



Press Release

Maharashtra's Cities in Urgent Need of 24,000 New Buses: ITDP India Analysis

A new analysis by Institute for Transportation and Development Policy ITDP India reveals a severe deficit of public buses in Maharashtra's urban areas. The study highlights that the state needs at least 28,800 buses across its 44 cities to meet the mobility demands of 5.6 crore residents. Currently, the urban bus fleet stands at a mere 8,700, out of which ~3,500 buses are nearing the end of their operational life. This leaves an alarming gap of 24,000 buses, including replacements for retiring vehicles.

Urban Areas Severely Under-Served

The study by ITDP India, conducted in December 2024, assessed the public transport requirements of Maharashtra's urban areas. According to the Working Group on Urban Transport for 12th Five-Year Plan recommendations by the Government of India in 2012, all cities with populations exceeding two lakhs should have organised public transport systems. By this definition, there are 44 cities in Maharashtra with a total population of 5.6 crore people residing in them. Of these 44, only 14 cities currently operate formal public bus services, leaving 30 of them unserved.

Even in these 14 cities, the availability of buses falls far below the benchmark set by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, which recommends 40-60 buses per lakh population. However, in these 14 cities the average is around 15 buses per lakh population. The analysis underscores a dire need for both fleet expansion and the establishment of new bus services across the state.

Tier-Wise Breakdown of the Deficit

A deeper dive into the data reveals stark disparities between city tiers:

- **Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities:** There are nine cities in Maharashtra, with populations over 20 lakh. These cities need approximately a 2x expansion of their bus fleets. For instance, Greater Mumbai currently operates around 3,600 buses but requires at least 8,000 to meet demand. Pune and Pimpri Chinchwad operate a fleet of 2,200 buses but need to double the fleet to 4,500 to meet the demand.
- **Tier 3 and Tier 4 cities:** Currently there are 35 cities with populations between 2 and 20 lakh in Maharashtra. They face an even greater shortfall, needing a 23x expansion in their fleets. For example, in Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar, the current fleet is just 90 buses, with only a fraction of the 1,000 buses required.

"It's critical for Maharashtra's new government to seize this opportunity and prioritise buses in the upcoming budget. Allocating at least ₹1000 crores to address 20% of the fleet deficit through viability gap funding for buses operating under gross cost contracts, can make a significant difference," said Aswathy Dilip, Managing Director, ITDP India.

Info graphic

Existing urban bus fleet size in Maharashtra: 8,700

The outdated urban bus fleet due for retiring : ~3450 approx

Existing urban bus fleet that can be operated: 5250

Current shortage of buses: ~24,000 approx

For more details contact:

Kashmira Dubash, Senior Manager, ITDP India: 9677016570

Vaishali Singh, Programme Manager, ITDP India: 9013445466

About ITDP India

The Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP) works with cities in India to create healthy and liveable communities through high-quality public transport including e-mobility, safe spaces for walking & cycling, traffic reduction mechanisms, and people-centered policies. We believe that shifting from single-occupancy private cars to high-capacity public transport and zerocarbon modes such as walking and cycling, would drastically cut emissions, reduce traffic congestion, and better connect low-income communities to the opportunities and resources they need. The team at ITDP India includes architects, urban planners, researchers, and e-mobility & transport experts, all of whom are committed to making visible, on-the-ground improvements by providing cities with technical expertise, policy solutions, research publications, and training programmes.