SUM Net India
Sustainable Urban Mobility Network

Calendar 2021

The Sustainable Mobility Decade

Sustainable Urban Mobility Network (SUM Net) India is a democratic, secular and membership-based coalition of individuals, voluntary organizations, and civil society networks and movements. It seeks to improve the quality of life for all by preserving the primacy of the democratic ideal to ensure that urban mobility systems are universally accessible, socially just, economically viable and environmentally sound.

The National Urban Transport Policy brought out by the Government of India in 2006 served as a preamble to the idea of this network. Five years into its launch, the need for both upholding the policy and ensuring its proper implementation at all federal levels became urgent. The founding members of SUM Net realized that urban transport initiatives carried out in silos, divorced from the larger sustainable agenda do not yield much. It was also understood that policy advocacy is not only incomplete without local participation but also unsustainable. The principle of democracy and the practice of down-up policy approach, therefore, informs the ethos and work of the network.

A very diverse group of individuals and organizations, located in around 20 cities, bringing their local and experiential knowledge of sustainability constitute this network. In over a decade of its existence, SUM Net has been supported by local communities and grassroot groups working on varied urban issues with whom it tried to develop a multi-perspective understanding of sustainable mobility. In turn, we have tried to assist the people by carrying out awareness initiatives and facilitating a dialogue with the decision-makers to push for people-made designs, plans, policies and cities.

This Calendar is a small output to mark SUM Net's tenth year in the urban mobility sector. It documents campaigns, advocacy efforts, studies, discussions, partnerships and outreach carried out by SUM Net to enable the transition from sustainable mobility being a mere promise to a reality.

List of Abbreviations:

SUM Net - Sustainable Urban Mobility Network
NUTP - National Urban Transport Policy
TRIPP - Transportation Research and Injury Prevention Programme
IIT- Indian Institute of Technology
SUTP- State Urban Transport Policy
NSSO- National Sample Survey Office
MoHUA- Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs
NGO- Non-governmental organization
PIL- Public Interest Litigation
CEE- Centre for Environment Education
CEPT- Centre for Environment Planning & Technology
BNCA- Dr. Bhanuben Nanavati College of Architecture for Women
BRT- Bus Rapid Transit
JnNURM- Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission

Parisar

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An initiative supported by

SHAKTI SUSTAINABLE ENERGY FOUNDATION
seeks to facilitate India's transition to a sustainable energy future by aiding the design and implementation of policies in the following areas: clean power, energy efficiency, sustainable urban transport, climate change mitigation and clean energy finance.

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Structural Change before Behavioural Change

Sustainable mobility is the key to quality of life for both a city and its residents. It determines accessible opportunities, environmental protection and urban development. With roads carrying over 80% of India's passenger traffic and transport sector being one of the largest contributors to air pollution in cities, taking the sustainability turn on the road to efficient mobility is not just important but also urgent.

Cognizant of this urgency, SUM Net advocates and campaigns for promoting sustainable modes like walking, cycling, cycle rickshaw, public transport as much as disincentivizing the growth of private vehicles and the infrastructure that supports it like road widening, flyovers, multi-storey parking lots, etc. SUM Net believes that sustainability in mobility cannot be achieved until constructive actions are taken for both aspects, ensuring equitable allocation of road space.

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The purpose of transport is to move people from their homes to offices, shops, places of entertainment etc. with a minimum negative impact on the city's environment, health of citizens and its natural and built heritage."

–Sujit Patwardhan, *Parisar*

January

SUM Net's HONEST opinion:

Sustainability is the best policy

Policies are roadmaps for change. The potential of transport policies to boost sustainable and inclusive growth leading to structural change, whether through investment, pricing, or regulation is huge.

At policy level, SUM Net played a crucial role in revising NUTP. SUM Net also raised a concern about a clause in the Motor Vehicles Amendment Bill 2019 which could be used to ban cycles and restrict pedestrian movement. This led to a statement by the Minister of Transport, Sh. Nitin Gadkari, clarifying that this would not be allowed. Few SUM Net members were involved in drafting the Maharashtra State Urban Transport Policy (SUTP) and ensuring multi-stakeholder engagement for its development.

February

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The needs of each state are sufficiently diverse to warrant an SUTP to help guide the evolution of urban transport planning in the state."

SUM Net, *'Towards a State Urban Transport Policy: An analysis of five states in India' Report, 2013.*

'Lakh ko 50' buses

Public transport services are the mainstay of the daily transit needs of millions in India. As per the NSS data, buses are the most preferred means of transport. Recognising this, the service-level benchmarks by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) stipulates a target of 60 buses per lakh population but there are only 30,000 urban public buses i.e. less than 8 buses per lakh people.

SUM Net launched a national campaign, 'Lakh ko 50', demanding from MoHUA a budgetary commitment to help cities achieve a minimum of 50 buses per lakh urban residents. The Maharashtra chapter of this campaign additionally demands the Chief Minister to make provision of bus services mandatory for cities. 'Reclaiming the Bus' campaign in Delhi demands free and safe bus services for all, recognition of bus services as essential services and bus workers as essential workers.

March

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A bus with 100 passengers has a right to 100 times more road space than a car with 1 person. I appreciate your work to ensure this basic democracy of road space."

–Enrique Peñalosa, *"Take the Bus' webinar by Parisar.*

All Shades of Shared Mobility

Intermediate or informal public transport (IPT), para-transit or feeder system provides services for occasional and emergency trips, last mile connectivity, and filling the gap if public transport is unavailable or inadequate. IPT services are yet to be regulated and adequately integrated with the overall transportation system in cities.

CEE Pune was involved in the public outreach for a shuttle service trial in Aundh, Pune as part of Smart City Project in 2016. Its aim was to reduce local private motorized trips and highlight the potential for well-organized local area shuttle services as an IPT option. In 2019, a methodology was developed and tested by them in three cities of Maharashtra to understand the readiness and barriers of IPT collectives, unions and service providers to be part of the sustainable mobility ecosystem. SUM Net has been consistently working to provide a platform for multi-stakeholder engagement, and to suggest mechanisms for addressing institutional gaps in the IPT sector.

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Policy making related to auto-rickshaws is dysfunctional - it does not adequately account for the perspective of drivers nor for the fact that they provide a much-valued, cost-effective transportation service."

–Simon Harding, Madhav Badami, Conor Reynolds, & Milind Kandlikar.

April

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Wheels from the past into the future

Cycle rickshaw is not only a vehicle to provide door-to-door accessibility, it is also a truly non-polluting mode of transport with minimum life cycle emissions. Yet, the cycle rickshaw and its driver struggle to survive in the absence of legislative and governmental support amidst the increasing urban sprawl and auto-mobilization in Indian cities.

An analysis of NSS data, 2011 by Nishant Singh revealed that 23% and 16% households in Bihar and Jharkhand respectively opt for cycle rickshaws in their everyday travel. In these states, a two-year long campaign and advocacy was carried out by IDS Delhi which attempted to address the absence of institutional mechanisms and lack of sensitivity by bringing together stakeholders in more than 60 meetings. In March 2019, a Cycle Rickshaw Bill was drafted through people's participation which addresses the deliberate non-recognition of cycle rickshaws in terms of policy, data and rights.

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Ecocabs is cycle rickshaw service made available at your door-step through a phone call. Introduced in Fazilka, Punjab ecocabs strengthened the unorganised network of cycle rickshaws, ensured welfare of drivers and was achieved through a collaborative effort of rickshaw operators union, local authority and a local NGO."

–Navdeep Asija, *Founder, Ecocabs.*

May

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Tilt the modal share towards cycling

An affordable mode of transport, cycling is an effective way to beat congestion and pollution. NUTP emphasizes the need to promote non-motorized transport but also mentions the disconnect between actual users (cyclists) and the infrastructure built for them. It recommends greater interaction with users so that designs truly cater to their needs.

To secure the road rights of cyclists, a PIL was filed in the Indore High Court by Cycle Yatri Samooh (SAYAS), a cyclists' forum created by SUM Net member Ashok Dubey. In response, the court issued notices to the state government and Indore Smart City company seeking better infrastructure facilities for cyclists.

CEE Pune and Parisar have worked for the adoption and execution of Pune Bicycle Plan. After the plan's adoption in 2016, they are involved in its proper implementation.

SUM Net also issued a public statement in 2017 condemning Uttar Pradesh Urban Development Minister Suresh Khanna's decision to dismantle the cycle tracks in a few cities.

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There are hundreds of women domestic workers in Nagpur who largely cycle or walk to work forming a significant chunk of cyclists in the city. Exclusive cycle lanes starting with simple low-cost street design measures, and free cycles for women must be provided."

–Vilas Bhongade, *Convener, Nagpur Women's Cycling Club.*

June

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SUM Net walks the talk on

Building Walkable Cities

Walking is a hazardous mode of commute in India with about 60 pedestrian deaths recorded daily. This exists despite NUTP stating that pedestrians must have segregated pathways to ensure safety and convenience, despite Court judgements asserting the rights of pedestrians and despite various missions or schemes stressing the need for better pedestrian infrastructure.

SUM Net has pushed for street designs and pedestrian policies developed through multi-stakeholder consultations in 11 cities. People-made street designs have been given a green signal for implementation in two cities. Recognising the need to organize pedestrians to become an effective voice and assert the demand for walkable cities, SUM Net has established Pedestrian Forums in 5 cities.

July

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We have worked for people's right to roti, kapda, makaan but we learnt about their democratic right to sadak—crucial for ensuring other rights—only after our association with SUM Net."

–Mahendra Yadav, *Founder, Bihar Paidal Yatri Manch*

The Sustainable Mobility course

Understanding transport from different perspectives and its complex relation with questions of equity, democracy and sustainability is of utmost importance. From an early age, people must understand that streets are for people and not vehicles.

With CEE Pune, SUM Net introduced the Streets for People course to promote academic work on sustainable mobility. The course has been offered as a 3-credits elective at CEPT for 5 years, as an Urban Landscape Design studio at BNCA Pune, as a 6-days workshop at PVP College of Architecture Pune and most recently at Rachna Sansad, Mumbai as part of a college project elective. The course focuses on urban mobility policy and practice, and methods of community involvement and advocacy. An updated version of this course is under preparation.

August

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The solution to address the street conflicts lies not only in conceptualizing physical design but in designing the process by which a community arrives at and implements solutions."

–Sanskriti Menon, *CEE Pune.*

SUM Net vs.

The State of Congestion

The unbridled increase in the number of personal vehicles is the biggest contributing factor to congestion. Congestion causes loss in productivity, valuable time, and during peak hours increase in pollution. Till date, flyovers and road widening are considered the solutions for traffic congestion.

SUM Net has advocated against the traditional approach of building flyovers and elevated roads as a solution for traffic congestion. It propagates that road capacity should be reduced, non-motorized transport must be promoted and share of public transport must be increased. SUM Net also believes that congestion solicits a policy response that can create a balance between urbanization and mobility.

September

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Keeping in view that road space cannot be augmented, there is no option other than to put into place a good public transport system, with BRT being an integral part thereof; for only then would the citizens of Delhi shift to public transport."

- Delhi High Court, *WP (C) No. 380/2012*

Love your parks not parking lots

As vehicles are voracious users of space—each vehicle requires at least three parking spots—increased motorisation means streets, parks, plazas and public spaces paving way for parking. In the absence of any coherent parking policy, the de facto policy in most cities is to accommodate as many vehicles as possible and build multi-storey parking lots.

SUM Net's understanding is based on the standpoint that parking is a commodity (as vehicles are private goods) and not a right. Therefore, high demand for parking must be met with a high commodity price or use fee, not more supply. Secondly, parking must be a part of a larger travel and traffic demand management strategy which enables the shift to sustainable modes of commute. SUM Net has advocated for formulation and adoption of a parking policy which recognises the relation between parking supply and mass transit, and propagates paid parking.

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If Ahmedabad's four million vehicles and Bengaluru's seven million are parked on the roads today, they will take about 30% of all road space in these cities... Free parking is usually haphazard parking, not only obstructing pedestrian movement but moving vehicles as well; it is a license to congest."

–Rutul Joshi *for Scroll.in*

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October

SUM Net questions

the Metro Solution?

Ever since the Delhi Metro became operational, metro rail has been hailed as a pioneering solution for urban traffic problems. While metro appears as the most attractive solution, its efficacy, claims and financial viability have come under criticism.

Most SUM Net members have analysed the economic, transit and social benefits of metro rail in their respective cities. Its suitability has been questioned on following parameters:

1. Consistent failure in achieving projected ridership
2. Neglect of the feeder network and its integration with other MRT systems
3. Insensitivity about its impact on the city's ecology, heritage and informal economy
4. Its real effectiveness in fixing air pollution and congestion issues

" As the trend shows, financial health of Delhi Metro is most likely to remain contingent on its role in the birth of other metro projects. This would indirectly promote the current race for metro in each Indian city."

– Nishant Singh and Rajendra Ravi, *Riding on Debt: Financial Analysis of Delhi Metro after Phase III.*

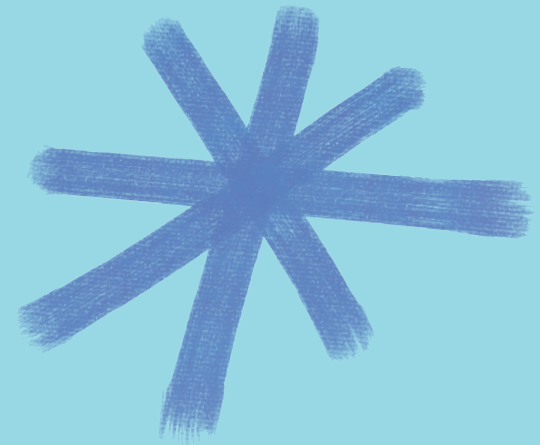| S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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November

SUM Net presents the

Sustainable Mobility Budget

While several cities in India allocate a large share of its budget to the transportation sector, it is not tied to urban plans or sustainability outcomes. An ad hoc process, divorced from the NUTP principles is followed at the whim of the various transport-related agencies and politicians.

SUM Net analysed the municipal budgets of 5 cities, namely, Ahmedabad, Chennai, Bangalore, Pune and Nagpur to find little to no correlation between city mobility plans and budget spending. In the absence of an outcome budget, there is no accountability. City budgets neither mention nor strive to achieve the transport benchmarks, policies and plans laid down by MoHUA.

December

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We talk a lot about sustainable transport when it comes to policies. However, we need to investigate where the funds are going. Because concern about congestion, which basically means congestion faced by cars, concern about lack of parking space for cars seem to be the dominant issues."

Geetam Tiwari, *TRIPP, IIT Delhi.*