

Report of L'avenir d'Auroville/TDC – January to May 2015

This report is a synopsis of key topics discussed in regular meetings. It does not include any communication that has been published in the News & Notes or on the AuroNet webpage of L'avenir d'Auroville / Town Development Council (TDC), such as community announcements, financial reports and site or building permissions.

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Main topics

I. TDC-RELATED TOPICS

A/ Communication coordinator/Secretary

In January 2015, the TDC was looking for a communication coordinator and a new secretary to replace Nadia. Two people were contacted:

- Ing-Marie (Maitreye): it was clear that she was very busy, cumulating several jobs/activities
- Divya (Kalabhumi): rapidly hired as a part-time secretary, she put together a communication brief on wastewater and energy (publication: Aurnet on January 21st 2015; News & Notes issue number 583 on January 24th 2015)

B/ New Town Development Authority (NTDA)

The dialogue with the Tamil Nadu Authorities has been initiated because of the need to provide protection from real estate speculative pressure and to assure proper land use for the private area within the Master Plan, especially in the Green Belt. This is best done through the application of laws. Auroville has the right to plan the development on its land but needs the support of local authorities on land that belongs to others.

It is in the mandate of L'avenir d'Auroville/TDC to undertake all the necessary steps to protect the land within the Master Plan and to interact with the relevant local authorities to do so.

The NTDA concerns all the people in the area. In a certain sense, it may also provide an important platform and forum for integrating the planning of Auroville and the planning of the villages.

In February 2012, the TDC submitted a request to the Tamil Nadu government to provide a protection plan for the area of the Master Plan of Auroville. In its reply, the Tamil Nadu government made a formal proposal to constitute a New Town Development Authority for Auroville.

Since February 2013, there have been three public meetings and workshops and three General Meetings (GM) that were dedicated to this matter, every time with a different attendance. In June 2013, the WC constituted a Status Study Group that was announced in the N&N on July 6th 2013 and on the Aurnet. The participation was open to all those interested.

Having explored the various options, the Study Group produced a report analyzing every known option; this document was published and discussed in GMs with the WC and the Resident Assembly Service (RAS).

The document recommended that the TDC was to engage with the Tamil Nadu government to explore the process of constituting an NTDA for the area. At that point, the work of the Status Study Group was over and the TDC constituted a task force to continue the dialogue with local authorities.

This resulted in the Directorate of Town and Country Planning (DTCP) of Tamil Nadu requesting its local office to prepare a preliminary report for the constitution of an NTDA comprising the Auroville Master Plan area.

The TDC has kept the community informed at every stage and sought endorsement as and when needed. The Task Force has also met the following groups: the Working Committee (WC), the Auroville Council (AVC), the Funds & Assets Management Committee (FAMC) and the Green Group (GG). The Governing Board and its members have also been updated.

The TDC will update as the dialogue with the DTCP and local authorities continues, keeping the community informed and seeking feedback as soon as things move forward and a proposition is ready.

C/ TDC membership

In March, with the resignation of yet another TDC member (Nicole, mid-March), the team feels weakened and requests the WC to find new members or set up a new functional Selection Committee. The Selection Committee that put together the present TDC team was supposed to find replacements, but was unable to do so. No new member has replaced any of the members that have resigned over the past 2 years.

In April, during a meeting, the RAS emphasized that cooperation between the working groups is necessary as the TDC has a lot of work.

Furthermore, communication and transparency problems have regularly led to resistance when it was time for implementation, sometimes leading to petitions signed in spite of/due to lack of information or misinformation.

The TDC informed the RAS about the issues with the Selection Committee. The RAS suggested communicating in the N&N and Auro-net, calling for new members and proposing workshops etc. The TDC accepted this offer, but it was agreed that detailed job description profiles need to be written, especially for Town Planning. It is a very technical field of work and can be undertaken even by consultants.

Even when a document is published, sometimes a Communication Coordinator is needed to listen to what the community has to say about it as well as to present and explain the document. For example: the Electricity master plan is very bulky and extremely technical, the community at large would need someone to explain and summarize these documents.

D/ Master Plan map

The policy regarding the map distribution of the Master Plan is to provide a .pdf format with date and code.

E/ Survey problems

In March, several incidents regarding Auroville land surveying had arisen, where the (Aurovillian) stewards refused and physically blocked surveys. An email was sent to several working groups, such as the FAMC, the WC and the Governing Board (GB), to inform them of the situation.

In April, the TDC survey team requested that a procedure be put in place to inform:

- the steward of the concerned plot about an upcoming survey (added in the email exchange)
- the team members themselves about NOCs and project details (name, map, details, project holders)

It was highlighted that when external surveyors come, 2 additional problems arise:

- the updated data is not communicated to the TDC survey team (therefore, additional surveys are necessary to update the database)
- there is no insurance on quality and integrity (again, another survey is needed)

The TDC suggested that there could be an additional mention in the NOC clause stating that the surveys and markings must be done by the TDC survey team on cost of the project holder. In case the project holders insist on employing a survey team of their own choice, it should be studied on a case-by-case basis, and the TDC will request that all data be shared.

The survey team asked if the following possibility could be considered: setting up a new internal team consisting of 2 “interchangeable” (leader/follower) people instead of hiring an external survey team.

It was mentioned that there should be a comparative cost study to see which option would be favorable financially on the long term. This should take into account employing 2 extra members, work demand

and cost recovery (internal team), frequency of surveys (external team).

If and when 1 or 2 competent people can be found for training and then part-time jobs (one proposal was to recruit directly in schools such as Future School or NESS), then the project becomes feasible and the survey team is requested to bring the topic back onto the table.

F/ Applications

The TDC regularly receives applications (for a job as an external consultant or an internship). Unfortunately, without a mentor for the interns (previously Ojas), this is not possible.

G/ Accessibility

In April, the TDC received a proposal from Accessible Auroville to do an auditing of accessibility whenever a public building or a major project takes place. All these types of proposals are welcome and the auditor will be contacted for future projects.

H/ Open House

In April, during a meeting with the RAS, the TDC proposed to hold a monthly Open House including Q&A sessions with the community.

The first 2015 Open House will be held during the first week of June, at which point a report of the first 5 months of 2015 (January to May included) will be made available to the community, as requested by the RAS (the other option was to publish a report for the first 3 months January-March then on a monthly basis). This report will be a summary of topics discussed during TDC meetings, put together by Divya.

The information site www.auroville.info was also discussed, because it contains the Master Plan as well as all studies and activities (except the last 2-3 years as it was not updated).

The RAS mentioned the Transparent Task Force project with an online platform for public and transparent collaboration and communication to generate feedback, comments and collaborative work.

II. MANDATES, POLICIES

A/ Land Board (LB) Mandate

In January, a new mandate was drafted for the LB; the TDC was asked for feedback. Modifications were made by all members and the proposed revised draft was sent to the FAMC, LB and WC.

In February, several meetings between the LB, TDC and WC were necessary to discuss various topics, such as unsolved land issues, communication (when the LB purchases land, the TDC should be informed), responsibilities (issues about AV land depend on the LB, legal aspects are part of WC work, TDC takes care of developments on private land).

The TDC studied the Land policy proposal. When needed, modifications, comments and feedback were shared.

B/ Bill of Quantities (BoQ)

At the moment, there is regulation in place stating that all projects below one (1) crore are exempted from the preparation of a BOQ. The purpose of this is to reduce the required administrative work as well as reduce the cost and time in obtaining building permissions.

In a few cases, this can lead to underestimating cost and price escalation. Especially in the case of public buildings, this has an impact on the collective finance of Auroville that cannot be evaluated properly.

Therefore, the TDC is considering lowering the BoQ exemption limit to 20 lakhs for public buildings and 50 lakhs for housing projects. Principally in the case of schools, there might also be the need to consider safety aspects in addition to cost control and verification.

The FAMC's opinion was requested in January: a 50-lakh limit for all buildings was suggested by them. The matter is still under evaluation.

C/ Appeal / Arbitration

In August 2013, after having studied a house extension request (in Progress community) and feedback provided by other community members, the TDC did not grant a Non-Objection Certificate (NOC) to this house extension.

In February, the Auroville Council contacted the TDC regarding an arbitration process for an appeal against this decision.

However, the process was unclear regarding the correct application of the Conflict Resolution Policy from 2004.

This arbitration process was paused while all aspects are clarified by the different working groups.

D/ Conflict resolution policy

The policy was read and no comments arose.

III. LAND-RELATED TOPICS

A/ Land use in Bharatipuram

In January, several meetings and discussions were held with a technical team composed of Achva, Deoyani, Giulio, Lata, and Suhasini on land use in Bharatipuram and development of the ring road (see V. ROADS, B/ Ring road).

A long-term process of social engineering needs to be prepared for a model housing project outside the city area that could be more attractive for the people presently living in Bharatipuram, thus making the space for the development of the International Zone according to the plan approved by L'avenir in 2009.

The proposal involves not only financial issues, but also represents a problem of real estate management, of social analysis, and understanding needs, demands and aspirations of the people living there. There is a need to combine marketing capacity with social responsibility and have a better knowledge of the socio-economic reality in Bharatipuram. The village development plan that is being studied could be a catalyst element in this direction.

The following few actions were agreed upon:

- A draft will be sent to the Auroville Foundation to get more accurate details about poramboke land.
- More information is needed from various sources, including the Tamil Heritage Group, as well as

a map representing the settlements with or without proper patta.

- It might be necessary to make a socio-economic survey of Bharatipuram specifically dedicated to understanding the social fabric of the place and identifying what could be the potential area of life improvement that can motivate people to live elsewhere.
- Some development in this area should take place at the earliest and be facilitated in the best possible way even if they are temporary (parameters on their nature will be worked out).

The planned radial will attract a lot of unwanted development; it was suggested to move it to a place that is not interesting to local people. There is willingness to make adjustments, but there is no consensus yet and further discussion is needed.

In February, several activities and site applications were considered for this area because there is an imminent danger of land encroachment.

The option of a temporary use in a permanent location (i.e. practice an activity in a building/zone on a temporary basis) was also studied. A building is permanent, but the activity or use can be evolving and therefore temporary. The building can then be allocated for a different activity.

B/ Land encroachment

Near Minati

In February, there was a land encroachment issue concerning 2 plots in the Green Belt area near Minati; the plots are Auroville land but not fenced or even used by Auroville. Emails were exchanged between the TDC, the WC, the FAMC, the LB and Dominik. The TDC followed the story and insisted that legal action was to be undertaken as fast as possible; there was no need for endless discussions. In the end, it was accepted by everyone that Dominik from Espace would become the steward of the plots.

Dehashakti Sports

A problem arose around Dehashakti in February-March regarding ownership of a plot directly adjacent to the sports ground.

The LB, Dehashakti team, and several volunteers brought this story to an end and the plot is now fenced off.

C/ Unwanted land development

The TDC is following several cases of unwanted land developments in the local area.

Mining in the Northern Green Belt

The TDC is working in collaboration with the LB to stop the mining.

D/ Sadhana Forest

In March, the residents of Sadhana Forest raised concerns about rumors around a railway being built through the forest, the problem was addressed.

IV. TOWN PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

A/ Detailed Development Plan (DDP)

The Crown road and Residential Zones 1 and 2 have been studied by a team of 2 consultants. In February, the DDP was reviewed by the TDC team for comments and feedback and was ready to be presented to the community by end of April.

This document is currently available for perusal and has been announced in the N&N as well as Auronet. Furthermore, an open desk (wo)manned by architect Kaja Delezuch – who has participated in preparing the plan with the team – has been organized to gather written feedback for a period of 3-4 months. The RAS and Kaja have also set up an Internet site.

B/ Bore wells

Auroville Water Service premises

In January, the Auroville Water Service dug a bore well in their premises. This initiated a certain number of Auronet posts as well as emails. Several ideas came up, such as multi-sourcing, establishing the limit of depth with a slab based on studies, etc. The TDC then set up the Water Group composed of 4 people (Christian, Tency, Toby and Tom) with different views for a unified approach and an external facilitator if need be.

In February, a communication mistake in the N&N made it clear that there was room for improvement, transparency being the immediate need. Many questions regarding a policy for bore well drilling came up. There are general guidelines and consensus to follow, but no actual permission is needed. However, 3 studies were taken into account. In the case of the well on the Water Service premises, 2 bore wells had failed, so something had to be done.

Regarding the non-stop drilling (problem on a humane level), stopping and starting the drilling would have cost an additional 2.5 lakhs for this project.

Permission-based projects (like it is done in Pondy) might be set up for awareness' sake, communication and presentation to the community. Ideally, there shouldn't be any bore wells whatsoever anymore, but reality is different.

Transition School

The Building Application group had worked in collaboration with the SAIER team to try and find a solution to their water problem, and had given the approval to drill the well in Transition. Objections were raised by members of the Water Group regarding the depth of the well. In the end, given the fact that SAIER had made an extensive evaluation process and the public nature of the project, it was considered as a very special case.

Water Service

All discussions regarding the need to have a new process for digging bore-well highlighted also the requirement to strengthen the Water Service.

The TDC will request an extra executive in the Water Service to strengthen the team. This should normally be done by the Water Supervisory Board that was established by the FAMC in 2011. This board has however met only very rarely and has not been very effective. This group, presently chaired by Gerard Marechal, should be revived.

C/ Mobility

In February, a collective mobility plan must be established with suggestions from the community so as to choose collectively whether the city development will go in the direction of cars (parkings, etc.) or excluding them (individual car ownership discouraged, access and public transport studied).

A survey of Aurovilian mobility has been made; the same concerning employees' mobility needs to be done but the data is insufficient. The integration with regular roads was also being studied.

In April, the mobility report of the technical team was received by the TDC, it is currently being studied.

D/ Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP)

In February, the TDC received a study as well as feedback and opinions on the implementation of a WWTP. An analysis was requested to a German university for a neutral and expert opinion.

Several plots need to be purchased or a lease agreement signed for tractor and pipeline access to the plant. Various working groups are still studying this project.

E/ Electrical master plan

In March, an electrical master plan was being finalized and is currently used for reference in terms of general guidelines for purchase orders.

F/ Lines of Force

In April, the TDC was considering requesting an additional study on the lines of force by Anupama that has been approved by Dr. Doshi.

G/ Housing development

Humanscape

This project was presented by the Auroville Foundation to the Central Government with a detailed project report prepared by Hemant and Suhasini. It seems that a first tranche of money will be available to start the work in this financial year. A tentative site was allocated to the project on the Crown Road and a site application is expected very soon.

Sacred Groves (SG)

Sacred Groves (SG) is an experimental affordable housing project in Sector 5 (South-West of Aurodam).

In April, during a meeting between the TDC and the SG team, 3 problems arose:

- There is a separation between SG management and the Housing Service
- Activities for fundraising are not going on as good as expected
- There is no clear path (cost, timeline, etc.) for the 3 model houses

The TDC is currently studying the final estimate for the model houses as well as a report on expenses. It is essential that the model houses be built at the earliest.

Serenity and Courage 3

These two new housing projects have also been finalized and are ready to start, but work has not begun as the project holders are waiting to have a certain number of perspective occupants.

Grace 5

The site permission for this project was given some time back and a building application has been submitted. It is under consideration by the TDC.

Kalpana

The housing project called Kalpana was proposed in October 2011 (first site application received). Since then, there were several changes due to various events such as architect-project holder issues, site changes, etc.

This project finally unravelled beginning of 2015, after taking into account feedback, discussing technical elements (collective spaces, mobility, trees cut, etc.) and lay-out of the buildings (distance to site limits, general aspect, etc.), meeting with architects and project holder, visiting the site, re-adjusting parameters.

It was agreed that future building permissions may include guidelines and conditions, for example regarding the difference and distance between site and building border.

In March, this residential project was further stalled due to the TDC's regret at not having drawn up an extensive list of parameters (e.g. concerning trees, integration in surroundings, layout). The project holder and architects did however respect the parameters that were set and indications given by peer reviews. In future, a complete and detailed tree survey will be done before giving site permissions or setting parameters.

Furthermore, the publication in the News and Notes and the Auronet was not properly followed up, the communication was faulty (e.g. the 3D drawings were uploaded later).

Following the quantity and nature of the feedback received, several emails were sent and a meeting was organized with the people who had provided feedback as well as several Vikas community members to respond to all feedback that was given and/or the concerns of people having showed an interest for this project.

To start the meeting, the architect presented and explained the placement of buildings, the sports complex, and the layout of apartments with regard to air circulation, noise and shade.

He added that this project has been very interesting, accompanied by the TDC, and that the additional guidelines and parameters that were added along the way always helped to make the project better.

The TDC underlined that these parameters were added and changed because there is no fixed urban design for the city yet, but the housing problem prevented the freezing of all building projects (despite no urban design).

The main concerns brought up were:

1. *Waste water*

The TDC answered that the grant for the WWTP has been allocated, the design is ready, and the plot is available. This project will take max. 2 years.

2. *Water catchment*

The architects specified that the pathways are all made with percolating concrete and the pond will allow for a slower absorption in case of larger quantities of rain.

3. *Amar*

The TDC reminded everyone present that, as agreed, Amar will be relocated to a different site in a Johnny-type house and that the relocation will be taken in charge by the project holder.

4. *Parking*

The architect explained that the parking would be on ground level. In the future, if mobility planning for the city remains by individual cars, then the parking will be necessary. If mobility planning opts for public transport, then the parking can be transformed into offices or a crèche or other apartments.

5. *Noise*

Noise presented a problem on 2 levels: in the near future, the neighboring communities might

be bothered by all the noise generated by the construction (a), and later for the people living in these apartments due to the proximity of the crown road (b).

a) The TDC underlined that work and construction noises will be temporary because buildings happen “zone per zone” (i.e. when all buildings in one zone are over, then the focus goes to the next zone).

b) Helmut pointed out that precisely this kind of situation would make people’s awareness dawn and shift points of view in the future, leading eventually to re-studying mobility in the city.

6. *Water source*

The TDC replied that a pipe-line would be laid directly to the water tower before the beginning of the construction.

7. *Apartment allocation*

The project holder and architect agreed that the allocation of apartments should be done in a respectful manner (e.g. not allocate a 3-bedroom apartment to a single person or even a couple, but a family instead).

8. *Layout*

Building the East block will destroy a certain number of trees, but it was recognized that one cannot build a city without cutting a few trees.

9. *Roof use*

Fabian proposed that the roof surface could be used for urban farming for example.

Everyone agreed that there was a lesson to be learned regarding the process, feedback and communication.

It was suggested that each project should have a separate link/website to better communicate with the community.

Although the feedback/discussion on materials generally comes only at a later date because it does not concern the layout of the building, the desire to speak about it was expressed, especially concerning flyash.

Some people suggested that this material should be avoided, and alternative materials must be found so far as possible.

The TDC ensured that consultations would be done and an opinion requested from the CEPT University in Ahmadabad.

V. ROADS

A/ Certitude road

In January, a petition was going on to pave the stretch of road between Certitude and Solar Kitchen and caught the TDC’s attention. The possibility of an alternative access to the Certitude Road (via a bypass in front of the Solar Kitchen or an access on the Reve radial for example) was and still is under consideration.

It was also mentioned that the maintenance of the road (even though it does not belong to Auroville) is done by the Road Service using Auroville budget.

B/ Ring road

In January, several meetings and discussions were held with a technical team composed of Achva, Deoyani, Giulio, Lata, and Suhasini on land use in Bharatipuram (see III. LAND-RELATED TOPICS, A/ Land use in Bharatipuram) and on the development of the ring road.

Regarding the ring road and radials, several issues arise:

- Criticality (forest area in Sector 1);
- Increase of regional mobility (access from Kulapalayam for example);
- Redundancy (the ring road in Sectors 3 to 5 is very close to existing roads in many places);
- Separation between green spaces and residential areas (e.g. Gaia-Grace, Aurodam, Vikas);
- Water catchment and drainage.

A 5-year plan (a clear and progressive skeleton plan dealing with land use, adaptable along time) must be laid out for safeguarding so as to be able to tend towards it over time and adjust it accordingly. All assets must be studied to see their use for the present and the future.

Some thoughts were raised:

- Parts of the ring road used as motorized stretches or cycle paths cum infrastructure corridors (2 mts);
- Control the traffic by determining specific access points (it was mentioned that to control the traffic, the land must be used in such a way that it won't attract it);
- Determine specific "exchange" zones and "feeder" roads for the inner city for outside 3rd-party traffic such as delivery trucks;
- Crown road for collective transport and cycle paths for inside circulation, ring road for protection of the city and less appreciable traffic (on the pollution level).

Ever-increasing access to Auroville through existing roads must be avoided, but that raises the issue of organizing the main circulation and the distribution of water etc. in Auroville. Big roads such as the ring road will attract more traffic and pollution, thus, a different distribution system needs to be set up. However, sections of the ring road must be kept to discharge the traffic on the crown road. These roads represent an integral part of mobility for the future, but present problems must also be dealt with.

The sector between the Vikas and Gaia radials needs to be discussed as several issues came up:

- There are problems in lengthening the Vikas radial, because it joins the Udai road (i.e. unwanted traffic) and impedes the natural water flow;
- The Fertile-Revelation link should also be broken in order to avoid its inclusion in the regional traffic;
- The ring road between Sangha and Transition will cross forest area (Gaia forest) to allow access to low-density areas (Cultural Zone).

A development plan for sectors 1 and 2 is under study, as well as the issue related to internal mobility in that context.

C/ Service corridors

The solution of a double bundle in 2 corridors on both sides of the paved road is a modular approach that is most practical and rational, and as small as possible.

The precise locations of the Internet and Intranet cables can be shown by the TDC and need to be shared with the group determining land use.

D/ Mangalam radial

Introduction

In August 2013, the necessity to develop the Industrial Zone was discussed as well as the Mangalam radial.

After many studies taking into account the width of the road, alignment possibilities and feedback, it was decided to start working on this radial in February 2015.

In March, following the decision to start working on the Mangalam radial, a Work Order was sent to the N&N for feedback from the community. A communication problem arose, extending the feedback period, but every discussion/feedback always recounted the same information (no new elements).

RAS meeting – March 20th

A meeting was held with the RAS to clarify some questions.

It was pointed out that, before beginning their mandate, all TDC members were asked to sign a document stating that they are to implement as best they can the Master Plan.

The following statements derive from the MP:

- Pony Farm is located in the Industrial Zone
- The Mangalam radial is part of the initial MP lay-out (not part of the 4 extra ones added in 2005)

It was emphasized that the Industrial Zone needs to materialize so that Auroville's economy can develop too.

Furthermore, the TDC has paid particular attention to the following points:

- Maximum care for the road alignment
- No intrusion on any residential plot
- Minimum impact

Additionally, all arguments that can be considered "valid" against a road (such as the presence of a house or valuable trees, temple or peramboke land) have been studied and dismissed.

The TDC informed the RAS that there was misinformation concerning a hypothetical document that had supposedly been signed by the previous L'avenir group, stating that there would be no road going to/through Pony Farm.

Finally, the TDC highlighted that several issues concerning stewardship and numerous projects have arisen over the years, none of which (stewardships/projects) were officially approved by the working groups (particularly the TDC) or the community.

Pony Farm community meeting – March 23rd

Another meeting was held with several Pony Farm residents and Rishi to address the feedback that was given regarding the construction of the Mangalam Radial.

Several concerns were raised:

1. *Information process: it was requested that the TDC be more transparent*

The TDC highlighted that all documents (plans etc.) are available at the office for everyone to peruse.

Furthermore, a walk was organized and some TDC members as well as Jan, Odile and Ricardo took part in it.

2. *Feedback process: the 2-week delay was not respected*

No work had been started; a surveyor was commissioned to study the area.

Also, this extension of the feedback period was a miscommunication problem.

3. *The area is not logistically adapted or viable with regard to the Master Plan by Roger Anger*

The MP (the zones of which were defined by the Mother) as established by Roger Anger is regularly adjusted to the ground reality. It was emphasized that the MP is a concept, not a detailed plan, with global directions, not obligations. There are 3 levels to the MP: the Galaxy (which is out of the picture), the zoning and the roads. Many studies have been done concerning viability; the infrastructure follows the MP with flexibility according to ground realities, the goal of the TDC is to find a flexible way to adapt concepts to reality.

Furthermore, the MP doesn't eradicate all the forestry/green spaces, on the contrary (especially compared to other cities), but the green spaces in the city must be studied further. There is joint work of the TDC and the GG on the Galaxy, but the TDC is still waiting for the Forest Group, Farm Group and Green Group to provide concepts or plans.

4. *The area is not economically sound on the long run, other areas are more appropriate*

5. *The Mangalam Radial goes directly into the floodplain*

It was asked that these 2 arguments be substantiated if they are based on studies or technical details.

As the area is very small, the Industrial Zone cannot afford to "lose" any part of it.

6. *Size of the right of way*

The right of way has been diminished to the bare minimum, serving only for pipe-lines and electricity. No trees will be cut for the right of way on this stretch.

7. *A road will open uncontrollable development of infrastructure*

The development of any infrastructure is monitored by the TDC. Unwanted non-Aurovilian development is immediately stopped and Aurovilian development follows the usual procedure (site application, building application, feedback process, etc.).

8. *The building of this road is non-negotiable*

Jan answered that, from his personal point of view, the road itself is non-negotiable. The details however may be discussed and are negotiable provided there are valid arguments.

The TDC added that information sharing can avoid having General Meetings and implicating the RAS unnecessarily.

It was shared that a big part of the community feels that the TDC is not implementing the MP fast enough. If these meetings/discussions are meant to stop all development in the Mangalam/Pony Farm area, then there is a problem. If it is accepted that something will happen there, then it becomes obvious that the road is necessary.

Furthermore, surveys (conducted for example by a surveyor with several Road Service members to clear the way) and studies cannot be blocked as it is Auroville land.

Pony Farm visit – March 27th

An information meeting was held at Pony Farm. During this meeting, one proposal was to develop the road through Windarra first, and then take care of the Mangalam radial, but that just postpones the problem, it doesn't solve it.

The TDC's communication problem would be less important if there had been a planning coordinator to prepare and develop such detailed explanations and studies (e.g. regarding the exact position and location of the road, the proposed land use development), and explain them when needed.

In the case of development project issues, there are always 3 parties: people that are for the development, those against it, and the public. The public needs to be informed, engaged and committed; this can only be achieved through communication.

RAS meeting – April 3rd

A meeting was held with the RAS to clarify further some questions about the General Meeting (GM) that was going to be held on the Pony Farm/Mangalam radial issue.

Regarding the Internet site that was being set up with maps etc., it was mentioned that:

- The AV surveys should be used as a base map (instead of Google maps which distorts the ground realities according to the position of the satellite)
- There should be a separation between process and project
- An easily accessible Internet site would avoid any form of misinformation (no N&N, information request at belated stages of the feedback process, etc.)
- Setting up an Internet site for future projects will allow for the integration of all perspectives in the process, which is the goal in the community and our higher aim which is that of human unity

RAS addendum:

Members of the Residents' Assembly Service (RAS) made the observation that as the development of the city proceeds, management of the relationship between the planning and implementation of infrastructure and public buildings and the residents and communities directly impacted (required to relocate, or in extreme close proximity to planned development) by those developments will become increasingly important, especially if L'avenir is to meet its stated objective of "balanced sustainable development in all aspects [including] social".

Members of the RAS proposed that the development of a process whereby new infrastructure projects were effectively communicated to the community and the community meaningfully engaged in input into the planning of those projects could streamline the execution of new public works in Auroville, reducing stress on L'avenir and assisting it to: "Respect the over-arching parameters for participating in the work of the Planning and Development Organization" [for a] "Collaborative approach - a wide participation is welcomed and a sincere effort to integrate different perspectives is a commitment", as stated in its mandate.

The TDC highlighted that the GM should lead to the end of discussions (as there are many other projects to tackle) and to a decision of implementation (as is emphasized in the GB meeting minutes). Care must be given, but projects need to move forward.

The radial was studied and shown to the community several times (e.g. for the Sincerity and Angad stretches); this alignment is (out of minimum 6 options studied) the most adapted to ground realities and represents the least damage to humans and nature.

Feedback periods can be most helpful, like the Transition road for example that generated great input. However, this project has reached a point where certain aspects can be discussed; others are/have become superfluous.

Furthermore, all global town development processes have been stopped, and yet individual and non-approved projects just go through without anyone saying anything, although advice against these constructions was given based on the public knowledge that there would be future developments in the area.

The meeting ended with everyone agreeing to the fact that this project will allow for the bettering of the process.

GM – April 7th

The TDC highlighted that the Master Plan is used as a guideline. In this plan, the area granted to the Industrial Zone actually has a limited space for industries as this zone is also used for farmland, forest, residences... as well as unusable places such as the canyon. To develop Auroville's economy (units and activities), a basic infrastructure including water, electricity and roads must be set up. This road has been planned since many years, during which time different realities (vegetation, soil, existing houses,

etc.) have been studied to try and determine land use and development of this area as well as align the road to adapt it to these ground realities. Mobility is an important point for the TDC, as it is important to minimize all traffic (including industrial) going through Auroville. Many aspects need to be taken into account, such as the traffic itself (type, intensity and speed) and the infrastructure of the roads (bends, safety and right of way). It was mentioned that the right of way has already been minimized, going from 25 to 12 meters.

The Pony Farm residents expressed their desire of a well-informed and unified community, symbol of a new consciousness, unity and harmony. Their feeling is that the TDC's procedure was invasive and threatening, void of respect and response to feedback and various attempts at communication. It was emphasized that this 12-m road will destroy the eco-system of the area (15 trees cut) and split the community into 2, although the 2 existing roads could avoid all this and respect farmers and foresters for a future self-sufficiency. Furthermore, the construction of this road would generate issues regarding private land and price escalation. It was mentioned that decisions should all originate from the RAS, taking into account the whole community as well as the youth. It was asked that a new Master Plan be set up in collaboration with all the groups, many architects and town planners as well as the community. A Question-and-Answer session followed the 2 presentations, allowing for participation and expression. Here is a summary of the concerns/questions raised:

1. *Why not use the existing non-moving Kali temple tar road? Is this road necessary?*

It was highlighted that the existing temple road is not an acceptable access to Mangalam.

The distance between the two existing roads is of 135 meters, up to 175 meters at places. To develop an area (45 acres in this case), roads need to be distanced by 80 to 120 meters maximum.

2. *What is the foreseeable impact of this road regarding surrounding villages?*

Using the temple road would generate a large number of issues, such as the traffic that Auroville itself would generate in the village (with regard to children, etc.).

The villages surrounding Auroville have not been included enough, this new road can help doing that, all the populations affected by the road can and will adapt. Furthermore, the price of private land in the area will not be influenced by this road, as it is anyway half-way between the existing one and the Mangalam radial.

3. *Are there any alternative alignment solutions?*

In 2007, the first markings were done, but several difficulties arose, bringing forth a road shift and alignment, some of the reasons being houses and canyon crossings.

4. *Destruction of nature*

The trees mentioned by the Forest Group are not impacted by the road and are not that rare, their seeds can easily be found.

Furthermore, it was emphasized that we are trying to develop a city, not a forest.

5. *Water-related problems*

The Mangalam radial follows the ridge, because it is the safest place to build a road. The fact that it corresponds to the Galaxy is a coincidence.

Furthermore, this "middle road" would help protect the canyon area (unlike the existing road).

Besides, the water level has gone up and can help develop the Industrial Zone water sharing plan that was set up in 1995.

6. *Community participation in the development*

Auroville should be involved in the planning; otherwise the same problem will come up for the other 12 radials.

In the Master Plan, the guideline is to build a city as well as human unity, which can only happen through communication and participation.

There is a lot of pressure on the TDC from all sides (mandate, RAS, GB, community...), therefore

parameters need to be defined so that implementation can through with the commitment of the whole community.

There is need for an active RAS, including community members, to solve communication and participation issues to enable unity.

7. *Is there a list of units or people that would like to go to the Industrial Zone?*

There is no queue of activities for the moment, but the economy of Auroville has become an emergency (for example: 80% of Aurovilians cannot afford any of the existing residences).

For the moment, the economy is turned towards tourism, but other essential Aurovilian products are necessary.

The Industrial zone would be a growth potential for Aurovilians and the youth as well as an economy without money. The economy needs to grow, with more units and expansion of the existing ones.

The community at large (i.e. Auroville) needs to grow; the space there should be used for this.

8. *There is confusion between Galaxy and Master Plan, this development does not respect the Galaxy.*

The Mother organized 4 zones, the Industrial Zone included.

9. *There is no general mobility plan.*

A team is working on the mobility plan, the global strategy of which is to provide better access and better control of traffic that comes towards Auroville; this can only be achieved through land and roads owned by Auroville.

10. *There should be no motorized access in Auroville.*

The ring road is meant for services only, the crown road for residents only. The radials are supposed to lead to the city without entering it. One of the points of Mangalam is to avoid the city center.

There are 3 aspects: the right of way, the infrastructure corridor, and the road itself. Mobility plans are evolving, but the most important is to finalize the right of way so they can evolve in the future and be developed into roads if and when the need arises.

11. *Master Plan revision*

The work should already start with issues of governance and procedures that are present in the groups.

RAS meeting – April 29th

During a subsequent meeting, the TDC informed the RAS that an exhibition on several roads in the Industrial Zone (including the Verite road) will soon be presented in the TDC offices. Also, there will be a presentation in July of all road works planned for the next year as well as the reasons behind them.

Regarding Pony Farm, the TDC expressed their disappointment regarding a clearly visible flaw: people did not respect the process to request building permissions in PF but then call on official processes (GM, RAS, etc.) when they need it.

E/ Road experiment at the Visitors Centre (VC)

In March, an AV-inspired experiment consisting in a trial stretch of poured earth concrete was discussed with the TDC. The Auroville Earth Institute (AVEI) is working with the VC team to test the poured earth technique by the entrance to the parking at VC. The TDC finds this experiment/study interesting, and supports and approves the implementation of this project. All data will be shared, updated and monitored.

F/ Windarra access

In April, a consultant started studying an access around Windarra.

G/ Madhuram access

The TDC received a request for an access to the Madhuram restaurant (next to the Pitchandikulam bridge).

As the matter was taken up by the WC and the road would theoretically cross Green Belt area (thus concerning the Green Group), it rapidly became evident that the matter was out of the TDC's hands.

VI. BIOREGION DEVELOPMENT

A/ Peace meetings with Kottakarai

In January, several peace meetings between Auroville represented by the Working Committee (WC), the Land Board (LB), the TDC and some self-appointed representatives of Kottakarai village took place to build a good relationship and for conflict resolution.

Kali Temple

In the list of demands presented in January, it was requested to establish an electrical connection for the Kali temple. To this purpose, many aspects were taken into consideration: safety, cost, availability of lights, noise pollution, etc. with the help of maps showing access and electrical connections.

The TDC worked out two possibilities that are technically implementable:

- Solar standalone system (consisting of solar panels, batteries, inverter/charger);
- Underground low tension (LT) connection to nearest transformer (Verite).

The solar system option can be changed to transformer/TNEB/underground low-tension at any moment. Several conditions have been highlighted, such as the necessity for Auroville to retain ownership of the cable.

The file was forwarded to the WC for follow-up.

Land exchange negotiation

In February, the negotiation for land exchange (concerning plots IR 254/2 + /3 + /4) was undertaken with all concerned parties. Several possibilities were studied for the cricket ground, highlighting the pros and cons of each location.

Several group meetings (between the LB, TDC, and WC) were held to find a consensus on every step. A commitment was not always possible in the immediate, leading to several non-peaceful endings.

March: As long as all AV requests are met, an official agreement/contract will go through for a long-term lease. This document can be brought to court in case of need.

Requests are:

- Restoring access to PF and Mangalam through temple and peramboke lands
- NOC for the ring road
- Keeping peace in Discipline
- Finding a compromise with the case against Satprem

Technical assistance of the TDC and/or urban planners will be offered for the planning of the land.

B/ Statutory planning

A team of 2 external consultants helped the TDC study land use and development in the Green Belt area. Several issues came up, such as the big demand of agricultural projects in spite of the shortage of land. A Green Belt Land Use Plan that includes proposals for solid waste management is being prepared and will be available by mid-May.

C/ Regional development

Irumbai panchayat (Irumbai, Edayanchavadi and Kottakarai)

A new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed with the Irumbai panchayat on February 5th. It is on the same line as the one signed with the Bommayarpalayam panchayat. Since this MoU has come into operation, 4 meetings (on February 25th, March 8th, April 12th and May 10th) have taken place with the committee formed under this panchayat.

At the 1st meeting, a list of 27 requests for development projects have been identified, out of which 5 top priorities are listed below:

1. Individual household toilets
2. Purified drinking water
3. Streetlights
4. Village knowledge centre
5. Bus facility for Edayanchavadi village

Some of the ongoing works are:

- *Solar light program for Irumbai village*: recommended by the Block Development Office (BDO) to the Tamil Nadu Energy Development Agency in Chennai. A solar energy generation plant will supply streetlights via cable in this village.
- *Drinking water scheme*: the TDC organized a visit in Pollambakam where an existing scheme has been implemented, to which the Panchayat President and committee members were invited for their information. A project is under study and land has been identified to set up a freshwater supply unit.
- *Compressed Stabilized Earth Bricks (CSEB) project*: financed by a grant from the Project Coordination Group (PCG). Lands for the project are being identified in the existing village peramboke. The TDC, in collaboration with the Auroville Earth Institute (AVEI), will perform the necessary soil tests before deciding on the best location for its implementation.
- *Reforestation*: under the MNREG (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee), the panchayat requested the Forest Group (FG) to support their efforts at reforesting peramboke lands and planting alley trees. A program is under preparation with the support of Pitchandikulam and will be followed by the committee members representing the Women's SHG (Self-Help Group).
- *Solid Waste Management (SWM)*: due to the efforts of the TDC, the Irumbai panchayat has been included in a pilot project under the BDO. 6 panchayats in the Vannur block have been identified; Irumbai was not on the original list. The scheme will be implemented in all 3 villages comprising this panchayat.

Bommayarpalayam panchayat (Bommayarpalayam, Pillaichavady and Kulapalayam)

The projects being implemented or under study with the Bommayarpalayam are:

- *SWM*: Bommayarpalayam has been included by the BDO in the list of 6 panchayats (out of 65 villages in the Vannur block). Land for segregation of waste and landfill has been identified. The project has already been approved by the BDO.
- *Bamboo project and beach beautification*: the estimate of 2.36 crores has been handed over to the DRDO (District Regional Development Office) in Viluppuram. The Tourism Department official from Tiruvannamalai visited the site. Engineers have been sent by the DRDA (District Regional Development Authority) to assess the viability of the project which is at the last stage before implementation.
- *CSEB production*: this project under SEDAB (Sustainable Enterprise Development in Auroville Bioregion) is being implemented in collaboration with the AVEI to provide training and employment to women beneficiaries in this village. The project shall start in June.
- *Individual toilets*: 1,500 households have been registered under the scheme that will be implemented by Kupuraj, an Aurovilian with a construction unit, who will build those toilets using the CSEB technique. The project is implemented under the Self-Supporting Scheme under the DRDA.
- *TNEB sub-station*: to improve the electrical connection in Bommayapalayam, Kulapalayam and Fraternity as part of a cooperation program with the panchayat of Bommayapalayam, land for the project was identified and is available. The plot has been cleared and access provided. The TDC had a meeting with the TANGEDCO (Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation) Executive Engineer in Kandamangalam who suggested a different spot closer to Abri in Auroville. The matter is pending.

VII. GROUPS, ZONES, SERVICES

A/ Sustainable Livelihood Institute (SLI)

Their project:

- Provide sustainable and consistent approaches to the government agency and the community in Tamil Nadu through training programs designed on the basis of local livelihood needs and in a framework of sustainability. Activities will include aspects of outreach, research, innovation and communication.
- Offer a creative, constructive engagement with government and rural communities in view of shaping our common future, and allowing Auroville to share its visions, values and achievements.
- Work with government livelihood workers and community representatives to present a series of workshops that will serve district-level ambassadors for SLI, responsible for implementing the programs of the TNSRLM (Tamil Nadu State Rural Livelihood Mission).
- Participation is envisaged for people from outside who are accessible and willing to work within an Auroville-based institution.

Regarding their project, a MOU was discussed as well as ideas for additional funds.

In view of an exchange, a piece of land close to the Irumbai lake was inspected in January and the TDC mapping team established a 3-colored map (farm-plots, buildable plots, floodplain) with contours aiming to identify all aspects. The land is cut in 2 by a canyon and half of it represents a floodplain; there are only 2 buildable plots (on higher lands).

In March, a meeting was organized to discuss the site that would/could be allocated to the SLI project.

All present agreed that this project is suitable for Auroville, the bio-region and even beyond to set an example as well as gain experience (through training) in farming and farmland use.

A site and parameters are necessary to be able to fill in a complete site application, the current one being simply an expression of intent. Several plots around the Irumbai lake were agreed upon; they represent many positive aspects, such as minimal intrusion and flooding. To facilitate land allocation and layout, collaboration between the Farm Group and the SLI team as well as the FAMC is needed.

B/ Green Group (GG)

Green Belt

In January, the TDC met with the GG to speak about Michael Bonke's plan to purchase land in the Green Belt via Varuna, then donate it to Auroville.

The idea of Varuna is to use these lands for a water storage project, but it must be noted that there is no concrete proposal yet, no decisions have been taken, and this project is still at the stage of an idea. The exact type of project will be known in the future, but this is already a preliminary discussion about it.

The idea is to buy land, donate it to Auroville and find stewards until a decision is taken in consultation with the GG, but it was stressed that everything will have to be very clearly formulated and binding for all parties (Aurovilians as well as non-Aurovilians).

A sub-group including the GG, the TDC, and the FAMC must be formed to lay down an agreement with Michael Bonke regarding plans, possibilities, interdicts, stewardship, etc.

The GG mentioned that this topic would be discussed during a Forest Group meeting, and the TDC added that the same would be done with the Land Board (LB).

Land allocation

Another meeting was held in May to discuss land allocation.

It was highlighted that land allocation and stewardship are different processes. Stewardship is dealt with by the FAMC, whereas land allocation is done by the TDC on recommendation of the GG. The latter then communicates and informs the Farm Group and the Forest Group. Land allocation and stewardship together are an integral part of the land use plan. Everyone agreed that a new process regarding stewardship should soon be set in place.

Concerning land allocation, the GG and the TDC studied the draft regrouping 6 guidelines.

The GG requested that two annexes be added: the land use plan for the Green Belt as well as the land allocation process for both the Farm and the Forest Group. Consensus was reached but it needed to be reformulated.

C/ International Zone (IZ)

Innuksuk fence

In February, fencing issues arose in the International Zone (Canadian Pavilion). The fencing must be decided in collaboration with the TDC (for a NOC and commission for fencing) and done by the LB.

Bharat Nivas

A detailed master plan (regarding water, electricity, etc.) for the BN area is in development and will be sent to L'avenir for information and approval.

IZ development

A meeting was held beginning of April to broach several subjects:

- 3-year plan

The meeting was started by a rapid presentation of the 3-year plan for the IZ, including different habitats, temporary and permanent pavilions for countries and continents, supplying the loop road with water and electricity, fencing, activities along the crown road, etc.

In principle, this plan was welcomed by the TDC, but it was agreed that many aspects (such as infrastructure and finance) must be studied and discussed in detail. Government grants cannot finance the supply with water and electricity of each branch along the loop road because they are allocated to main infrastructure. Furthermore, the priorities of the current financial year will be the WWTP as well as the completion of the HT infrastructure in the Residential and International Zone. For the branches, the IZ will have to find other sources such as fundraising etc.

- Loop-road

The International Zone group has requested to make Work Orders for the loop road. Before starting, the issue of peramboke land needs to be solved. The TDC will make an effort to include it in this year's budget if there are some extra resources available.

- Urban design

It was pointed out that an approved urban design is needed for global guidelines allowing site applications to be filled and zone organization. It was requested of the TDC to (re)confirm the urban design provided several years back. The TDC highlighted that the existing plan is used as a reference base, but it must be flexible and evolve, and present a global lay-out (no details) and function or activities of the IZ.

- Fast-tracking

It was asked if there was the possibility to fast-track the process for temporary structures/locations. The TDC answered that, in principle, it is possible to include the SA and the BA in the same process (meeting agenda, feedback, detailed study if need be) for temporary buildings. They approved to follow the proposed fast-track (suggested 14 days) for temporary structure applications. In reality, it would take a little more time than 14 days because of the announcement in the N&N and the community feedback time of 14 days.

There is however a trust issue because "temporary" structures often become permanent. The IZ representatives emphasized that it may be problematic with individual people/requests, but in the case of a coordination team, the whole process is more followed.

- Fencing

The IZ members would like to fence the radial to VC and adjacent parking. The TDC requested an application as well as a map.

- Follow-up

The IZ team proposed to send a planner to meet on a regular basis with the TDC for clarifications (concerning activity/function to determine a suitable location).

D/ Auroville Earth Institute (AVEI)

The AVEI team has been looking for a site to build a school. Following the issues in Mangalam, other options were sought but a viable solution has not been found yet.

E/ SAIER

The SAIER team contacted the TDC, requesting a site for staff quarters. In April, the TDC requested the SAIER team to formulate a project to identify their precise requirements regarding space and lodgings. This project will allow the TDC to identify and allocate an appropriate site.

F/ Youth Action Group

In April, the TDC received an email from the Youth Action Group and invited them to a meeting to discuss their Goal 1 (Housing).

VIII. VARIOUS TOPICS

A/ Street light in front of Unity Pavilion

In January, a request for a street light in front of the Unity Pavilion was received, but the TDC has no possibilities of financing streetlights in general. If a streetlight is needed, it is advised to contact Sunlit Future. They buy, install and maintain streetlights in Auroville. Placing a streetlight requires a 'Non-Objection Certificate' for the site from the TDC that can be obtained via a normal application procedure.

B/ Auromode

In January, the TDC was invited to study the use of these premises for industrial or commercial purposes provided there are units in demand.

In February, feedback was requested regarding Auromode for 2 site applications and a follow-up was done on site where it was determined that different options were possible without any big problems. Another textile place would be optimal, but the final decision depends on the Auromode trust.

C/ Pebble mining

In February, there was maybe the possibility to excavate gravel and pebbles (for and by the Road Service) but reservations were expressed and the matter is on hold until this activity is cleared on the legal level.

D/ Kuilapalayam Cultural Centre

In February, an e-mail and site application was received by the TDC to build a cultural centre in Kuilapalayam. A number of people are involved in this project which concerns just a new location (not a new activity).

However, clarity was capital (regarding support, funding, relation to which group, communication) and the bio-region plan needed to be discussed with Pondy government. Furthermore, it was necessary to check with the LB because most of the land at the site was up for exchange.

In March, the TDC studied this Site Application with regard to several parameters (consultation of other groups, verifying maps and site, etc.).

In April, an update on the status of the concerned area/land was requested from the LB, but no answer has been received as of yet.

E/ News & Notes publications

For clarity, it was requested to the N&N team that answers and clarification be published on the same page as the initial announcement.

*L'avenir d'Auroville / TDC: Cristo, Jacqueline, Nicole (till mid-March), Sauro, Toby
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