

By Pray Jani

Pune figures among the top OOH advertising destinations in the country, in keeping with the city's business and industrial growth and demographics. In recent years, Pune has also seen significant physical infrastructure development including transit infrastructure, many of which have contributed to OOH asset creation. The BRTS corridor is a case in point.

The Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) is among the beneficiaries of the OOH growth. The urban local body mopped up Rs 32.6 lakh from the Sky Signs Department in 2016-17. The department's account closed at Rs 2.1 cr that year, from Rs 1.8 cr at the beginning of the financial year. PMC also generated Rs 43 lakh the same year from the smart city project – which is another area where OOH can grow. Investments to the tune of Rs 44 lakh was also made on bus shelter development.


In the effort to double the revenues from advertising, PMC decided to float a tender in November for grant

of exclusive ad rights in the city – cited as the biggest ever in Pune. The tender has called for proposals for the refurbishment of directional signages, installation and maintenance of street furniture and outdoor media in the city.

The ad rights will be given in 5 different zones of the city, each being contracted exclusively to the top bids. Bidders are free to bid for more than one zone. PMC set a bid security amount of Rs 15 lakh per zone.

The urban local body has planned for one master concessionaire in each zone, and the rights will be given for a period of 10 years, extendable by another 5 years. Each zone will have an additional average 50,000 sq.ft of advertising space.

The existing advertising surface in each zone averages 2 lakh sq. ft., rounding off to a total of 2.5 lakh sq. ft. of surface area available for advertising in each zone




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when the additional space is added. PMC has specified the advertising zones as given in Fig 1:

**Fig 1: Advertising space in each zone**

Zone no.	Wards	Existing surface area (sq. ft.) (including electric pole)	Proposed surface area (sq. ft.)
1	Dhole Patil road (ward 20, 21), Nagar road, Wadgaonsheri (3, 4, 5), Yerwade-Kalas-Dhanori (1, 2, 6)	2,17,289	53,000
2	Aundh, Ghole Road-Shivajinagar, Kothrud-Bahadran	2,26,345	54,500
3	Dhankawadi-Sahakarnagar, Singhgad Road, Warje Karvenagar	2,11,511	47,500
4	Hadpsar-Mundhwa, Wanwadi-Ramtekdi, Kondhwa-Yewalewadi	2,02,800	56,000
5	Kasba-Visharambaug, Bhawani Peth, Bibwewadi	2,07,521	35,000

Fig 1 shows that Zone 2 offers the highest surface area for advertising. The added benefit of investing in Zone 2 is that it falls in Pune's highly populous areas and has prime OOH sites. Media owners are likely to keep Zone 2 high on their consideration list for investments.

While the tender is designed to augment the media supply side, current market trends point to challenges on the demand side. Brand advertising has not picked up momentum and so the moot point is whether media owners will be encouraged to invest in creating more inventory at this stage. It appears that some of the prominent media owning firms in Pune have not opted to place their bids, perhaps because of the bid amounts.

As city beautification is one of the goals of the tender, the PMC has placed the onus of local area development



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The PMC move is akin to the exclusive ad rights accorded by the Punjab Government to a single operator in the city of Ludhiana. There, Leafberry Ads hold the sole rights. In the case of Pune, there could be up to five different media operators holding the rights in five different zones. In a larger city like Pune, it would be in the fitness of things to have more than one concessionaire, and besides, that will also provide the advertisers with a wider mix of media assets. The competition between the zones could also contribute to the media offerings being more innovative.

That said, the PMC's ambitious plan to create five exclusive advertising zones is creating a new pathway for city governance, infra development and advertising. In time, more cities are likely to emulate this model, provided the Pune model gets early success. ●

on the firms investing in the media. Point 5.2.2 of subsection 5.2 (Safety) of the tender document says, "All reinstatement work shall be done by the Concessionaire so as to match with the surrounding surfaces at their own cost, to the satisfaction of the OIC." This could be quite challenging for the media owners as they may not have control over any unplanned constructions or installations coming up in the periphery of their media assets. However, more aesthetically maintained surroundings could enhance the value of the media assets. Bidders may therefore weigh the pros and cons in this regard while planning their bids.

The tender document opens up scope for DOOH displays, and LED screens may be installed in place of static sites. "However, the display shall be static or scrolling. The motion shall be permissible subject to the prior permission from the PMC and Police Department (Traffic) as per applicable advertisement policy. No electrical/electronic modification will be allowed on the advertisement/display which are installed on electric/light poles," states point 3.3.5 of subsection 3.5 (Exclusive Rights). Those electrical modifications will be charged 1.5 times over the quoted rates.

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## Gearing up for the fast-lane

*In recent years, the Indian OOH industry has undergone cataclysmic changes, with transit media accounting for an increasing share of the total domestic OOH ad spends. This is largely influenced by the adoption of sophisticated digital display technologies in this space. The transit and DOOH media combination has paved the way for cabtop branding to gain significant ground. Several startups have come up with solutions for cabtop media, which in the coming times, will likely branch into the small cities.*

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Cabtop media, which has been seen for long in markets like the US, UK and South Korea, are finding their way into Indian markets, especially in the larger cities. The growth of this media is contingent on the growing acceptance of transit media for brand advertising, and the use of digital display technologies for launching engaging campaigns.

Sharing his company's journey in this space, **Harsh Vardhan Mahipal, Founder, Taxi Top Media** says, "You



see the vehicle exterior and top as an under-utilised advertising medium in desperate need of disruption. In both the traditional taxi and ride-sharing spaces there are thousands of rooftops that could be generating millions of brand impressions, but instead almost nothing is being done there. With

the sophistication of today's marketing technology, innovators will find success in digital media." That is, technology is now enabling advertising in spaces that were not visualised earlier. He believes that in time several startups will explore the cabtop media opportunities.

Taxi Top Media is currently working with Uber and is present in Kolkata with plans of entering Mumbai soon. Litcabs Advertising is another company that is operating in the cabtop advertising space, but unlike Taxi Top Media, this company works with over 400



individual cab owners and not aggregators. **Jyotiba**

**Patil, Senior Partner,**

**LitCabs Advertising**

says the media on 'kaali-peeli' cabs has high visibility, especially in the slow-moving traffic in Mumbai. As a tech outfit, LitCabs brings to the fore its software tech strengths to make the media connected, dynamic and creative.










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Currently, this media is being largely used by banking, FMCG and auto brands, says Jyotiba.



Another dominant player in the cabtop media space is Adonmo. The media owner has a strong presence in Hyderabad with media assets running on 900 cabs. Adonmo works with both cab aggregators and individual cab owners. **Sandeep Bommireddi, Co-Founder of Adonmo,** says, "Indian brands are not used to this media as yet" while adding that

like any DOOH site, advertising on this format is sold in slots and not as space. That calls for the format itself to be evangelized.

The average size of this format is 1ft x 3ft. "Although we could increase the display height to 1.5 ft, most cab drivers do not prefer that," he points out.

Adonmo has been able to engage top brands to its media, like IKEA, Amazon, Exide, etc. He attributes the brand engagement to the low price/eyeball ratio. "Moreover, as a tech company we work on the hardware and software solutions to create the best possibilities for the advertising brands," says Sandeep.

Adonmo is looking to tap into the markets across the country, as well as overseas markets where feasible. Several other businesses are also looking at cab

advertising with great intent. **Raghu Khanna, CEO, CashurDrive Marketing,** notes that "this is a frequency based media and not an impact media. It can be used to complement traditional campaigns."



However, the current ad norms could be roadblocks for this format. "Currently, Delhi has stringent laws against digital media but we are hoping to bring this media out once the laws become more supportive of DOOH. We have tested the media and it has worked well," explains Raghu.



Jyotiba echoes that view while stating that permissions for running this kind of media are not easy to get.

The challenges notwithstanding, what goes in favour of this format are:

- Strong visibility in slow moving traffic
- Connected media that facilitates dynamic and contextual advertising
- Both national and local brands are opting for this media; major categories like OTT too are active on this media
- Economical packages for advertisers

That said, the cabtop media operators will be called upon to promote their media offerings in a big way, and participate in the deliberations for bringing about the necessary changes in the policies governing OOH and transit media. •





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