Welcome to the inaugural issue of MyCity, the Project Mumbai newsletter. Project Mumbai is a not-for-profit public trust that has partnered with the Government of Maharashtra to bring you Mumbai 2.0.

We may be a little more than 50 days old as an organisation, but we are guided by leaders with over 150 years of collective experience across multiple sectors. People with a common purpose. A Better Mumbai. We aim to bring together individuals, ideas and institutions to improve the quality of life in our city. We do have big plans, and the energy and optimism to make them successful.

What makes us so confident? Our focus on people.

Over 75,000 Mumbaikars from all walks of life joined hands to make our first initiative, The Mumbai Plastic Recyclothon, a huge success. The recycled plastic will now be seen in the form of benches for senior citizens across gardens and public spaces in Mumbai. Thank you, Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM).

This is only one example of the support we have from you, citizens. Project Mumbai is simultaneously involved in research, ideation and execution of several initiatives. Chaalti Mumbai, an effort to make the suburbs pedestrian-friendly, is one of them. Seamless navigation at civic hospitals, a toll-free helpline on mental health and sports opportunities for all, especially children, are some of the others.

That apart, we will relentlessly focus on good urban governance, with an emphasis on transparency and accountability.

On the inside pages, you will get to know more about our immediate action plan, and, ways that we can get together. Collaborate.

And this is just the start.

As a catalyst for public-centred initiatives, Project Mumbai will strive to create partnership and dialogue platforms with the State. This is to ensure that policy-makers are constantly reminded to have citizens at the table when they craft urban governance decisions.

We, as a committed citizen body, will work tirelessly on the present — to invest in and build for the future.

On behalf of Project Mumbai and MyCity, wishing you all a festive December and a healthy, prosperous 2019.

Yours truly,
Shishir Joshi,
CEO and Co-Founder, Project Mumbai

Mumbai 2.0 is not a conference. We never wanted it to be one. What makes this event, and your presence, so special, critical and unique? Its purpose and intended outcome. Mumbai 2.0 is about collaboration. Shared concerns, common agendas and greater benefits for all. It is about reclaiming. About ownership. About Public-Private-People Participation. And that is how Mumbai 2.0 is structured.

This is not and cannot be about talking heads. And thus, much thought, work and discussion have gone into identifying partners whose collective experience will help us not only pinpoint problems but also carve out solutions.

Project Mumbai, as a catalyst, will strive to join these dots, because these decisions impact people. Positive change is and will be our mandate.

In keeping with this, Project Mumbai has undertaken another initiative directly connected with the people: The Citizens’ Charter of needs.

Over the past few weeks, we reached out to Mumbaikars and asked them: What do you need? What affects you the most? What would you want resolved with assistance from the government? We share the answers with you at Mumbai 2.0.

These conversations have helped Project Mumbai identify some initiatives that the city requires. Some of them are listed in this newsletter.

There’s more that makes this gathering special.

Chief Minister Mr Devendra Fadnavis has committed to take note of the recommendations of the various panels; devote time to the Citizens’ Charter; attend to Project Mumbai’s initiatives; and then map out a shared action plan.

Shared. Which means you and me. Us.

An action plan which has a time-bound outcome. A plan which will be monitored by the Chief Minister's war room.

Project Mumbai pledges to collaborate with the CM's team and play the role of an informed catalyst. Because we need to create Mumbai 2.0. Because this is MY CITY.
Mumbai has several zones with high concentrations of poverty, vulnerability and economic inequity. Populated by migrants and citizens in low-income jobs, these zones are characterised by informal, illegal or unauthorised housing as well as weak or absent basic physical and social infrastructure. Here, diseases are rampant and life insecure. These are also zones with a high proportion of unemployed youth, which increases the possibility of these areas emerging as crime spots.

Project Mumbai, along with the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), would like to partner with Urban Local Government bodies in these areas to upgrade the physical infrastructure, including housing, enhance public services and social infrastructure, and launch special programmes to engage the youth in educational, sports and cultural activities. We have already identified some of the target zones using data and in consultation with experts. We are looking for strategic support from the government through special policies, creation of a cell and appointment of a coordinating officer. From corporates, we welcome data and in consultation with experts. We are looking for strategic support from the government through special policies, creation of a cell and appointment of a coordinating officer. From corporates, we welcome financial and logistic support to assist integrated projects.

People-friendly streets

Mumbai roads are getting narrower and pedestrian pathways are nearly non-existent. Project Mumbai seeks to help pedestrians reclaim their streets, while also aiming to make them safe and comfortable for walking, cycling, recreation and social interaction. The twin benefits of decreased pollution and reduced dependence on motorised transport could be the direct outcomes of this initiative. Corporates are invited to adopt a street of their choice and collaborate with the local ward office to beautify it and make it friendlier for people.

Seamless navigation at hospitals

Project Mumbai is collaborating with the Directorate of Medical Education, Maharashtra, to create a seamless navigation system for four civic hospitals — King Edward Memorial Hospital (KEM), Sir JJ College and Hospital, Nair Hospital and Sion Hospital (LTMGH). Millions of people visit these landmark institutions every year and most of them face problems in figuring out where they can get the help they need. The hospital infrastructure is too stretched to guide them better. Over the next few months, Project Mumbai will map every floor, department and section of each of these hospitals and create processes and multilingual systems that will make it easy for visitors to find their way around.

Operation Khataara

Mumbai is one of the world’s most densely populated megacities and its real estate among the most expensive. Given the paucity of space for humans and vehicles alike, an astonishing number of old cars lie abandoned on our roads. These clunkers are eyesores too, and in contravention of the PM’s Swachh Bharat campaign, they become garbage dumps where malaria and dengue-causing mosquitoes breed. This year, Mumbai Mirror started a campaign to remove these abandoned and rusting cars from our roads. Operation Khataara began at the behest of a residents’ association in Kandivali and gained tremendous traction as other suburbs joined in. The Bombay High Court too took notice of the campaign and mandated that a helpline be set up for people to report abandoned cars. What is required now is an urgent commitment from our urban agencies to act on this citizens’ demand: remove khataara and give us back our road space. Project Mumbai has partnered Mumbai Mirror to extend Operation Khataara across the Mumbai Metropolitan Region with the help of the traffic police and the municipal authorities.

Next generation of leaders

Mumbai has been privileged to be led by doyens on whom we have relied for decades. Much of Mumbai’s growth comes from the vision and enterprise of these captains of the city. But it is important to also invite the many bright minds waiting in the wings with great ideas and fire in their belly. Project Mumbai will shortly introduce 50 Under 50, an initiative to identify leaders who can put Mumbai into action mode and steer it into the next decade.

Chahiyya Mumbai

Walking is an essential part of the commute for most Mumbaikars. And more than half the people whose lives are lost on Mumbai’s roads are pedestrians. Initiatives in partnership with the traffic police and MCGM have demonstrated that it is possible to make the roads safe and comfortable for pedestrians. Scaling up these initiatives across the city is one more step in that direction.

- Car-free Sunday (held in several suburbs)
- 100 Safe Junctions (10 junctions already improved using a science-based approach as part of the Bloomberg Philanthropy partnership with MCGM)
- Super Walkway connecting Siddhivinayak Metro, Prabhadevi, Parel and Cotton Green stations (likely to benefit 2 million pedestrians)
- Managing and regulating parking through the newly established parking authority at MCGM
- Promoting walking tours of the city
- Bayline project to redefine the 35-plus kilometres of coastline with a focus on the common man.

Mission sports

More of Mumbai’s children and youth deserve the space to play outdoors. Project Mumbai is working on a PPP model involving MCGM, MMRDA and corporates to create and maintain sports infrastructure across the city and promote physical activity. For this initiative, we will look to utilise existing spaces like those under the flyovers. Corporate support is welcome to help develop the infrastructure, provide equipment, run a city-wide physical literacy programme in schools and create a sports curriculum for state schools.

Mental wellness for every child

Mental health is emerging as one of the most significant challenges of modern times. Children are often victims of mental illness, without adults around them realising it. Partnering with trained educators, counsellors and institutions, Project Mumbai aims to reach out to at least one lakh children in the next five years, with programmes that will help increase their emotional strength.

Toll-free counselling helpline

Project Mumbai is in the process of setting up a toll-free helpline where adults suffering from mental health problems can receive counselling. It will be operated on the public-private participation model. We’re looking for private sector support in funding, training, providing medicolegal assistance and capacity building. The State’s support would be needed for infrastructure and outreach.

Digital libraries for children

The megapolis has barely three digital libraries, none exclusively for children. Project Mumbai aims to work with the MCGM, Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) and other corporations, as well as corporates, to help set up digital libraries for children.

How do you want to co-own these projects? In what other ways do you want to make Mumbai better? Tell us at info@projectmumbai.org
When the Maharashtra government banned plastic earlier this year, one question remained. What should one be doing with the vast quantity of existing plastic that was polluting our land and sea?

Project Mumbai pitched in, boosting the efforts of the MCGM to implement the ban, with the collective support of Mumbaikars. We launched a campaign that persuaded thousands of Mumbaikars and over 750 schools, colleges, offices and NGOs to donate plastic items weighing hundreds of kilograms. We did doorstep pick-ups between October 2 and 8, celebrating the Indian festival of voluntary giving, DaanUtsav. Afterwards, people continued to donate plastic at the Corporation’s dry-waste collection centres across the city.

The work to recycle the donated plastic waste into benches for senior citizens has begun and the Corporation is identifying locations where these will be placed. Sculptor Arzan Khambatta will also create an art work with the recycled plastic.

We are delighted to share with you all that the MCGM Commissioner, Ajoy Mehta, has directed his team to identify gardens and open spaces of the city where these benches would be installed.

Appreciating the concept of a plastic art work, the MMRDA Commissioner, R.A. Rajeev, has identified a spot facing the iconic MMRDA office in the Bandra Kurla complex for the art work placement.

Project Mumbai thanks the people of Mumbai for their generosity in giving away plastic. Their contribution for a better Mumbai.

Project Mumbai is relentlessly working on initiatives that impact citizens’ lives. We have been fortunate to get pro bono support from individuals and experts from time to time. But some of the services are expensive, some projects require funding and there are costs to be met. We would be happy to have you on board as a donor partner. You can choose a cause we are working on, a project we are associated with or donate to the Project Mumbai Corpus Fund which will get appropriately utilised. Our projects do fall under the CSR Category too. We also assure complete transparency in all financial transactions and use of resources.

The Project Mumbai bank details are mentioned below:

Project Mumbai
Axis Bank Ltd, Andheri West
Account No. 918020096611456
IFSC: UTIB0000740
Send us a text about your donation with your name, address and PAN to telephone no: +91-9653330712
You could also call us on: 022-26704021
Project Mumbai is a platform of collaboration for ideas and solutions from individuals to institutions. Volunteering by individual and corporate citizens will be an integral part of every project we undertake.

This call to action is an invitation to put on our thinking cap and roll up our sleeves. You can join in right away by emailing us your ideas, suggestions and solutions. Our website www.projectmumbai.org will guide you through the process.

Mumbai needs Project Mumbai and Project Mumbai needs you.

We have extended our hand. Will you extend yours?