

Chief Architect Proposes New Approach to Public Hearings

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Moscow's chief architect Sergei Kuznetsov

Moscow's new chief architect, Sergei Kuznetsov, is proposing to do away with public hearings on major city construction projects.

"It's not possible to say that this practice is very effective," Kuznetsov said, Interfax reported. "Everybody is different and people think very locally," he added.

Kuznetsov said that when the master plan for the development of Moscow to 2025 (known in Russian as the Genplan) is being discussed, "not all city residents are ready to join the dialogue at the same level with which the document is created."

City construction regulations now mandate public hearings when aspects of the plan are under discussion.

An institution of representatives who can express the opinion of city dwellers would be

sufficient when reviewing major projects, the chief architect said.

"I think that we are developing in this way, and in the future various constituencies will be represented by lawyers who can clearly communicate the preferences of the population when the Genplan is being discussed," Kuznetsov said.

He also said, however, that the public hearing process should continue when localized questions are being resolved.

"When we are talking about detailed planning, the same law requires discussion with residents, and in this case they have the priority. If a project directly affects them, and they come out in opposition, the project will be canceled," Kuznetsov said.

Even if some investor, having obtained his construction permit, tries to get by without a public hearing, it's not excluded that citizens can come out and stop the project, he added.

When Mayor Sergei Sobyenin came to power it was decided to review the Genplan, which requires an update based on the new territories added to the city this summer.

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