

Personal statement

Although I am currently TOS and have been since Oct. 8th, I have been hearing and reading about the recent events in Auroville from multiple sources, as well as seeing pictures and video footage. Real pain, sorrow, frustration and, at times, fear are starkly visible in the images and can be felt in all the many communications I have seen. These events have left me deeply shocked and saddened, and feeling great concern for the Dream of Auroville, the Auroville that I and so many others came to try to build, grow and be a part of, to serve the spiritual call of Mother and Sri Aurobindo.

The Galaxy Concept is a beautiful one, and I am not against the Master Plan as a perspective and framework. However, I don't believe it was intended to be a fixed or static plan and it is in fact stated on pg 84 that "Although the Master Plan (Perspective 2025) indicates a time horizon of 25 years, it will neither be traditional nor static and rigid." (Full quote of the paragraph is reproduced below.) Having read the transcripts of the interviews of Roger and having a lifelong connection with Mother, I don't believe they were rigid or fixed either, as can be seen in the many available writings and documented interviews. (From an interview with Roger: *"People come here to live the experience and it is from this experience that their living conditions, their environment will be created. Q. So Auroville may never be finished, then? R. Perhaps not, but that has absolutely no importance. What is important is not to build a city, it is to build, I repeat, a new humanity. Having said that, how much delay and how much time it will take, only the future will show us. I hope it will be soon!"*)

But for me being for or against the Master Plan is not the point. The point is how we live together, how we develop together, how we make decisions together, act together, treat each other. And the physically aggressive actions involving JCB's and busloads of police in the middle of the night and then JCB's and a large group of hired outsiders behaving like gundas during the day after an agreement had been reached, and all of this planned behind closed doors between the Secretary and Aurovilians against other Aurovilians...this is simply not justifiable. How can we claim to be aspiring and working towards an "actual human unity" and "peace and progressive harmony" while carrying out, ordering or condoning violence, aggression, threats, intimidation and literal bulldozing because of internal disagreements?

I was present at the Inauguration, I grew up in Auroville most of my childhood and have spent most of my adult life in service to the Dream, to the aims and the ideals, and have lived in all its realities, the beautiful and hopeful as well as the discouraging, disappointing and frustrating ones. I believe with all my heart and soul that this authoritarian approach using external entities to force contentious development, or anything else, is not the way for Auroville, and goes against its spirit, its aims and its ideals.

Another point I would like to address is that of participation by residents in major decision-making. I believe every resident, no matter their perspectives or opinions, should have the chance to participate and it is reasonable to expect the Working Committee to allow and support that process. Quoting pg 9, 20(1), of the Auroville Foundation Act, *"There shall be a Working Committee of the Residents' Assembly which shall assist the Residents' Assembly or, as the case may be, the Governing Board, in discharging its duties under this Act."* I believe the Working Committee, of which I am currently a member, is primarily accountable to the Residents' Assembly and must put aside individual preferences and positions to give the RA its voice in organized decision-making processes, even if many of Auroville's processes are still far from perfect. Auroville, its processes and its residents are very much 'works in progress', and therefore so is the Working Committee, but it must

represent the RA to the best of its ability and, ideally, try to synthesize all of the diversity of views and positions in our complex community without resorting to force.

I hope and pray that this kind of thing never happens again among us, that it is agreed that divisive forces and tactics are unacceptable in Auroville, that the deep hurt and wounds and rifts that have been caused will be acknowledged as something real and regrettable, that we can all dig deep and find a way to build the city and walk the path of an evolution of consciousness in a spirit of creativity, exploration, experimentation, flexibility, pragmatism and open-mindedness, with all our diversity and differences, while acknowledging and embracing our common love and commitment to The Mother and Sri Aurobindo.

Chali

15 December 2021

Although the Master Plan (Perspective 2025) indicates a time horizon of 25 years, it will neither be traditional nor static and rigid. In the framework of Perspective 2025, the Planning Group would prepare a detailed Five Year Development Plan containing the priority item to be taken for development as given in Table 22. At the close of the first Five Year Development Plan, the progress would be assessed. A second phase detailed development plan would then be prepared on the basis of the feedback obtained from the field/monitoring which will be followed by further detailed development plans for subsequent years and period. (Pg 84 of the Auroville Master Plan, Perspective 2025)