

INTACH J&K organizes Public Consultation on Draft Master Plan Srinagar (2015-2035)

Convener J&K Chapter M Saleem Beg highlighted the vital issues in proposed Master Plan, and triggered the discourse to revisit the vision document





As the Master Plan Srinagar 2015-2035 has been put in public domain by the Srinagar Development Authority, J&K Chapter of INTACH in collaboration with Institution of Engineers organized a Public Consultation on Monday, June 12th, 2017 at Institution of Engineers Sonwar Bagh, Srinagar. While summarizing the main components of the Master Plan at the beginning of the program, Convener J&K chapter highlighted some key features of the draft document.

The participants, including civil society members, Engineers, architects and planners, former Municipal Commissioners, Journalists and Cultural activists took part in the consultation process and shared their views, gave suggestions and comments on the proposals in the DMP. , M. Shafi Pandit, (Rtd IAS Officer) and former Chairman Public Service Commission chaired the consultative session with Ashraf Fazili, (Rtd Chief Engineer) Chairperson Institution of Engineers.

The proceedings, recorded at the event, and the responses received from participants via email, have been reproduced in a monograph for circulation. The monograph also carries some key components from the proposed Master plan in a more comprehensible language.



News coverage on
“Public Consultation on Master Plan Srinagar 2015-2035”
A program organized by INTACH, J&K Chapter in
collaboration with Institution of Engineers, Kashmir

Doubts over Srinagar's master plan

Peerzada Ashiq (The Hindu)

SRINAGAR, JUNE 14, 2017

The proposal to shift the capital to city's periphery faces criticism

Experts have raised red flags over the proposed Srinagar Master Plan, envisaging the shifting of the capital to a flood basin on the city's peripheries and creating tourism infrastructure "at the cost of heritage and essential sites".

The proposed Srinagar Master Plan 2015-2035 has identified key city installations to open up for tourism infrastructure, which will involve big players of the hotel industry. Officials plan to host seven million tourists annually by the year 2035, with 56,000 beds required per day.

These buildings include heritage structures and buildings of the Forest Department, Doordarshan, the Chief Justice's accommodation, the old Assembly Complex, the Biscoe and Mallinson School, the Chest Disease Hospital and the District Court Complex in and around the commercial hub of Lal Chowk, which are identified for "tourism infrastructure".

Fragile State

"Kashmir is environmentally fragile. There is need to regulate numbers and focus on high-end tourism sector, where we lack infrastructure, and this has not been underlined," said Saleem Beg, head of the Kashmir chapter of the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage, and former ex-member of the National Monuments Authority of India. In another proposal, there is a plan to shift the main offices of the Civil Secretariat to a mini-secretariat, the seat of power, to Nowgam, which is prone to floods and was worst hit during the 2014 floods.

"It sounds strange that planners identify the nearby railway station in a flood-prone area and propose the shifting of the capital to the same site. It will increase trips and road overload," said Mr. Beg.

The plan also proposes to expand Srinagar city from 416 sq. km. to 766 sq. km., eating into farming land and orchards.

Srinagar Development Authority vice-chairman Thaseen Mustafa, who heads the nodal agency of the plan, said, "This is not the final draft. More public consultations will be held to incorporate the necessary suggestions."

Source: <http://www.thehindu.com>

Experts detect ‘loopholes’ in Srinagar Master Plan

Oppose shifting of Civil Secretariat to flood prone area

Mudasir Yaqoob (Greater Kashmir)

Srinagar, Publish Date: Jun 13 2017

The draft Master Plan for Srinagar came in for severe criticism on Monday with experts raising objections to the proposal of shifting several offices including the civil secretariat to flood-prone areas. At the Public Consultation on the draft Master Plan organized by INTACH (Kashmir), experts questioned the rationale behind several proposals incorporated in the plan.

Speaking on the occasion, convener INTACH Saleem Baig questioned the proposal of shifting the civil secretariat to Nowgam. “The place proposed for setting up of the secretariat is a flood-prone area. The Assembly and High Court lies in close vicinity of the secretariat. How shifting of only establishment from the area is justified while leaving behind the two,” he asked.

He added that proposal of converting public and semi-public institutions into tourism infrastructure is not a good idea “This will not support the sustainable development of the city as envisioned in the document,” he said. He said that risk zones should be categorized on the basis of multiple risks persistent in the area like risk from fire, earthquakes, floods and epidemics. He added that the process should be systematic with risk identification, mapping and vulnerability assessment. “The approach should be holistic rather than hand picking area for disaster management,” he added.

The draft suggests recognizing the significance of Mughal gardens that have been nominated by the state government for inclusion in the tentative list of World Heritage sites of UNESCO. “Buffers for Nishat and Shalimar are too less if you are considering these to be part of World Heritage Sites. 100 meter buffer considering the high urban pressure around the perimeter of these gardens is certainly not enough for their adequate protection,” Baig said.

Former bureaucrat, Muhammad Shafi Pandit called for wider consultants and discussions on the Master Plan. "We understand and respect the efforts of all those who were engaged in making this document. Plans and policies must go from bottom to up and should not come from up to bottom. Put it in public domain for feedback," he said.

He also suggested that document must be called Master Plan for 2021 to 2041. Vice Chairman, Srinagar Development Authority, Tahseen Mustafa said the document was prepared after consultation with various organizations and experts. "I will say this document is a sketch and it is you (experts and public) who have to fill it with colors. We will encourage and welcome every suggestion," he said.

He added that shifting of Civil Secretariat to Nowgam was recommended by experts as 35 percent of secretariat employees come from north Kashmir and 30 from south Kashmir. "There we have rail connectivity and highway gives also easy access to this area," he said. Various civil society members, engineers, city planners, cultural activist and others also participated in the event.

Source: <http://greaterkashmir.news>

Experts pick holes in Srinagar Master Plan at INTACH meet

By Reader Correspondent on June 13, 2017



SRINAGAR: At a public consultation meet organized by the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), the Srinagar Master Plan (2015-2035), prepared and recently made public by the government, was criticized for ignoring various elements deemed necessary for it.

The speakers, comprising former commissioners, senior government officials, journalists, columnists and members of civil society, critically analyzed the draft of the formulated plan and asked the agency concerned to reassess it and include elements either left out or less focused-on, so as to make the plan better and more comprehensive. While the speakers decried the draft planners' shifting of the secretariat, which as per plan would be moved to the city outskirts in Pampore, many others called both the move as well as the entire plan politically motivated.

"The drainage planning, which is the biggest problem in Srinagar, has been given very little attention. They (the planners) should consult qualified, professional people for mapping and designing the city drainage system," said convener INTACH, Kashmir chapter, M. Saleem Beg.

After a long wait, the draft Srinagar Master Plan (2015-2035) was placed in the public domain for 60 days last month to seek suggestions and objections to the plan before its being put before the state cabinet for final approval.

Officials from the Srinagar Development Authority (SDA) have requested people to put forth their feedback regarding the draft plan and upload it on the SDA's official web page.

The speakers said the draft plan has been ambiguous about land usage in the city. "It has not been clear about plans on urban land usage and about solid waste management, crises of which have been witnessed often. The planners should put forth their strategies, something missing in the current draft," observed several speakers at the gathering.

Speakers also pointed out that the Master Plan was already virtually in force as the 20 years of the plan start from 2015, but officials are still intending to make changes to it.

"As it's a mammoth plan, aiming to include everything, it is better that the government set a time frame from 2021 to 2041 so that the Plan includes feedback from diverse sections," suggested former bureaucrat Mohammad Shafi Pandit.

Referring to the vast amount of land in the city under occupation of government forces, speakers at the meet said that Srinagar was probably the only district in all of Jammu and Kashmir where outsiders were welcomed by an army garrison.

Earlier, Beg made a PowerPoint presentation where he highlighted the draft plan's main loopholes.

Speaking on the occasion, SDA vice chairman Tehseen Mustafa told the gathering that the plan's current version was only a draft, which could be changed on the basis of public feedback and suggestions.

Source: <http://kashmirreader.com/2017>

INTACH proposes to utilize empty spaces beneath the under-construction Jehangir chowk –Rambagh flyover

Irka Syed, Urban Designer INTACH J&K explains the possibilities how to use the available spaces, to beautify the area falling under the flyover, and avoid traffic congestion



View of the proposed children's under Soni-Ni-Chali AMC Bridge (<http://www.skyscrapercity.com>)



View of the proposed food court under the Thakkarpaba Nagar AMC bridge (<http://www.hcp.co.in>)

Srinagar 13th May, 2017

In a meeting, chaired by Jenab Naeem Akhter, Minister for Public Works (R&B), Jammu & Kashmir Government, to review the on-going work on Jehangir chowk – Rambagh flyover, and also to explore ideas how to use the spaces under the flyover, the possibilities of using the available spaces artistically without putting hurdle in traffic movement was discussed in detail. The meeting was attended by CEO Economic Reconstruction Agency J&K, Director Flyover projects & other officers.

The power point presentation made by Irka Syed, Urban Designer INTACH J&K focused on beautification of the space imaginatively. Illustrating with the examples from other States, Syed explained the technical aspects of turning the 2.5 KM area which falls under the under-construction flyover, attractive by creating vibrant spots like books shops, kiosks, art galleries in residential areas like Solina, and landscaping, in congested places like Jehangir chowk. It was emphasized that the purpose of project is to utilize the spaces and avoid traffic congestion.

The Hon'ble Minister directed the Economic Reconstruction Agency (ERA) to prepare the road-map in consultation with INTACH, J&K chapter at earliest, and submit the preliminary report to the authorities.

Upcoming event:

The chapter is going to organize a workshop-cum-exhibition on Islamic Calligraphy, in collaboration with J&K Academy of Art, Culture & Languages, Department of Tourism Kashmir, & Skill Pro Kashmir at Islamic Cultural Center, Jamia Masjid Srinagar from 17th – 23rd July, 2017.

Main attractions of the event:

- On-site live demonstration on Islamic Calligraphy
- Exhibition of Calligraphic works by contemporary Kashmiri Artists
- Photo Exhibition on historic development of Islamic Calligraphy in Kashmir



All art lovers are cordially invited to attend the event.....