation, mandated even by the 74th Constitutional Amendment, and having only its own officials in a committee constituted for reviewing the objections.

Coming out strongly against the approach of DDA, Sanjha Manch said since the Master Plan outlines a broad vision for city development and it was not adequately circulated earlier, the date for submission of comments and suggestions should be extended by another six months and DDA should organise at least one public hearing in each zone during that period to acquaint the public with the provisions in the Draft and obtain detailed responses.

Prepared in December 2004 and placed on the DDA website for public hearing on April 8, 2005, it said people were only given a 90-day period to file their comments and suggestions on the Draft and this period ended on July 7.

Accusing DDA of not making the zonal plans and sub-zonal plans available so that people could familiarise themselves with what was being planned for their neighbourhoods, the group said without these plans it is impossible for the citizens to really

understand how the Master Plan is going to affect their life. It also alleged that DDA did not conduct public hearings in every locality. However, in May and June a number of voluntary organizations came together under an alliance called the Sanjha Manch and decided to publicise the plan on their own. With a technical supports organisation, Hazards Centre, coordinating their efforts, these citizens evaluated the draft plan.

"The objective was to highlight the emergent contradictions and aberrations in the document, its overriding focus on constructing a world-class city and subsumed anti-poor discourse, huge gaps in projected targets and actual delineation of space and resources, excessive emphasis on privatisation and commercialisation in all key sectors," the group said, adding that the objections had been filed by people from the level of rag pickers to Members of Parliament.

But as three months have passed and there is no word from DDA on how and if at all it intends to incorporate these suggestions, these citizens have now as "supposed beneficiaries of the Master Plans", decided to demand accountability on part of DDA and would be for this purpose organising a protest outside its headquarters on October 6. And the group claims the former Prime Minister, V.P. Singh, would also join them in raising the voice against alleged indifference displayed by the "supreme planning body".

Meanwhile, the organisation has also stated that this time the "Work Studies", on which the Master Plans are based, were not published for public debate, analysis and comment.

Stating that private sector participation has been acclaimed in virtually all sectors, including land acquisition, housing, power generation, water supply and sanitation, health, transport, education, and even governance, the group has asked if there is any detailed analysis that DDA has conducted of the existing privatisation of transport and power distribution.

Also it has described as vague the projection of Delhi as a "world class city" since the same has not been spelt out in detail anywhere in the draft plan. It has also asked how DDA proposes to resolve the conflict between existing settlements and proposed ones .

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