

Draft development plan has no room for low-cost homes, open spaces, say experts

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MUMBAI: Suggestions to create more affordable houses and open spaces have not been accommodated while preparing the city's draft development plan (DP) 2034, alleged former Rajya Sabha member and actor Shabana Azmi, and architect P K Das. "We had submitted a detailed plan to create more open spaces and affordable houses during the preparation of the DP. But it has not been considered. Since every political party, activist, builder is opposing the DP, it should be thrown into the dustbin," said Azmi.

She was speaking at an interactive programme organized by the city unit of the Congress to decode the DP for the common man with the help of experts. The party is attempting to mobilize support over the issue. "We wanted to simplify and understand the DP. We are also requesting people to send their suggestions to the government to reject the DP," said city Congress president Sanjay Nirupam.

Das said it was not possible for anyone to study the lengthy DP within 60 days and give suggestions or objections to the government, so one should look for some basic points in the DP to understand if it is trying to address those problems. "We must all have affordable houses, good easily accessible schools, hospitals and open spaces for a healthy environment. The DP is not addressing these issues so we are opposing it. Affordable housing is a big issue, but there is no separate chapter on it in the DP," he said.

Das claimed the planner wanted to minimize open spaces after de-reserving them in the draft DP. He said the Sahara land at

Goregaon is a no-development zone as it touches Malad creek and falls under the coastal regulation zone but is marked for residential/commercial purpose under the draft DP.

Other experts said the draft DP will stop development and make houses unaffordable. Azmi and Das said they had suggested that open spaces could be doubled over the last DP plan and 15 lakh affordable houses constructed across the city but their suggestions were not considered in the draft DP.