

## **Citizen Feedback on the BIAPA proposed Outline Development Plan**

October 20, 2004

On 16 October, 2004, Janaagraha called for architects, planners, urban issue experts to examine the BIAPA plan put out by the Bangalore Metropolitan Regional Planning Authority (BMRDA). A series of meetings with BMRDA officials and Swati Ramanathan of Janaagraha resulted in this larger group meeting to review the proposed plan with the Commissioner, BMRDA / Chairman, BIAPA, Shri M K Agarwal, at his offices. Participants included Almithra Patel, Ravichandar and Satej Alur and twenty others.

There are many aspects to the proposed plan that show thought and care: plans for rain water harvesting; solid waste treatment plants; careful consideration of zoning heights, protection of the valleys and maintaining large areas of green through appropriate zoning; protection of aircraft areas from bird hits, etc.

However, there are many gaps of significant concern. Below are the collective concerns and suggestions submitted to the BMRDA:

- Public dissemination: can we change the process of letting the public know about planning decisions being taken that will impact the city and it's surrounding areas. There are a number of gaps in the current process:
  - the process of consultation should begin at the early planning stages rather than a fait accompli after the design process
  - thirty days for any citizen to give an opinion is too little time. The usefulness of critical input should not be so rigidly time-bound
  - calling for citizen input through ads in the popular dailies for a day is clearly insufficient since almost nobody in the group saw the notice. Better dissemination methods are called for
  - a bunch of maps gives no indication of the thought process in the decisions that are made. A supporting document to detail this must be included
  - Public participation seems severely restricted to government discretion. What is the value of citizen feedback if the process leaves it to the government to merely "consider"
  - The singular option for the citizens to troop into the department office to "view" the maps is inconvenient. Why are the proposed plans not put up on the department website. There is no implied finality in the plans merely by being on the web
- The silo approach: it seems that the different authorities whose plans are all going to impact each other, are working in isolation. This is inviting disaster at multiple levels from planning public transport to zoning laws to putting in water pipes. The BMRDA must pull the different agencies and planning authorities to the same decision-making table and form a cohesive planning strategy. Civil society must be included at this table.
- Water supply to BIAPA: this is an issue of concern since the two sources identified by BMRDA –Hassergatta lake and Cauvery- are somewhat suspect

in their capacity and cost to provide water. Rainwater harvesting will work only to a point.

- Transport and connectivity: the key users of the Airport are going to be the residents of Bangalore and the surrounding CMCs. There must be adequate and rapid connectivity options available to them. Mass rapid systems in every international metropolis in world connect the city to the airport. The fact that the BMRTL stops at the BMP edge and also does not connect to the railways is of prime concern. The IDEK and RITES solutions are unclear. Adding lanes to highways is not an appropriate solution. Highways incentivise strip commercial development and put more vehicles on the road, thus negating the primary purpose. Traffic is already a nightmare in the city. We need to reduce the number of cars that are on their way to drop passengers to the airport. We need alternate, efficient means of connectivity. Especially given the fact that this will be the only airport for both national and international air travel.
- Protection of the highway corridors: it is important to find planning and zoning devices that will prevent building encroachment and edge disintegration of the highways. Providing landscape border zoning on either side of the main highways is a possible solution. Intersections can be provided strategically to allow traffic into internal developments.
- Diverting the highway: the expressway or highway runs within the proposed airport township. In fact the township (whose economy is centered around the Airport) should be away from the main connecting road. This is important for the quality of residential layouts in the town as well as for improved speed on the highway. Likewise the highway to connect the Devanahalli and Doddaballapur needs to be routed around the towns (bypass with restrictions of expansion if possible)
- Planning the developments:
  - The Doddaballapur industrial area will improve dramatically (like electronic city) due to its proximity. Hence it should be planned and connected directly to the Airport either via road or rail.
  - All neighboring villages need to be considered as satellite towns and adequate infrastructure facilities need to be provided in the planning. Such as provision for continuity of Mass transit to Devanahalli, & Doddaballapur as well as water supply. This will not only develop the existing towns but also reduce inflow of traffic to Bangalore.
  - It might make sense in the long run to consider one of them to be an administrative zone (such a Canberra & Melbourne)
  - The towns need to be protected in terms of expansion by surrounding them with green belts.
  - It is obvious that luxury hotels and major MNC's will come up around the area (such as the proposed Oberoi resort). The BMRDA should earmark specific zones (with the condition that they maintain the highway or any other infrastructure). Similar to BOOT.
  - If possible the proposed Airport Township should be a planned zone (similar to a smaller Chandigarh or New Mumbai)- neighborhood concepts? It seems haphazard in the existing situation.
- Protection of the environment: can the sensitive area be protected permanently from future development by insensitive local authorities?

- Protection of historic sites and archeology: the mythic society should be consulted on the extensive list of rich heritage in the area that needs to be preserved.
- Meeting the Aviation specification Standards: there was some concern about the proximity of the landfill sites to the airport runways.
- Bring in the private professionals: A genuine competition (unlike the Central Jail) should be floated to all Indian architects, designers and planners to design the area around the expressway. The approach roads in any Indian city are never designed.

**A follow up meeting to discuss this further was requested. There was no response or recognition of the issues submitted in the Outline Plan released.**