



## Recommendations

discussed and drafted in

# Roundtable on Carrying Capacity of Cities

A Part of a Series of Roundtables on Urban Policy by PRO

MONSOON SESSION 2025



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## **Background**

The Symbiosis Centre for Urban Studies (SCUS), in collaboration with the Policy Research Organization (PRO), organised a full-day roundtable on Carrying Capacities of Cities on 23 August 2025.

The event convened experts from diverse domains, including urban planners, architects, social activists, journalists, former civil servants, citizen representatives, and academicians, to deliberate on the conceptual and practical challenges of urban carrying capacity and to propose pathways for sustainable urban development.







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#### Recommendations for

## The Municipal Corporations

- 1. Cities should establish comprehensive data dashboards to measure, aggregate, and monitor key indicators of urban livability. The dashboards should be made available in the public domain, which will act as a data repository at the ULB level. This will also reflect the livability challenges at the city level. Potential data sources for creating and maintaining the necessary data of the migrant population in a city refer to footnote.
- 2. Financial and fiscal decentralisation is essential to enable ULBs to raise and manage independent sources of revenue.
- 3. The State Finance Commissions (SFCs) have recommended, sharing of grants on the basis of a clear-cut formula, which should be incorporated. For example, in Maharashtra, the recommendations of the State Finance Commission need to be accepted in order to financially empower the ULBs.
- 4. Capacity-building initiatives should be undertaken to strengthen financial management, fund mobilisation, and accountability mechanisms within ULBs.
- 5. Training of Municipal Corporation officers who deal with citizens and public representatives is necessary, and this may include knowledge sharing and sensitisation programmes.







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- 6. Further expertise from external agencies could be utilised on a consultancy basis to aid the ULBs.
- 7. Reclassification of settlements and jurisdictions should be undertaken on the basis of ground realities, and the definition should be based on the degree of urbanisation.
- 8. Effective resource planning should be undertaken through District Planning Committees (DPCs) and Metropolitan Planning Committees (MPCs).
- Data publication, sharing, and communication among various authorities should be established as a statutory obligation. Such a mandate would reduce delays and confusion, facilitate better coordination, and improve the efficiency of project delivery and implementation.
- 10. The Mayor should function as the true representative of the city. This may require providing the office of the Mayor with clear authority, decision-making powers, and institutional recognition.







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#### Recommendations for

## **The State Government**

- The Maharashtra Regional and Town Planning (MRTP) Act must undergo a complete revival and revision to reflect present-day urban requirements, governance needs, and sustainability concerns. The revised Act should focus not only on land-use planning but also on integrated approaches to livability, infrastructure, and citizen participation.
- 2. Both the State and Central Governments should prioritise the recruitment of trained urban planners. Professional planners must be tasked with designing and guiding city development, ensuring that urban growth is well-coordinated, sustainable, and responsive to citizens' needs.
- 3. Development Plans (DPs) are typically prepared with a 20-year vision for a city. State governments should review and update DPs every three to five years to respond effectively to evolving citizen demands, emerging urban challenges, and dynamic patterns of growth.
- 4. There is a need to establish formal dispute settlement mechanisms to address and resolve pending land-related disputes at the municipal level. Such mechanisms would reduce delays, prevent litigation backlogs, and facilitate smoother implementation of urban development projects.







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## **The State Government**

- 5. A dedicated state-level transport authority is essential to ensure coordinated, efficient, and sustainable mobility solutions across cities and regions. Such a department can address fragmentation, integrate multiple modes of transport, and support long-term planning for public transport infrastructure.
- 6. At present, Maharashtra lacks a comprehensive state-level urban policy. A well-defined policy framework is necessary to provide coherence in planning, service delivery, and governance across ULBs, while addressing challenges of rapid urbanisation, peri-urban expansion, and regional imbalances.
- 7. Publication of reports, plans, and data should be made a legislative obligation under the relevant State Acts.
- 8. Rural regions should be developed into contiguous, well-planned, sustainable models to improve the quality of life and reduce pressures on cities.
- 9. Focused rural development initiatives, such as the Providing Urban Amenities in Rural Areas (PURA) scheme, can help create employment, improve infrastructure, and enhance urbanisation in a balanced manner.







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#### Recommendations for

## The Government of India

- Local governments should be granted greater functional, financial, and administrative autonomy. Empowering ULBs to make independent decisions and mobilise resources will enable more effective planning, responsive service delivery, and sustainable urban management.
- 2. Both the State and Central Governments should prioritise the recruitment of trained urban planners. Professional planners must be tasked with designing and guiding city development, ensuring that urban growth is well-coordinated, sustainable, and responsive to citizens' needs.







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#### **Credits**

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The Esteemed Participants of the Roundtable







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