

Maharashtra Charter of Demands for Bus-based Public Transport

A well-established and efficient public transport system is an essential service for the economic and emotional well-being of a city. The inherent characteristics of the Bus transport system makes it the ideal mode for meeting the huge and increasing demand for passenger transport services. Bus transport makes the most optimum use of the available road space and fossil fuel by transporting the maximum number of people per unit of road space.

In spite of this, the share of buses in Maharashtra has declined to an abysmal 0.47 per cent of all registered vehicles in 2016 from 2.93 per cent in 1971.¹ Private vehicles, on the other hand, are growing at a devastatingly tremendous rate. Two-wheelers, which in the year 1971 constituted only 28.25% of total vehicles on roads, in 2016 constitute an alarming 73.04%. The CAGR (Compound Annual Growth Rate) of registered motor vehicles in the state for the period 2006-2016 is 9.76 while the CAGR of the population for the same duration has been 0.38.² Maharashtra also accounted for the largest share of total registered motor vehicles i.e. 12.17% in India in 2014-2015.

Interestingly, according to the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) [annual survey](#) of household expenditure on service and durable goods in India, the bus is the most preferred means of transport in both rural and urban areas. About 66 percent of households in rural areas and 62 percent of households in urban areas reported expenditure on this mode. This is the case even when the share of public transit in work trips has dropped to 18 percent.³

According to the Seventh Schedule (Article 246) of the Indian Constitution, urban development, which includes urban transport, is in the State List. While in some states, the transport department undertakes urban transport planning, in others, it is the urban development or municipal administration at the urban level that performs this role.

In recognition of the crucial role that the State Government can and must play to encourage the shift to sustainable and affordable modes of transport

We, the **SUM Net (Sustainable Urban Mobility Network)**, representing bus commuters, service providers and citizens groups in Maharashtra, put forth the following

CHARTER OF DEMANDS

to the State Government of Maharashtra.

This Charter of Demands recognizes that:

1. Bus-based public transport (BBPT) is a basic, flexible, affordable mode of public transport which can meet the accessibility and mobility needs of all sections of society.
2. Affordable, efficient and effective bus transport service is a collective right to accessible mobility

3. BBPT helps to save road space and energy consumed per passenger-km thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions and thus plays a key role in climate change mitigation commitments made by the nation
4. BBPT is a cost-efficient mode of transport
5. There is a severe deficiency in the quantity and quality of BBPT across the country
6. BBPT is needed in all types of cities, from mega metropolises to emerging towns, and can play the role of complementing mass transit modes or be independent system in itself
7. It is the commuters and their convenience, comfort and time which needs to be at the centre of every policy, and operational, financial and legal decision

The Charter of Demands is as follows:

1. In recognition of the importance of a public policy to ensure
 - a. effective decisions concerning the distribution of power and allocation of resources,
 - b. management and regulation of existing transportation modes and networks
 - c. Public transportation is a public service, an obligation of the government towards its citizens
 - d. setting service level benchmarks
 - e. integration of land use planning

We demand a Bus Transportation Policy⁴

2. In recognition of the fact that
 - a. urban transport will always require public subsidy to ensure good quality, safe and affordable services to people
 - b. a good quality public transport service ensures overall cost-benefit to society
 - c. existing urban local bodies and states have financial limitations, while public bus agencies are financially stressed which inhibits their ability to procure buses and improve services
 - d. buses have the potential to deliver high quality frequent service akin to the metro at lower costs

We demand a State Bus Fund for dedicated financial support to ensure long-term financial viability of operations and improved quality of service.

3. In recognition of the need for
 - a. standards in planning, bus design and provisioning of bus infrastructure and technology
 - b. urban transport to be integrated into cities' expansion and development plans, and land use transport integration

We demand a comprehensive **Set of Standards** that will cater to the need for bus services in all types of cities. We also demand that state governments must develop a **Bus Toolkit**.

4. In recognition of the current scenario where
 - a. State Transport Undertakings and Urban Local Bodies have limited bandwidth and capacity to plan and provide high quality urban transport services

We demand that Bus-based Public Transport **Centres of Excellence** are set-up with the mandate to proactively provide technical, operational and managerial assistance for improvement of BBPT systems in the country

5. In recognition of the current scenario where
 - a. government bus operators are liable for multiple taxes on their assets and operations, on their inputs and revenue, which results in loss of bus services in the cities
 - b. extant tax framework at both the state and union level is one of the major causes of loss-making transport entities
 - c. subsidy provision by State government is crucial to offset the taxes paid by the operators

We demand a complete **removal of Taxes** on the procurement, operations and revenue of the bus-based public transport in the state.

6. In recognition of the need to ensure
 - a. fast and smooth movement of buses which carry a lot more passengers than private vehicles
 - b. Increase in the number of bus trips by increasing their average speed by provision of a dedicated right-of-way
 - c. reduction in travel time for bus passengers which can in turn lead to shift from personal vehicles to public transport

We demand **Priority for the movement of buses** through means such as bus lanes

References:

1. <https://transport.maharashtra.gov.in/Site/Upload/GR/MTS%201516.pdf>
2. <https://transport.maharashtra.gov.in/Site/Upload/GR/MTS%201516.pdf>
3. <https://www.intelligenttransport.com/transport-articles/21458/city-public-transportation-india/>
4. The Motor Vehicle (Amendment) Act, 2019 already mentions National Transportation Policy which the central government may develop in concurrence with states. National Transportation Policy as mentioned in the Indian Motor Vehicle (Amendment) Act, 2019-
<http://egazette.nic.in/WriteReadData/2019/210413.pdf>

