

(For Immediate Press Release)

30 October 2025

Roundtable explores how a walkable Bengaluru can ease congestion, boost women's workforce participation, and enhance safety

Jana Urban Space Foundation and Janaagraha convened stakeholders to reimagine Bengaluru's roads as safe, vibrant public spaces for all.

Jana Urban Space Foundation and Janaagraha convened 'Walkable Bengaluru', a roundtable that brought together senior government officials, practitioners, and civil society representatives at Sabha Blr on 30 October. Participants examined how Bengaluru can lead the way in designing roads that are safe, walkable, and sustainable — a shift that requires viewing roads not as conduits for vehicles, but as public spaces that connect communities, strengthen local economies, and improve quality of life.

Key themes discussed

The discussion explored four thematic areas:

1. Design, implementation, and maintenance

While Tender S.U.R.E. standards guide design and implementation, there is now an urgent need for maintenance standards and dedicated budgets to ensure that upkeep is planned and prioritised, not treated as an afterthought.

Strengthening inter-agency coordination is also essential. In addition to vehicles, roads are also conduits for utilities and service lines must be planned and laid in a coordinated way, especially in expanding areas of the city. Limited resources and a shortage of junior-level engineers remain critical gaps, highlighting the need for continuous capacity building in designing and delivering inclusive mobility infrastructure.

2. Technology

Real-time data from aggregators, drivers, and citizens should be made available and include information on safety, potholes, and broken footpaths. A user-rating system could further strengthen accountability by capturing user experience and creating a continuous feedback loop for improvement.

3. Traffic management

The Traffic Engineering Cell should evolve into a Mobility Engineering Cell that prioritises pedestrian safety and walkability, not just vehicular movement. Bengaluru needs a single authority accountable for pedestrian safety and all underground and overground street infrastructure.

4. Community voices

Participants noted that while initiatives like Tender S.U.R.E. have set strong benchmarks, the scale-up has been slow. Meanwhile, citizen-centricity in street works remains weak — from unsafe, poorly managed digging to encroachments. Further, inconvenient foot overbridges and poorly designed bus stops serve as barriers to walkability, deterring walking rather than enabling it.

The roundtable underscored the need for a fundamental mindset shift that places pedestrians at the top of the mobility hierarchy. There was a strong consensus that Bengaluru must launch a dedicated Walkability Mission to deliver safe, accessible, and people-first streets at scale.

Roundtable participants

Participants included: Basavaraj Kabade, Chief Engineer, Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA); Lokesh Mahadevaiah, Chief Engineer, GBA; G.T. Prabhakara Reddy, Chief Traffic Manager – Operations, BMTCL; V. Ravichandrar, Member, Brand Bengaluru Committee; Magizhan Selvan, CEO, Namma Yatri; Arun Pai, Founder, Bangalore Walks; and Naresh Narasimhan, Co-founder, MOD Foundation. *(Please see the annexure for the complete list of participants.)*

The roundtable was moderated by Srikanth Viswanathan, Executive Director of Jana Urban Space Foundation and CEO of Janaagraha, with opening remarks by Nithya Ramesh, Director – Planning and Design, Jana Urban Space Foundation, and a context presentation by Surjyatapa Ray, Associate Manager – Urban Policy, Jana Urban Space Foundation.

Perspectives from participants

Basavaraj Kabade, Chief Engineer, Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA), said: “Bengaluru was the first city to implement Tender S.U.R.E., where we placed strong emphasis on footpath safety for pedestrians. In the first phase, we developed nearly 40 km, and in the second phase, we expanded it to about 140 km along with white-topping. Now, with the Greater Bengaluru Authority and five city corporations in place, we have taken up 1,000 km of roads across all city corporations. Our goal is to make them the best pedestrian-friendly footpaths in the city.”

Lokesh Mahadevaiah, Chief Engineer, Greater Bengaluru Authority, said: “Bengaluru is our city, and we must ensure that everyone lives here happily and comfortably. For that, footpaths and walkability are key. We have to make Bengaluru a truly walkable city. We have taken several initiatives in this direction — the first and most important being the Tender S.U.R.E. concept. We have successfully implemented these roads across most of the CBD areas and are now planning to extend them further so

people can walk without obstruction. Let us work together to make this a true 'Walk-a-luru' by providing the best footpaths and walking experience for all."

Zibi Jamal, Member, Whitefield Rising, said: "When local communities come together, it can transform how our public spaces feel and function. They can be encouraged or invited to take care of these spaces — or step forward on their own simply because they want them to be better. The result is public spaces that are more inclusive, vibrant, and welcoming for all."

Nithya Ramesh, Director – Planning and Design, Jana Urban Space Foundation, said: "With the formation of the GBA, a walkable Bengaluru is within reach. We now need policies that prioritise pedestrian rights, reduce private vehicle dependence, and fix fragmented road governance. Each city corporation can set up dedicated road units, not just Traffic Engineer Cells (TECs), to build and maintain streets with clear utility coordination, ownership, and accountability."

Surjyatapa Ray, Associate Manager – Urban Policy, Jana Urban Space Foundation, said: "In the last 15 years, Bengaluru has doubled the number of people on its streets, yet lost many of its walkers and cyclists. Congestion has worsened as more private vehicles are competing for the same road space. Bengaluru's walkability crisis is solvable, but only if we prioritise people over cars. The city already has the right foundations: a walkable climate, a growing public transport network that depends on last-mile access, and proven models like Tender S.U.R.E."

Bengaluru's Walkability Advantage

Bengaluru is uniquely positioned to become India's first walkable city. With a year-round average temperature of 22.9°C, the country's second-largest metro network (96 km operational, 124 km planned), and a proven local model in Tender S.U.R.E.—implemented across 174 km—the city

demonstrates both the conditions and the capability to reimagine its 14,000+ km road network as people-first public spaces. Nearly 75% of first and last mile trips to public transit are already made on foot, highlighting the critical need for safe, accessible pedestrian infrastructure.

Annexure: Complete list of speakers

Name	Organisation and Designation
Ankit Bhargava	Co-founder, Sensing Local
Arun Pai	Founder, Bangalore Walks
Basavaraj Kabade	Chief Engineer, Greater Bengaluru Authority
Devesh Varma	CEO, Ola Foundation
Deepika	Community representative
Ganesh Kamath	Tender S.U.R.E. Contractor
G T Prabhakara Reddy	Chief Traffic Manager – Operations, BMTC
Kavya Ramesh	Community representative
Krishna Panyam	Member, Malleswaram Social
Lokesh Mahadevaiah	Chief Engineer, Greater Bengaluru Authority
Magizhan Selvan	CEO, Namma Yatri
Nanditha	Community representative
Naresh Narasimhan	Co-founder, MOD Foundation
Nitin Seshadri	Member, Citizen Action Forum, Koramangala Third Block RWA
V Ravichandar	Member, Brand Bengaluru Committee
Vidya Goggi	Member, RT Nagar Ward Committee
Vivek Chandran	Co-founder, Solutions for Sustainable Living
Zibi Jamal	Member, Whitefield Rising

For more information

Please feel free to reach out to:



- Mahalakshmi B
Sr. Manager – Media & Communications
Email: mahalakshmi.b@janaagraha.org
Phone: +91 99860 16557

About Jana

[Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy](#) and [Jana Urban Space Foundation](#) (together called 'Jana'), founded in 2001 and 2007 respectively, are Bengaluru-based not-for-profit institutions working to transform the quality of life in India's cities and towns. Over the last two decades, Jana has worked extensively on urban policy, planning and design, and governance reforms, including engagements with JnNURM, the XIII, XIV, and XV Finance Commissions, and the Comptroller and Auditor General of India. Our current portfolio of work includes formal collaborations with the XVI Finance Commission, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, NITI Aayog, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India, the 5th State Finance Commission of Karnataka, and the state governments of Odisha, Assam, and Uttar Pradesh.

Jana believes that transforming quality of life in India's cities and towns requires fixing India's city-systems. It aims to strengthen city-systems and enable the delivery of high-quality infrastructure and services through three strategic priorities:

- **Planning and design:** focusing on neighbourhood improvement plans, rural-urban transition plans, and design guidelines for roads and public spaces.
- **Decentralised participatory governance:** policy engagement for strong local governments, leadership development of councillors, and sustainable models of civic participation.
- **State capacities:** strategic assistance for public finance and staffing reforms in cities.

This is enabled by innovative work on urban policy and insights, with concerted efforts to advance outcomes in climate, public health, and equity outcomes.

Office Address

Jana Urban Space Foundation and Janaagraha
19/20, Sair Bagh, 3rd Floor,
Cunningham Road, Bengaluru - 560052, Karnataka, India
Ph: +91 80 41200844/41500844