



URBAN GOVERNANCE DIALOGUE

Transforming Urban Governance

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Urban Governance Study in Vasai-Virar Municipal Corporation

Located north of Mumbai, Vasai-Virar Municipal Corporation (VVCMC) is a part of the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR). It is the only Municipal Corporation and the most populated city in the Palghar district. VVCMC is well-connected with other cities in MMR such as Thane, Bhiwandi, Kalyan and Panvel via road and rail transport. Vasai Road is also an important railway station on the Western Railway. Due to its strategic position and transport network, the city holds significant growth potential.

Introduction to Vasai-Virar Municipal Corporation:



Vasai-Virar Municipal Corporation is the governing body for the city. The corporation was formed in 2009. Four municipal councils—**Vasai, Virar, Naigaon, and Nalla Sopara** and some villages were merged to form it. Currently, it administers a geography of 311 square kilometres and a population of over 12 million residents (according to the 2011–12 [Census](#)). The municipal corporation is divided into nine administrative wards. Furthermore, 42 municipal constituencies were formed in the last municipal elections in 2015. 115 councillors—110 elected councillors and five nominated individuals—were members of the city's general body. The elected body completed its term in 2020 and elections are due. The Municipal Commissioner is currently presiding as the Administrator. VVCMC has also developed an active website: <https://vvcmc.in/en/>.

Urban Governance Study Objectives:

Vasai-based non-profit Civil Society Organisation, [Women In Need Given Support \(WINGS\)](#) invited Praja to conduct urban governance study in the city. WINGS is a nonpartisan organisation, working in the fields of education, health, women empowerment, environment,

agriculture, solid waste, renewable energy, carbon sequestration, research, and training. 'Prajakalp' is their project to empower the city's Elected Representatives (ERs) by undertaking research and training programmes for good governance. The project involves stakeholders including citizens, administration, media, and academia for the same purpose.

With the mutual objective of improving urban governance and delivery of urban services, Praja joined hands with WINGS and conducted an Urban Governance Study in September 2022. The study framework comprised four themes of urban governance as identified in [Urban Governance Index \(UGI\) 2020](#)

1. Empowered Mayor and Council
2. Empowered Administration
3. Empowered Citizens
4. Fiscal Empowerment

Primary as well as secondary resources were channelled to capture ground reality. Praja conducted 22 Interviews with the city's elected representatives and administration to capture their insights and expertise on the subject. Praja made sure that the sample represented the political and gender spectrum of the corporation reflected in the selected sample. Interviewed elected representatives also involved a former mayor and committee chairpersons and a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA). We also analysed VVCMC's website, to understand the ongoing functioning and urban service delivery in the city.



"I stay in Vasai. Being a young Municipal Corporation, it requires active citizen participation to meet the promise of local good governance. City also needs to improve standards for welfare and city life to make favourable living conditions for citizens. Since I consider myself to be a responsible city resident, I initiated the Prajakalp activity.

We decided to collaborate with Praja Foundation as it brings the expertise on good governance through citizen participation and can provide recommendations to bring required changes and make political leaders accountable. I hold Executive Business Management Programme Degree in Politics and Policy from IIM Bangalore so I could easily relate to tools like ER Report Cards Praja publishes."

Falguni Rajput, Director, WINGS Foundation

Highlights from the study:

- The annual municipal budget is published on the website. It can be accessed from [Budget](#) tab under Corporation at Work Section. The actual Budget Receipts for 2021-22 budget Rs. 102032.82 Lakhs while expenditure was Rs. 88525.08 Lakhs.



- The last general body was dissolved in 2020. Elections for the new body are currently due. While all councillors have already completed their term, they are still actively working to resolve citizen grievances. They actively participated in the relief work activities worked during the pandemic.

- As directed by [the Maharashtra Municipal Corporations Act of 1949](#), VVCMC instituted Ward Committees for all 9 Administrative Wards in the last Municipal Corporation. Committees are authorised to sanction municipal works costing up to Rupees 5 lakhs within their jurisdiction.

- VVCMC website is interlinked with the State's grievance redressal portal 'Aaple Sarkar' but the corporation also has a separate Complaint Redressal Mechanism (CRM) link on the VVCMC website. ['Check your complaint status'](#) link is also present under the CRM link.

- Municipal Commissioner conducts routine in-person meetings with civic groups to monitor their grievances directly. His office has dedicated timeslots where citizens, former councillors, other ERs even journalists can directly visit him.

"Mayor should be given additional powers, particularly executive powers in case of emergencies and to ensure prompt implementation of initiatives".

Former Mayor of VVCMC

"Training sessions should be arranged for all the staff members at regular intervals. It will improve service delivery in the city. Currently, only officers are trained at YASHADA or other state institutions"

VVCMC Administrator

Important Links:

- Website of Vasai-Virar Municipal Corporation: <https://vvcmc.in/en/>
- Website of WINGS Foundation: <https://ngowings.org/>
- The Maharashtra Municipal Corporation Act 1949:
[https://lj.maharashtra.gov.in/Site/Upload/Acts/\(02\)%20The%20Mah.%20Municipal%20Corporation%20Act%20\(H-4062\).pdf](https://lj.maharashtra.gov.in/Site/Upload/Acts/(02)%20The%20Mah.%20Municipal%20Corporation%20Act%20(H-4062).pdf)
- Praja's Urban Governance Index 2020:
https://www.praja.org/praja_docs/praja_downloads/UGI2020.pdf

We would like to know your views and feedback based on the information shared above. Feel free to reach us at info@praja.org

Kind regards,



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