It’s time we Act...

Pune Traffic & Transportation Forum
Donation Fee: Rs. 5.00
Look At These Alarming Facts!

- Mumbai is four times bigger than Pune, yet Pune has more auto vehicles than Mumbai. Shocking? Yes, but true! Mumbai has 10 lakhs, Pune has 12 lakhs.

- More than 300 persons die in traffic accidents in Pune every year. That means one Puneite in every 10,000 residents will be killed. About seven times more are seriously injured. One of them could be your child.

- It used to take 15 minutes to travel 10 km by scooter during peak hours. For example, Kothrud to Main Street. It now takes 25 minutes. Travel time in busy hours has doubled in the last decade.

- The total air pollution load in the city is 210 tons per day, consisting of carcinogenic compounds like benzene, sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxide and polyaromatic hydrocarbons. Over the last ten years, there is an estimated 30% increase in ailments related to traffic caused pollution – such as asthma, blood pressure, eyes watering, shortness of breath, etc. Remember, you could be a victim.

- Pune is now the fifth most polluted city in Asia!

Source: World Bank, December 2003
110,000 more vehicles were registered at Pune RTO in 2003-2004. Parking space needed for these additional vehicles is half a square kilometre. But the area parking lots developed by the Pune Municipal Corporation in the last four years is just 10% of this area.

Since 1960, road length in Pune has grown by 5 times, whereas the number of vehicles has increased by 87 times! There is simply no planning to regulate vehicle growth. Naturally, there is less and less space to drive and park them.

Cyclists (and pedestrians) are the highest victims of traffic accidents, although they cause the least pollution or danger. Progressive cities the world over are encouraging the use of cycles. Yet, ironically, Pune’s 8 lakh bicycle users are an endangered lot, pushed to the margins of the road. Parents fear to let their children out on bicycles; they spend enormous amounts on rickshaws or lose several hours dropping their children to school.

According to the police, they require about 1,000 traffic constables to regulate the current traffic flow, but they have less than 500. This shortage will become more acute in the next few years, given the rapid rise in vehicle numbers.

*And all these problems will only get worse, unless …………………. unless we Act*
What We Must Do

Act 1.
Create a Vision for Pune’s Traffic and Transportation
PTTF has already spelt out a comprehensive vision: citizens, politicians and public administrators should aim at developing an urban transport system that is safe, sustainable, multi-faceted, eco-friendly, equitable, and introduce the best practices around the world to make the vision a reality. What does that mean?

Sustainable means:
- a system which will continue to run for a good length of time (requiring only minor modifications).
- whose cost is affordable to the city/tax payer/commuter.
- which foresees future problems and plans solutions for them right now.

Multi-faceted means:
- providing a variety of modes of transport and infrastructure.
- catering to the requirement of different types of commuters.

Eco-friendly means:
- adopting an approach that will cause least pollution to the environment.
- implementing policies and practices which ensure clean air, so as to protect the health of all citizens.
- which will cause least damage to the natural and built heritage of the city.

Equitable means:
- appreciating the rights of all residents, road users and commuters, and treating them with dignity.
- allocating financial and other resources in such a manner that each segment is catered to with fairness.
Act 2.
Give Priority to Public Transport

Create an excellent bus service. Thirty years ago, 65% of Pune’s commuters were travelling by Pune Municipal Transport buses. Today barely 35% of commuters use the service. This is absurd. Compare this to Mumbai, where over 85% of commuters use public transport.

Oppose the attitude of abandoning support to modes of transport which bring relief to thousands of commuters. For example, the “it’s not my problem” attitude of some decision-makers towards the PMT, will not do. When over six lakh people travel by PMT every day, why should PMC give it stepmotherly treatment?

How we gain: With an adequate, reliable, punctual and clean bus service, using your scooter or car will become an option, and not a compulsion. For senior citizens, housewives and children, who cannot afford to or are not allowed to drive, a good bus service is a necessity and a boon.

An efficient and comfortable bus service means you are not forced to take a loan to buy your own vehicle, or spend on costly petrol. A good bus service is the statutory responsibility of the Municipal Corporation. Curitiba, in Brazil, is not richer than Pune. Yet, it has one of the best bus services in the world.
Act 3. 
Plan for Decongestion

Introduce stringent rules to curtail the use of existing personal auto vehicles and growth of further ones. High parking charges, auto vehicle free roads, specific days for specific vehicle numbers, are some measures to dissuade unnecessary use of personal auto vehicles. Stop thinking of “more private cars & scooters and wider roads & flyovers” as the only solution. We must understand that the current models of transportation are not sustainable... they take up too much money and too much space. It will only lead to congestion.

How we gain: Less vehicles on the road means less pollution and congestion. Moreover, your bus or rickshaw will travel faster. Less traffic will mean better mobility for public transport. Mobility of people is more important than mobility of vehicles. Consider these examples:

From February 2003, Mayor Ken Livingstone introduced a £5 congestion charge for vehicles entering central London. The result? Congestion dropped by 30% and accidents decreased by 20%.

Singapore has made it mandatory for all buyers of new cars to pay a vehicle ownership permit, which costs more than the price of the car itself. Moreover, the number of new permits is restricted to the number of cars being scrapped. This has kept the total number of personal motor vehicles from rising.
Act 4.
Demand Financial Viability, Affordability, Transparency

Stop policy makers from starting grandiose schemes that will collapse within a few years or whose cost will drive the city into debt. The SkyBus proposal could prove one such costly experiment. We must demand facts and figures to prevent badly conceived plans which will drain the civic budget.

How we gain: The proposed SkyBus project will cost Rs. 50 crores per kilometer (therefore over Rs. 1000 crores for the planned two routes totaling 20 kms). This cost may rise further. Current figures indicate that the service is not financially viable. If the SkyBus enterprise goes into debt, the corporation or government might take the money out of our pockets through increased taxes or cess. Or they may sell off lands reserved for schools and parks. This is exactly what happened with the Mumbai-Pune Expressway. Now we are being forced to pay a toll even on the old National Highway to cover the losses suffered by the Expressway.

Daily assault of auto emissions in Pune, India

Act 5.
Insist on Less Pollution, Better Health

Put public health on top priority. Impose the ‘polluter pays’ principle. Those who pollute more must pay more. 65% of all air pollution is caused by vehicular emissions. Pune already tops the chart in Maharashtra as the most polluted city. Insist on better pollution controls. Impose steeper fines. Make CNG or Ultra Low Sulphur Diesel compulsory for all buses, rickshaws and six-seaters, as was done in Delhi.
How we gain: Less pollution means better quality of life everyday. Tough decisions can be made to work. After making CNG compulsory, Delhi’s pollution is said to have come down by 40%. The Supreme Court has plans to add more cities to be monitored. Pune deserves to be on that list.

Act 6.
Provide Non-Motorized Options
(cycle tracks, pedestrian paths, vehicle free zones)
Provide safe and dedicated lanes for cyclists. It is their right, just as much as it is of others who use the roadway. Even today, there are an estimated 800,000 cyclists in Pune. Create sufficient and safe footpaths for pedestrians. Ensure that their width is not reduced to accommodate wider roads. Walking is the cheapest and least polluting form of mobility. It is one of the most basic and justified of human rights.

How we gain: Remember, majority of those who die in traffic accidents are pedestrians and cyclists. In fact, they use the least polluting modes of travel, and pose the least danger. Why should they be the victims? Thousands of people walk for short or long distances each day – senior citizens to buy vegetables, mothers to drop childrens to school, casual labour going to work, etc. It is also one of the easiest way to exercise. Roads must be made safe for all users.
Act 7.
Move towards Integrated Planning
(land use, modal efficiency)

How a city is planned, where it places residential complexes, business areas, educational institutions, government offices, open spaces, etc. all determine the nature and volume of traffic that will be generated. Proper planning and implementation of land use is therefore crucial. Similarly, we must insist on saving spaces marked for parks, playgrounds, rivers and hills. They are the lungs of our city. They are our heritage, and need to be preserved.

**How we gain:** Transport needs of the city can be planned for in advance. It will maximise use of resources and minimise haphazard movement of traffic. It will also prevent converting natural resources and open spaces into cement jungles or asphalt roads. This not only kills the hills and the rivers, it slowly kills all aesthetics and sense of freedom.

Act 8.
Plan for Newer/Undeveloped Areas of PMR
(Pune Metropolitan Region)

Insist that the development plan for Pune’s surrounding 23 villages allocates adequate space for including all the above mentioned features in anticipation of the traffic requirements. Roads must be planned in such a way that there are sufficient and safe tracks for buses, pedestrians and cyclists.

**How we gain:** Prevention is always better than cure. Advance planning will help us to avoid repeating the problems we see in Pune city. There will be more open spaces, safer habitats, less pollution and easier travel for residents and commuters. It is not impossible. The city of Bogota in Columbia (Latin America) has created 300 kms of cycle tracks in five years – between 1998 and 2003.
Act 9.
Create Open Plazas, Shopping Areas and Business Districts that Prohibit Private Motorized Vehicles.

Create open plazas, shopping areas and business districts that do not allow private motorized transport. These will be a welcome change from the relentless congestion. Allow only subsidized bus shuttles to provide commuters service to these areas (permitting ambulances during emergencies). The absence of vehicular congestion, guaranteed safety and pollution-free air will encourage people to come, walk and shop. This can be started for some hours every day. Laxmi Road and Mahatma Gandhi Road are ideal places to introduce this experiment.

How we gain: Thousands of people avoid visiting congested areas, like Pune gaothan, because there is no place to walk or park. Experience in other countries has shown that centrally located ‘no vehicle’ areas generate business because people feel safe to come. They spend time and money.
PTTF Perspective and Appeal

Pune Traffic and Transportation Forum is a platform of citizens, like yourself, who are concerned with the issues outlined above. This forum is open to all.

We believe that it is possible to dramatically improve the traffic quality in Pune. We believe that it is possible for us to have safer and better transportation in Pune.

To do this, WE, the people, public officials and politicians, work together, with a new vision.

This pamphlet is a step in that direction. We hope you find it useful.

PTTF needs your support.

Join us.

Together we can change the quality of mobility in Pune.

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