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Single window for planning permits sought

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Builders say delays plague process of issuing planning permissions for property

Taking a cue from other metropolitan cities in the South, the State government should consider creating a 'single window counter' to issue planning permissions for properties in the city, builders have suggested.

A section of Chennai builders submitted their grievances to Housing Minister R. Vaithilingam recently. Their demands include doing away with the practice of getting No Objection Certificates from multiple government agencies, and instead, setting up a single location or agency.

Members of Builders Association of India (BAI) and

Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Associations of India (CREDAI) have been vocal about the delay in receiving the planning permission. The delays along with red-tapism and the high cost of construction material are affecting them, they say.

“The single window counter is a success in Pune. Even Bangalore and Hyderabad have dynamic systems of approvals,” pointed out Sandeep Mehta of CREDAI's Chennai Chapter. He said the practice of getting NOC from the traffic police, for instance, should be done away with as builders incorporate provisions of Development Control Rules relating to parking.

Ram Prabhu of BAI, said that in the rest of the State capitals in South India, the time taken to issue plan approval was not more than two months, while Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority took as long as two years in certain cases.

A CMDA official said a couple of years ago, the pending applications stood at more than 500 but at present, the number had come down to 250. Of these, less than 50 projects were special buildings (residential/commercial building

with more than two floors but less than four floors, or a residential building with more than six dwelling units) and multi-storey buildings (more than 4 floors).

Officials said they had issued planning permissions to 549 special buildings in 2012 (528 in 2013) and 88 multi storey buildings in 2012 (75 in 2013). Some of the approvals were issued in less than two months and CMDA's transparency was for all to see, the official added.

The number of plan approvals given by them amounted to less than 10 per cent of the total permissions issued by local bodies, including Chennai Corporation, in the Chennai Metropolitan Area. Any delays, if at all, were due to erratic applications or non-payment of the stipulated charges, he added.