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10

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BDA withdraws draft Revised Master Plan - 2031, to review and rewrite

New draft to integrate Transit Oriented Development policy

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The Bengaluru Development Authority (BDA) has withdrawn the draft Revised Master Plan (RMP) - 2031, which was in a legal quagmire, in the aim of reviewing and rewriting it.

"It will be reviewed to integrate the Transit Oriented Development policy and a few other changes. A new draft of the RMP will be put out in the public domain for comment soon," said Rakesh, additional chief secretary, Urban Development Department. He also said that the process would not start from scratch. "It will be done at the earliest."

The Transit Oriented Development (TOD) policy put out by Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRC) in May 2019 was at odds with the Draft RMP - 2031. "The government is of the opinion that TOD is the need of the hour for the city. The draft RMP has been withdrawn to incorporate and integrate the BMRC's TOD policy," said a senior BDA official.

The 'TOD approach', adopted in several global cities, opts for dense, mixed land use, development along transit corridors, in this case Namma Metro, bus hubs and the proposed suburban rail corridors. It calls for the integration of transit and land use patterns.

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have a huge impact on zoning regulations especially along metro corridors. The BMRC policy defines TOD as the development of concentrated nodes of moderate to high mixed land use density within five to 10 minutes of walking distance from mass transit corridors.

The policy calls for a premium Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 5 and mixed land use to allow commercial and other uses along transit corridors. The new draft will provide for a Premium FAR of 5 in the city, senior officials said.

"The Draft RMP - 2031 has large buffer zones around lakes (75 m) and drains (up to 30 m) as per the NGT order that was eventually struck down by the Supreme Court. So that also has a big impact on land use patterns," a senior official explained why the draft has now been withdrawn.

Meanwhile, a decision is yet to be taken as to whether to include the contentious

elevated corridors (102 km) project in the new draft or not, sources said. The ruling BJP had opposed the network of elevated corridors while in the opposition. However, several ministers in the incumbent government have maintained "they are keeping an open mind" on the project.

'BMPC must spearhead'

The Citizen Action Forum (CAF) has challenged the now withdrawn Draft RMP - 2031 in the Karnataka High Court on the grounds that the Bengaluru Metropolitan Planning Committee (BMPC) is constitutionally mandated to prepare the Master Plan for the city, not the BDA. The Draft RMP - 2031 has to date not even been discussed in the BMPC. "We will follow the due procedure and get the new draft ratified by the BMPC following public consultation," a senior BDA official said.

However, N.S. Mukunda,

founder president of CAF and one of the petitioners before the High Court, said ideally BMPC must not remain a ratifying body, but it must spearhead the process of planning. "Not even the parastatals like the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board, Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation, Bangalore Electricity Supply Company and BMRC are involved in the planning process and in turn they are not statutorily bound by the Master Plan for the coming term as well."

He argued that this defeats the purpose of planning. "The BMPC, led by the Chief Minister, has the political authority to make planning for the city a collective effort from the ground with inputs from parastatals and the public. The new dedicated law for governing Bengaluru needs to make adherence to the Master Plan a legal binding as well," Mr. Mukunda added.