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## Thane Municipal Corporation plans to bridge gaps in city

THANE: The Thane Municipal Corporation (TMC) is planning a high capacity mass road transit project to connect various parts of the city.

The project will ensure a seamless commute by a six-lane road that could be a mix of surface and elevated one passing through several areas of the city. The areas that could be connected by this route are Thane railway station east, Kopri, crossing over the tracks at Anand Nagar, Teen Hath Naka, Nitin Company, Laxmi Park, lake in Pokhran, Chitalsar-Manpada, then crossing over the Ghodbunder Road through Swastik Complex, Balkum, crossing old Agra road to reach Thane jail along the creek side and then crossing over the tracks to reach Kopri.

The stretch would provide dedicated two lanes on each side for private vehicles and the middle lanes could be used as bus corridors in the future. Also, space could be made for development of metro or mono rails along the median considering future growth and requirements.

"The plans are currently in the conceptual stages. If implemented, it could ease commuting woes," said city engineer K D Lala.

Further boosting the public transport usage among citizens, the entire corridor of around 20 kms could have landings at around 16 spots that could also serve as hubs where citizens could get feeder bus or auto services for accessing internal areas of the city. A plan for developing a multi-level car parking at these spots for those taking public transport services can also be planned, said a civic official.

However, the project is likely to be affected because it involves a lot of resettlement-rehabilitation as a sizeable area already under encroachment in addition to some section of the route coming under the Coastal Regulation Zone possibly delaying or trashing the plans, said an official from the public works department.

Experts and activists have criticized this plan and insisted the TMC first do a reality check of what the city actually needs. Activist Chandrahas Tawade said he has already approached several authorities in the past regarding seamless connectivity in the city. Activist Milind Gaikwad said that better coordination between agencies could also help the city to a large extent. "Residents should be taken into confidence when the authorities plan projects for a city like Thane. Not only can the authorities get instant support from the locals but they can also share some suggestions as they will be the end users of any such developmental project," said Gaikwad.