

SDC Uttarakhand Urban Agenda 2022 Factsheet Four : December 30, 2021

Public Transport, Parking and Traffic in Dehradun and Uttarakhand

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The challenges of inadequate public transport, limited parking spaces and massive increases in traffic jams in Uttarakhand need attention from all political parties and all policymakers. The above challenges are multifaceted and pose immense challenges on many levels. With an increase in population, rapid spread of urbanization and greater disposable incomes; the above challenges are bound to increase during the coming years.

Registered Vehicles in Uttarakhand

There has been a 750% increase in the number of registered vehicles in Uttarakhand during the past 20 years. At the time of state formation in November 2000, there were approx 3,50,000 registered vehicles in Uttarakhand. As per the Statistical Diary of the State Govt, there were 29,68,892 registered vehicles last year on 31/3/2020 in Uttarakhand. As of today (December 2021), there are more than 32,00,000 registered vehicles in Uttarakhand.

| Types of Vehicles | Number | Percentage |
|---|------------------|------------|
| Scooter, MotorCycle, Moped | 21,69,955 | 73.0 |
| Car, Jeep, Omni Bus, Tractor Trolley | 5,95,244 | 20.0 |
| Multi-axle, Truck & Lorry, Four Wheeler Load Vehicle, Utility Van, Delivery Van, Recovery Van, Tanker (Petrol / Milk / Water) | 88,801 | 3.0 |
| Maxi / Taxi | 54,748 | 1.8 |
| Vikram / Auto Rickshaw | 24,519 | 0.8 |
| Government Bus / Semi-Government Bus / School Bus, Ambulance / Stage Carriage / Contract Carriage | 16,823 | 0.5 |
| E-Rickshaw | 14,864 | 0.5 |
| Other | 3,938 | 0.1 |
| Total | 29,68,892 | |

Traffic Police & University of Petroleum & Energy Studies (UPES), Dehradun 2019 Research:

The Traffic Police & UPES had conducted a joint study in 2019. The study informed that each vehicle was stranded on an average of 7 to 20 minutes in a traffic jam in Dehradun on a daily basis. The study claimed that by 2025 there would be 15 lakh registered vehicles in the city of Dehradun. In case of a business as usual scenario, they further asserted that each vehicle would be spending 90 minutes in a traffic jam on a daily basis by that time.

PWD Traffic Census 2019

In a similar PWD Traffic Census in 2019, it was found that 9,000 vehicles were operational in a one kilometer radius around Clock Tower in Dehradun in one hour between 1-2 PM. The maximum capacity of the area to absorb the traffic load is 5,000 vehicles. Due to high numbers of vehicles, there is a perpetual situation of traffic jams.

7,000 Dharna, Julus, Shobhayatra , Chakka Jam and other protests in Dehradun

Dharna, julus, shobhayatra, strikes, rallies, protests and similar other public programs are a big cause for traffic disruption. The Traffic Police had claimed that almost 7,000 such programs took place in Dehradun in the year 2016.

Top 10 Uttarakhand Ground Realities for Public Transport, Parking and Traffic

We outline the major, top 10 ground realities on the public transport, parking and traffic front in Dehradun and Uttarakhand

1. Adequate, timely and safe public transport has failed to take off in Uttarakhand. Though various solutions like metros, light rails, personal transport, ropeways and air-taxis have been considered and explored; yet the reality is that the state does not have any integrated, multi modal transportation planning.
2. In recent times, more than 2 lakh new vehicles are getting registered in Uttarakhand on an annual basis (due to Covid there has been some decline, but this is the overall trend). The existing infrastructure is unable to keep pace with the load exerted on the roads, flyovers, footpaths and parking spaces in the state.
3. There is an acute shortage of roadways buses in the hill districts. Many road accidents and deaths are taking place since people are forced to travel in overcrowded maxis/taxis.
4. Autos, e-rickshaws and vikrams are choking many roads in many cities in Uttarakhand. Quite often, many of these are unregistered and unfit but continue to ply in large numbers on city roads.
5. Last mile connectivity is a critical challenge for Uttarakhand. This compels citizens to buy and use their personal vehicles.
6. There is an acute shortage of government and/or commercial parking in all cities and towns in Uttarakhand. Basement parking of commercial complexes have not taken off. They are usually poorly lit and subject to frequent water logging.
7. Roadside parking is very common in Uttarakhand and this generates frequent traffic snarls. People are often not ready to park their vehicles in designated parking spaces.
8. Traffic jams are omnipresent in Uttarakhand right from plain areas like Roorkee, Haridwar, Dehradun, Rishikesh, Haldwani and Kashipur. The situation is even grimmer with towns like Nainital and Mussoorie. Frequent traffic jams on the Char Dham route leaves millions of tourists and pilgrims stranded for hours.
9. Illegal encroachments in many different forms have choked the cities and towns in the state. These impact all aspects relating to public transport, traffic and parking. The condition of footpaths in most situations is deplorable. They are unfit for walking and in the few places where they are functional, encroachments have taken over.
10. Air pollution levels have spiked significantly in Dehradun and Uttarakhand during the past several years. Vehicular traffic has a big role in the increased PM 2.5 and PM 10 pollution levels.

10 Point Uttarakhand Action Plan for Public Transport, Parking and Traffic

We suggest the following 10 point action plan to improve the situation with public transport, parking and traffic in Dehradun and Uttarakhand:

1. It is extremely critical to understand the linkages between public transport, parking and traffic. The three issues cannot be looked at in isolation. Thus, it is important to have an integrated approach involving all government departments like Transport Dept, Roadways, Urban Development, RTO, Police, MDDA, Smart City, Pollution Control and others. Similarly; political parties, academic institutions, citizen groups, elected representatives, vyapar mandals, transport bodies and media should be involved and engaged as key stakeholders in drawing up any plans especially for parking and traffic management.
2. There is a need for a comprehensive, multimodal mobility plan for the city of Dehradun and the other large cities in the state. The options of metro, air taxis, ropeway, light rail & personal rapid transport have been explored for Dehradun.. Yet, the city has not moved beyond creaking city buses and a fleet of errant autos, vikrams and erickshaws.
3. There should be a greater push towards green transport. Cleaner alternatives like CNG based autos and electric vehicles should be promoted. Pollution checks need to be enforced strictly.
4. Capital intensive projects like Metro are financially unviable for low load cities like Dehradun, Haridwar and Rishikesh. With the meager resources of Uttarakhand and inadequate number of passengers, such projects will likely drain the state exchequer.
5. Apart from wider roads and flyovers, other solutions need to be explored. With the upcoming Delhi Dehardun economic corridor and the Char Dham All Weather Road; intercity connectivity will increase exponentially. It is thus important to consider the strategy and options for intracity connectivity.
6. Dedicated cycling tracks and non encroached footpaths are the need of the hour. All major cities should promote the concept of non motorized transport (NMT).
7. There is a need to regulate vehicles entering towns like Mussoorie and Nainital during the peak tourist season. Alternate methods to transport tourists need to be explored, developed and implemented.
8. Strict action should be taken against builders who do not leave adequate space for parking in their complexes. New paid parking lots need to be developed on a war footing.
9. The number of traffic constables that are deployed for traffic management is inadequate. Additional people need to be engaged for the activity. Creative solutions like engaging youth as Volunteer Citizen Traffic Police for peak seasons needs to be explored. The volunteers can receive certificates of participation and some basic honorarium.
10. Road safety and air pollution should be accorded highest levels of priority while designing statewide and city wide mobility plans. Similarly, financial sustainability is important to ensure long term operations for any service provider for any form of public transport.