

# Regional Plan

**NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION**

THE APPROACH TO PLANNING IN THE  
NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION.

The genesis of the National Capital Regional Plan can be traced to the Master Plan for Delhi which in 1962 had recommended that not only the Delhi Metropolitan Area but also a larger region comprising several districts contiguous to Delhi should be planned as a composite unit. It had also recommended that with the development of Delhi there should be a synchronous development of the 'ring towns' around Delhi. Taking cognizance of this recommendation in the Draft Master Plan for Delhi the Government of India had set up in 1961 a High Power Board, with the Union Minister for Home Affairs as its Chairman and the Chief Ministers of Haryana, U.P. and Rajasthan among others as members for the co-ordination of town and regional planning activities in the region, so as to secure the collaboration of the concerned Governments in the formulation and implementation of a Regional Plan. Between 1965 and 1967 the High Power Board met three times to discuss the common problems of water supply, flood control, drainage, recreational facilities, unauthorised colonies and a revolving fund for development.

In the meantime the problems created by the complex situations arising out of the metropolitan growth have been mounting and an increasing necessity had been felt for a regional plan which will be in the best interest of the overall growth of the Region, ensuring not only the orderly and rational growth of the National Capital but also the rapid development of the

Region as a whole. On a directive by the High Power Board, the Town & Country Planning Organisation in consultation with the Town Planning Departments of the State Governments concerned prepared this Draft Regional Plan. Agricultural development, building up of an adequate infrastructure for selective decentralisation of industry, trade and commerce and govt. office employment together with re-structuring of transport network proposed in the draft Plan should be able to make a breakthrough in building up an effective metropolitan structure. The proposed physical and functional hierarchy of the metropolis, cities, towns and villages in the Region, with adequate economic and physical linkages will set the pace for a better integrated framework.

I would however like to draw attention to the regional imperatives brought to focus by the draft Plan. No doubt, the Draft Plan is essentially a metropolitan plan but all aspects of problems facing this rapidly developing Region have been studied, including the technological and organisational limitations in building up a complex metropolis and the 'green revolution' ushered in by agricultural technology in the rural areas of the Region, in order to project an efficient, prosperous and socially acceptable metropolitan fabric for the future. The Region has been taken as a composite unit with inter-

linked problems and inter-dependent functions which have an impact on each other. The proposals made have taken into consideration that the projects implemented in one sector or in one Sub-region will have wide ramifications in other sectors and sub-regions. Hence, the proposals made in the Regional Plan are comprehensive in nature having taken into consideration all the relevant variables extended over the space of the entire Region during the time period of the Plan.

The Plan is comprehensive from another point of view. The National Capital Region is only a part of a much larger complex of settlements encompassing the whole country. Hence, national policies have been taken as the starting point in offering solutions to the metropolitan problems. Goals for the Region have been set in consonance with national policies and thereafter the objectives to be achieved to serve the goals have been identified and the method of realising the objectives have been enunciated. This makes it obvious that the national, economic and urbanisation policies of maximising growth with social justice and decentralising economic activity and population concentration in a more rational and balanced manner should be more purposefully implemented in the country as a whole, but particularly in the four States adjoining Delhi as far as this Region is concerned. Unless this is achieved at the macro level, there would be acute

imbalance between the NCR and the adjoining regions and between Delhi and the other towns in the NCR.

The Central theme of the Regional Plan is dispersal of new economic activities in the Region and consequent redeployment of human resources. Towards this end, the Plan advocates synchronous action in restructuring economic activities, population agglomerations and the transport system. Past experience in the Delhi Plan has shown that planning and implementation of only urban development in isolation has not led to a realisation of plan objectives, but in fact has accentuated the problems and has caused severe imbalances, like concentration of population, social problems, traffic bottlenecks and severe economic strains. This is the kind of situation that has to be avoided in this Regional Plan. Therefore, it is not feasible to accept only certain aspects of the Plan without a firm commitment to the implementation of the hard core of the plan proposals. It would be a grave error to only accept the urban development part of the Plan and try to implement it. The Plan has to be considered in its totality; the location of economic activities the transport network and the integrated development of services etc. Thus any planning or implementation of only one element of the plan would only lead to unsatisfactory results. It is very necessary that the comprehensive nature of the plan proposals

are recognised and steps taken to implement them in a coordinated manner.

Implementation of national and regional level policies brings us to planning and implementation at the sub-regional level, namely by the concerned State Governments. The pivotal role of sub-regional policies in urban development, location of economic activities and building up of a transport network cannot be over-emphasised in guaranteeing the success of the Regional Plan. Central to this policy is land use and development control. In the interest of the overall benefit of the Region and the Sub-regions, the concerned State Governments will have to strictly adhere not only to the physical pattern outlined in the Regional Plan but also to a rational use of urban land and prevention of haphazard development of land for agro-based and consumer industries. Industrial development should form an integral part of urban centres where adequate housing and other community facilities have to be provided. Residential densities in Delhi as well as in the Regional towns have got to be optimised as they have significant bearing on lessening the demand on agricultural land and in lending economic support for the policy of dispersal.

In order to maximise the benefits of planning, it is essential to have an integrated development programme for providing the infrastructure at the right places, with the stipulated priorities, that could ensure optimum

development - physical as well as economic. The problems are of an inter-state nature and cannot effectively be tackled by any one State. Previous attempts at finding solutions to the water requirements, drainage problems, housing requirements, etc., solely in the interest of the State, have proved short term palliatives, but counter productive in the long run. The Central Water and Power Commission has been trying though not very successfully to coordinate the activities with regard to irrigation, drainage, flood control and power. The problem of drinking water should also receive concerted efforts, as in our opinion, water supply is the critical factor in future urbanisation in the NCR. Similarly, housing, regional recreational needs, and community facilities should also receive the attention they deserve in their role as catalytic agents for economic growth and in their relationship to employment centres. As the proposals in the draft Plan in this respect are more or less broad-based, therefore, follow-up action to prepare functional, sub-regional and detailed project plans to elaborate and detail the broad policies enunciated in the Plan would be an urgent task.

Follow-up action on the Plan proposals by a wide range of action agencies - central, state and local have to be coordinated. But in the present framework, implementation

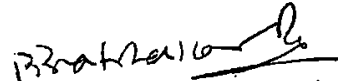
of the Plan proposals with regard to radically restructuring the physical and economic frame to bring about the desired results envisaged in the Plan would be indeed unsatisfactory if not totally impossible. Clearly, greater tasks lie ahead. It is this compulsion that makes it necessary to have an institutional framework for plan formulation and plan implementation. In this respect the draft bill for the setting up of the National Capital Regional Planning Board and a Revolving Fund are important tools in energising the Plan and are vital for its success.

It has to be stressed that the Plan must be geared to the changing future demands and patterns of life and activities in the Region. It is the beginning of a process of guidance and evolution. It follows then that planning as well as the control mechanism and plan evaluation must be continuing phenomena. Large scale investment will be required to decisively influence the metropolitan structure. The political, economic and physical pattern will continuously be changing, some very slowly and subtly, but others radically. This will require constant evaluation and review of the Plan for which there should be adequate feedback data. Large amount of fresh data would be available from the 1971 Census which has to be processed and the Plan proposals already made will have to be reviewed in its light. The Regional Plan should not be considered as

a static Plan but as a dynamic one with continuing action in all its facets to meet the current needs of the complex metropolitan structure and the challenges of the future.

The coming decade will be a crucial one for the National Capital Region. Just as the Delhi Master Plan was a pace-setter for comprehensive urban development, the National Capital Regional Plan could not only guide and mould this metropolitan structure but could also be a model for other developing metropolitan regions in the country.

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New Delhi

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