Housing Mandate
Governing the allocation and management of residential property owned by the
Auroville Foundation
April 2021

Vision
Auroville seeks to manifest Mother’s vision in all spheres of its daily life, including the aim of it being entirely self supporting. With an ever increasing population, it seeks the day when it is able to provide for the housing needs of all those who are drawn to live here, inspired by the wish for human unity. This is the vision for housing in Auroville.

Guiding Principle
There is no personal property in Auroville. All residential accommodation, whether it be for Aurovilians, Newcomers or Volunteers, remains at all times, regardless of any contribution that may be made towards it, the legal property of the Auroville Foundation. It is held in trust for humanity as a whole. This is the guiding principle by which all issues and policies relating to housing, including this one, in Auroville are considered.

Responsibilities for Housing
Residential accommodation in Auroville is regulated by three distinct bodies:

1. The Funds and Assets Management Committee (FAMC),
2. The Housing Board (a sub-group of the FAMC); and
3. The Housing Service.

1) The FAMC: The overall superintendence of all residential property in Auroville falls within the mandate of the FAMC. This requires the FAMC to ensure “that all funds and assets of Auroville are being managed in a responsible manner and are used to achieve the vision set out in the Charter of Auroville.” The Housing Board is a subgroup of the FAMC. The Housing Service is the administrative and implementing wing of the Housing Board. They abide by the FAMC’s decisions and guidance, thereby helping to ensure the implementation of FAMC’s Residents’ Assembly approved mandate. Its specific responsibilities include:
   a) Providing effective oversight to the work of the Housing Board and the Housing Service for both operational and strategic matters covering immediate and longer term planning;
   b) Acting, where necessary, as a binding arbiter between the Housing Board and the Housing Service regarding disputes concerning all aspects of this mandate’s interpretation and work carried out further to it;
   c) Reviewing and providing guidance in relation to the financial management of all residential accommodation, including the review of Annual Work Plans and Annual Reports regarding Auroville’s Housing;
   d) Reviewing, and providing guidance in relation to, the operational workings and structuring of the Housing Board and the Housing Service including, where appropriate, approval of operating procedures and manuals;

HOUSING MANDATE
e) Together with the Housing Board, appoint, review, and, determine the terms of service (and termination of Service) for the members of the Housing Service and, in particular, the positions of the Finance Coordinator and the Coordinator of Housing Service. Such information shall be set out in an Operations Manual.

f) Reviewing and approving an annual budget submitted to it by the Housing Board;

g) Reviewing and approving policies and key documentation, as well as approving amendments to such documents that are related to housing (in consultation with the AV Council) and submitted to it by the Housing Board; and

h) Considering in consultation with the Town Development Council and the Housing Board, Auroville’s housing needs within wider strategic planning relating to Auroville’s management of funds and assets.

2) The Housing Board is responsible for the strategic planning for Auroville’s housing requirements. Its specific responsibilities include:

a) The identification of Auroville’s housing needs, problems and potential solutions for both current and future generations;

b) Identifying priority areas for fundraising and advising in relation to the same;

c) The production of an annual work plan and annual budget highlighting key housing issues that will be encountered or resolved within the following year. This may, for example, include information regarding new housing projects, projected expenditure and budgetary information on housing repairs, loans, subsidies and anticipated problems. This shall be submitted to the FAMC for review and approval;

d) The responsibility for the production and submission of an annual report to the FAMC setting out information regarding the work of Auroville’s Housing Board and Service over the last year. This shall be submitted to the FAMC for review and approval;

e) Drafting and monitoring policies relating to housing for recommendation and approval to FAMC;

f) Drafting and monitoring policies relating to waivers and fraternal contributions and recommending to the FAMC for approval individual cases where such waivers should apply;

g) Acting as the interface between the Housing Service and the FAMC;

h) Approving all housing projects (of all size and description ie for single and multiple household construction);

i) Approving the allocation of residential property, the period of its occupancy (including Stewardship), and any conditions of occupancy that may apply to that occupancy, and doing so in a manner that is fair, transparent, free of arbitrariness or conflicts of interest and in accordance with any relevant published guidelines or policies governing the same;

j) Approving grants relating to housing needs and maintenance that are above a threshold set by the Housing Board in accordance with published policies governing the same;

k) Undertaking, as necessary, inquiries in relation to particular housing matters that the FAMC may request information on;

HOUSING MANDATE
l) Considering requests for, and recommending to the Loan Group, that loans, be issued in accordance with guidelines and applicable policies produced;

m) In relation to internal disputes within Housing, acting as a source of binding guidance for the Housing Service in relation to the staffing and operation of the Housing Service;

n) Acting as a first point of review for decisions of the Housing Service with final rulings relating to the management of Auroville Foundation Property falling within the remit of the Funds and Assets Management Committee (FAMC);

o) Reporting regularly to the community on Housing issues.

p) Together with the FAMC, appoint, review, and determine the terms of service (and termination of Service) for members of the Housing Service and, in particular, the positions of the Finance Coordinator and the Coordinator of Housing Service. Such information shall be set out in an Operations Manual.

3) The Housing Service is responsible for the daily administration and attendance to Auroville’s housing issues. It makes decisions that touch upon the Housing Policy and is accountable, in the first instance, to the Housing Board, implementing decisions and guidance that the Board may issue. Specific responsibilities include;

a) Providing regular updates on its work including, but not limited to, information regarding its finances; at intervals to be agreed with the Housing Board.

b) Providing effective day to day management for residential property owned by the Auroville Foundation;

c) Recommending to the Housing Board the allocation of residential property, the period of its occupancy (including Stewardship) and any conditions of occupancy that may apply, and doing so in a manner that is fair, transparent, free of arbitrariness or conflicts of interest and in accordance with any relevant published guidelines or policies governing the same;

d) Recommending loans or contribution waivers, where appropriate, to Housing Board for review and further approval, where appropriate from the FAMC;

e) Approving grants relating to housing maintenance and repairs below a threshold sum set by the Housing Board in accordance with internal policies governing the same. Such grants shall be reported to the Housing Board;

f) Processing loan requests to housing needs will be as per the Loan policy.

g) Be the interface with the Auroville community regarding all housing needs;

h) Maintaining administrative and accounting records necessary for the smooth running of the Housing Service;

i) Arranging or prepare estimates for repairs approved by the Housing Service and provide oversight during the process of the repairs being undertaken;

j) Assisting, as appropriate, with work relating to the development of housing projects;

k) Maintaining current data regarding Auroville’s residential assets (including staff quarters), their occupancy and stewardship and make it available to the Housing Board;

l) Collecting and recording contributions due in relation to occupancy and repairing of residential assets; and

m) Assisting, as necessary, with the Housing Board in the discharge of its duties.

HOUSING MANDATE
Selection of the Housing Board’s members

This mandate governs the selection of members of the Housing Board (the Housing Service not needing to undergo a similar community wide selection process).

The Housing Board will be composed of nine members chosen by the FAMC in a fair and transparent manner. Key points to note are:

Representative members:
1. 2 members shall be from the Housing Service;
2. 1 member shall be from the FAMC;
3. 1 member shall be from the Town Development Council;

Representative members shall be nominated by their respective groups which will then be subject to final approval by the FAMC.

Community-at-large members:
4. 5 members shall be from the community-at-large

Community-at-large members will be nominated through an open process in consultation with the AV Council, and then finally selected by the FAMC.

5. If there are not suitable candidates proposed, the FAMC may, at its own discretion, further to consultation with the current members of the Housing Board, appoint members to the Housing Board;
6. Selected members will be submitted to the Residents Assembly for a two week feedback period;
7. Appointments to the Housing Board will be for a period of three year terms;
8. The FAMC will endeavor to ensure knowledge retention within the Housing Board by, where possible, facilitating handovers between departing and newly selected Board members and, where possible, staggering the terms of Board membership.
9. Reappointment to the Housing Board will follow the same process as initial selection;
10. Only one consecutive term of appointment will be permitted. A person may not serve a third consecutive term;
11. If a member completes two consecutive terms, he or she will be eligible to be a member of the Housing Board after a gap of two years;
12. Resource persons may be invited, by current Board members or the FAMC, to work with the Housing Board as needed on specific issues. Resource persons are there to assist the Board. They have no right to vote on or decide matters falling within the Housing Board’s mandate;
13. If, in the opinion of the Housing Board, a housing issue affects a particular sector then a liaison person from that sector shall be invited to work as a resource person with the Housing Board in relation to that particular issue;
14. The Entry Board and the Auroville Council may each appoint one standing liaison to the Housing Board. Standing liaisons of the Entry Board and Auroville Council shall be invited to attend all meetings of the Housing Board and otherwise assist in the work of the Board whenever issues related to their sector or specific field of expertise arise. They shall be allowed to subscribe to the Housing Board email list and given...
access to all Shared Drives related to Housing. In all other ways they will be considered as resource persons who have no right to vote on or decide matters falling within the Housing Board’s mandate;  
15. Five members of the Housing Board shall be required to attend any individual meeting of the Board in order to constitute a quorum for decision making.

Criteria for membership of the Housing Board

To be a member of the Housing Board, an individual must:

1. Be listed on the register of residents for a minimum of five years. In circumstances it deems exceptional, the FAMC may waive this requirement, further to consultation with existing Housing Board members;
2. Have a commitment to the Charter and ideals of Auroville;
3. Be willing to dedicate their time to the work of the Housing Board in a spirit of goodwill, collaboration and transparency. This includes the ability to work together harmoniously with the other Housing Board and Housing Service members and an acceptance of the need to attend Board meetings regularly and declare any conflicts of interest that have the capacity to cast doubt on the integrity of the Housing Board’s decision making;
4. A concern for and willingness to work toward the improvement of Auroville’s housing situation;
5. Display competence in areas of work covered by this mandate;
6. Not be subject to any past or current inquiries, investigations or censure that may affect the perception of the member’s credibility or the Housing Board’s reputation. Any such matters should be referred to the FAMC and the Working Committee for consideration;
7. Not own any immovable property or have any undeclared proprietary interest within the Masterplan area of Auroville. This does not apply if the immovable property is family-owned as ancestral lands and the nominee’s family members are not residents of Auroville.

Removal of a member from the Housing Board

1. The FAMC reserves the right to remove a Housing Board member if one or more of the above cited criteria for membership is breached;
2. If a minimum of six members of the Housing Board conclude that a fellow Board member is not in compliance with the criteria for membership of the Housing Board, they can recommend to the FAMC that the member be removed;
3. If a member resigns from, or is otherwise unable to fulfil, his appointment as a Housing Board member, the terms and conditions of his or her notice period must be agreed by the Board.
4. In all circumstances where the need to appoint a new member of the Housing Board arises, the FAMC shall do so fairly, utilising, where possible, the selection process used to appoint existing members.