



## Press Release

# **Chennai Parking Policy has the Potential to Change the way Chennai Moves, for Good**

**11<sup>th</sup> March 2025**

In a significant move towards improving urban mobility, the Tamil Nadu government has approved a Parking Policy for the entire Chennai Metropolitan Area (CMA), spanning 5,904 sq. Km which includes four corporations like Chennai, Tambaram, Avadi, Kancheepuram, 12 municipalities, 13 town panchayats, 22 panchayat unions and one special grade town panchayat. This policy marks a major step in addressing parking challenges and promoting sustainable transport options.

The Chennai Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority (CUMTA), an authority under the Government of Tamil Nadu and chaired by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, was established to enhance urban mobility and promote seamless integration of transport systems across CMA. CUMTA has been designated as the nodal agency responsible for formulating strategies and managing parking initiatives within the CMA. As part of its efforts, CUMTA has now developed a comprehensive parking policy for the region.

Speaking about the policy, Mr Jeyakumar I, IRTS Member Secretary, CUMTA said, *“Parking management is fundamentally an urban mobility measure, to facilitate smooth traffic flow and promote sustainable transportation modes, to ensure the limited road space is efficiently used for all road users. Allocating parking spaces to optimise road space is an effort in this direction.”*

Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP) India is proud to have offered technical knowledge support towards the creation of the policy, which involved extensive stakeholder collaboration with Urban Local Bodies, Police Department, Road Owning Agencies and Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority (CMDA).

Ms Aswathy Dilip, Managing Director of ITDP India said, *“With this policy, Chennai takes a bold step towards improving urban mobility. The shift from free to paid parking, will not only streamline parking management but also encourage a shift towards more sustainable modes of transport, like public transport, walking, and cycling.”*

### **Shifting Focus to Mobility First**

We applaud the bold and proactive steps taken by the Government of Tamil Nadu for being far-sighted and futuristic, addressing the problems to come in parking management, today.

Parking management will certainly make Chennai city, future ready by addressing the exploding vehicle population and make the city more livable, walkable, and greener!

A dedicated Parking Management Unit (PMU) will be established under CUMTA to oversee the parking management process. This unit will be responsible for developing parking plans, setting parking prices, selecting service providers, and executing implementation strategies, with support from Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) and the Police Department. Unlike other cities, CUMTA's PMU will be the Single Authority to manage parking across the entire CMA.

### **Why Parking Policy?**

To understand why parking is important, it is critical to note that on average, one parking space for a car takes up 18 sq. meters (about 220 sq. feet) of road space—equivalent to the size of a small low-income housing unit in India or three office cubicles. This valuable space is often given away for free to just one segment of road users. Paying for parking helps ensure that limited road space – which is a public good is used fairly and efficiently. Here's why it matters:

1. **Reduces Congestion:** Free parking often leads to vehicles circling for spots, causing traffic jams. Paid parking discourages long-term parking in busy areas, freeing up space.
2. **Prioritises Public Spaces:** Revenue from parking fees will fund better footpaths, cycle tracks, and public amenities—benefiting everyone, not just drivers.
3. **Encourages Sustainable Choices:** Higher on-street parking fees nudge people to use off-street lots, carpool, or switch to public transport, walking, or cycling.
4. **Fairness:** Everyone pays a small share to maintain order, ensuring roads are safer and less cluttered for *all* road users.

In Chennai, with a vehicle population of 9.2 million nearly matching its human population, the need for effective parking management is urgent. The policy introduces a shift: parking is not a right but a paid service, just like any other urban service like electricity, waste disposal, water supply etc. A small cost for a shared resource that improves quality of life for the entire city. Though we will need to pay for on-street parking when the onground implementation commences, it will be easier to find parking spots, and streets will be less congested, saving you time and fuel.

Efficient parking management that this parking policy will pave the way towards, saves space by prioritizing land for sidewalks, parks and shops instead of endless parking lots. It reduces traffic and pollution by encouraging walking, cycling, and public transit, while ensuring fair access to parking for everyone. While the transition may feel inconvenient at first, the city will soon see its benefits: smoother traffic, safer streets, and a more accessible, people-friendly urban environment.

With tailored Area Level Parking Plans for neighborhoods already being prepared, we look forward to working with CUMTA towards piloting the parking management plans.

**Document Links on Policy:**

[Parking policy - English](#)

[Parking Policy Tamil](#)

[Government Order for Parking Policy Adoption](#)

**Additional resources on parking management by ITDP India:**

[Busting Parking Myths](#)

[Park it Right: The threefold approach to effectively managing parking](#)

[Parking Basics: Key principles and steps](#)

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**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 zero carbon 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.