



## **Development Plan and Urban Design Policies**

**Dr. V.M. Marudachalam and N. Jothilakshmy**



### **Abstract**

*In today's context development plans prepared for the cities forecasting for the growth over 25 years are concentrating on the policies on different sectors such as housing, infrastructure, environment, economy and so on. In totality as an urban design vision and policies developed towards the overall form of the city and vision is completely lacking. In this context, this paper tries to entrust the importance of incorporating urban design policies as part of the development plan with an overall urban vision.*

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Urban planning involves forecasting future population growth and planning for possible changes. Planners consider rate of growth, rates of natural increases and migration, age profile of the forecasted population and housing types, employment services required for making proposals. To be successful the development planning process must be:

- Visionary and realistic i.e. it must raise the aspirations for the people and area and provide a vehicle for consensus building and implementation;
- Fully integrated into land use planning system, but also allow new uses and market opportunities to exploit the full development potential of the area;
- A flexible process, providing the basis for negotiation and dispute resolution;
- A participative process, providing all the stakeholders with a means of expressing their needs and priorities; and
- Equally applicable to rethinking the role, function and form of existing neighborhoods as creating new neighborhoods.

A city is an assemblage of buildings and streets, system of communication and utilities, places of work, transportation, leisure and meeting places. The process of arranging these elements both functionally and beautifully is the essence of urban design.

### **2. DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND ITS CONTENTS**

Development Plans are prepared to achieve an orderly growth of urban settlement which forms part of the regional plans. Jurisdiction of the development plans are normally urban areas in the case of smaller urban settlements and it includes the

*Dr. V.M. Marudachalam, former Professor and Head, Department of Planning, School of Architecture and Planning, Anna University has done M.A (Geo.), M.A (Sociology), P.G.Dip. in planning (Hons) C.D.P (DPU, London), Ph.D.*

*N. Jothilakshmy, has done BArch. from College of Engineering, Thiruvananthapuram and Masters in Town and Country Planning from School of Architecture and Planning, Anna University. Currently doing her reserch on the topic " Formulating Form Based Code for emhancing the Imageability of the City - a case of Chennai". Email: jothi.lakshmy@gmail.com*



surrounding inter dependant areas in the case of major urban settlements. The plan period for such development plan is generally 15 to 20 years. Here also the population for the plan period is projected and the spatial extent for not only the existing population but also for the future population is given in the plan. It is necessary that development plans also prioritize and phase out the developments. As in the regional plans, the agencies for planning, monitoring and implementation are identified. Such development plans contain the following in detail:

- The manner in which land in the planning area shall be used.
- Allotment and reservation of land for:  
Residential purpose; Commercial purpose; Industrial purpose; Agricultural purpose; Parks, play fields and open spaces; Improvement and conservation of urban renewal areas; and Amenities, services and utilities.
- Provision of areas for:  
Housing; Shopping; Industries; Civic amenities; and Health, Educational and Cultural facilities.
- Control of architectural features.
- Provision of zoning regulation.
- Phasing of development proposals.

### 3. DEVELOPMENT PLAN APPROACH: CONCEPTS, OBJECTIVES AND FUNCTIONS

A development plan, which is perceived to be a process rather than a conclusive statement, provides guidelines for the physical development of the city and guides people in locating their investments in the city. In short, development plan is a design for the physical, social, economic and political framework for the city, which greatly improves the quality of people living in urban areas.

The functions of a development plan are as follows:

- To guide development of a city in an orderly manner so as to improve the quality of life of the people;
- To organize and coordinate the complex relationships between urban land uses;
- To chart a course for growth and change, be responsive to change and maintain its validity over time and space, and be subject to continual review;
- To direct physical development of the city in relation to its social and economic characteristics based on comprehensive surveys and studies on the present status and the future growth prospects; and
- To provide for resource mobilization plan for the proposed development works.

There is a widely held view that the development planning methods adopted over the last few decades have not produced a satisfactory physical environment. The urban development planning process in the past has been unduly long and has been largely confined to dealing with land use aspects.



#### 4. CURRENT PLANNING PARAMETERS FOR DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

It is recognized that the Chennai Urban Area displays some signs of insufficient strategic planning, primarily due to the reactive nature of the planning process which has focused on controlling development rather than leading and guiding development. In general, the urban form and design that currently exists, has been the outcome of the ideas of individual developers on individual projects with little reference to the principles of good urban design and integration with the surrounding existing or future urban fabric.

The main objectives of prescribing rules for development control are:

- Control density;
- Minimize negative impacts which may be created over the adjoining properties such as noise, vibration and to provide privacy;
- Control and regulate traffic generation; and
- Optimum utilization of available and planned infrastructure.

Instead of having too many parameters, it is suggested that the following minimum number of parameters would serve the purpose:

- Minimum road width;
- Setbacks;
- Maximum permissible area or FSI;
- Maximum permissible coverage;
- Maximum height; and
- Parking standards.

To understand these types of controls, it is important to recognize the design objectives, design principles and design guidelines. Objectives are statements of what a design is to achieve. The objectives of an urban design scheme are inevitably a mixture of economic, behavioral and aesthetic ends. Principles are statements describing and explaining the links between a desired design objective and a pattern or layout of the environment. The set of design principles used repetitively by a designer is loosely called that person's style.

A guideline is a statement, which specifies (for uninformed people) how to meet a design objective. They are also known as design directives. A guideline is an operational definition of an objective. There are two types of guidelines: prescriptive and performance oriented.

Performance oriented guidelines are essentially the same as design objectives, prescriptive guidelines are based on design principles and are as good or as bad as those principles.

- With prescriptive guidelines the designer of the guidelines works out what kind of pattern is required of the built environment. In performance guidelines it is



left to the designer of the individual components of the urban design scheme to do; and

- Design based on prescriptive guidelines is easier to evaluate; performance guidelines, while encouraging divergent thinking, require considerably more effort to ensure that the objectives are actually met. Guidelines are frequently used not simply to inform designers but as design controls.

Design controls in cities are always shaped by the invisible web of law specifying individual and communal rights, the nature of the market place and the allowable mechanisms for interfering in the market place on behalf of perceptions of the public interest. As such it complements the capital web of investment policies used by governments to shape the environment. Urban design controls reform aspects of both webs.

## 5. FUTURE ORIENTATION AND PLANNING PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Unlike the conventional two dimensional zoning plans, which tend simply to define areas of use, density standards and access arrangements, the development plan must establish three dimensional frameworks of buildings and public spaces and create more sophisticated visual models. A city is an assemblage of buildings and streets, system of communication and utilities, places of work, transportation, leisure and meeting places. The process of arranging these elements both functionally and beautifully is the essence of urban design. The vision of the development plan must fulfill the following essential needs:

- Allow understanding of what the public spaces between buildings will be like before they are built;
- Show how the streets, squares and open spaces of a neighborhood are to be connected;
- Defines the heights, massing and bulk of the buildings but not the architectural style or detailed design;
- Control the relationship between the buildings and public spaces to maximize street frontage and reduce large areas of blank walls;
- Determine the distribution of uses, and if these uses should be accessible at street level;
- Control the network of movement patterns for people moving on foot, cycle, car or public transport;
- Identify location of street furniture, lighting, landscaping, monuments, etc; and
- Allow understanding and visualization of how a new or enhanced urban neighborhood is integrated with the surrounding urban context and natural environment.

The following aspects need to be considered to arrive at the basis for policies affecting the urban fabric:



- Areas of significance in built environment;
- Visual integration of the city;
- Policy for tall buildings;
- Policy on unhindered access movement, parking and pedestrian realm;
- Policy on hoardings, street furniture and signage;
- Urban design scheme;
- Policy for design of pedestrian realm; and
- City structure plan and urban design objective.

It is proposed that the development plan will incorporate the concepts presented here:

- Stipulate that planning permissions for development in any area within the urban district shall be conditional on compliance with the integrated development plan;
- Specify that proposed developments will be subject to assessment by an appointed urban planning consultant to establish compliance with the development plan and the costs of such consultancy to be borne by the developer;
- Specify procedures for examining developer requests for revision to the development plan with procedures on consultations, costs, etc;
- Specify procedures for planning authority revision to the development plan with procedures on consultations, etc; and
- Specify planning levy to cover the cost of the development planning study and updating.

Building rules were first introduced in 1940, confined to regulating sanitary conditions, lighting, ventilation and structural safety. In respect of construction, the Municipal Acts and Public Health Act enacted later designated areas within the city for residential or industrial uses and prohibited certain types of activities in certain areas of the city.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

Development control forms part of the development plan, with stipulations for planning parameters such as plot extent, frontage, coverage, height, floor-area ratio and so on. The development control rules vary according to the location such as city, municipality, town panchayat or village. Urban form is all about the shape of our cities and towns: how they are designed and structured?; where development occurs?; what type of developments is allowed?; what areas are protected?; and how all the areas are connected and support each other? All these issues are important and relevant.