

The Citizens and Elected Representatives make the city Real Rich



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Let's get Real!

It is that time of the year again – when we will all be looking forward to asking questions of our elected representatives: “What have you done about our roads?” “What about our garbage problems?” “When will our city start looking good?” And that's the beauty of democracy, isn't it? That we get to elect our representatives and we get to hold them accountable. But, is that our only job as citizens of the world's largest and greatest democracy? I would say not. In fact, as we head into election season, I would like to take this opportunity to draft out a Citizens' Manifesto. And as responsible citizens of Pune city, as people committed to making our city Real Rich, I would urge all of us to take a moment and read what follows:

We, the Citizens of Pune commit to abide by traffic rules.

We are fully aware that our elected representatives are not sitting inside our cars, or behind us on our motorcycles. And that when the traffic light turns red it is up to us, not them, to stop. It is up to us, not them, to ensure we don't enter one-way roads from the wrong side, keep to our lanes, teach our

children and communities to follow all traffic rules, reduce use of horns, overtake from the right... it is up to us as Citizens of Pune, and we will do our bit.

We, the Citizens of Pune commit to keeping our city clean.

We are fully aware that our elected representatives are not guiding our hands when we choose to litter our public spaces. It is we, not they, who turn the beautiful hills of Pune into vast dumping grounds, dump huge mountains of garbage onto street corners, spit on roads, destroy and desecrate public property... we are responsible for turning our wonderful city into an open-air dustbin. And now it is our job to clean up our act and keep Pune clean.

We, the Citizens of Pune commit to restoring the beauty of Pune.

Our city was once held up as an example of elegance and urban beauty. We are fully aware that our elected representatives are not destroying the facades of buildings, occupying footpaths, encroaching on roads, squatting under flyovers, hawking... that's on us. And it is our responsibility to stop. The whole city is our home. And we, as Citizens of Pune, insist on maintaining its beauty, inside out.

We, the Citizens of Pune commit to ensuring that we do not create public nuisances.

We will adhere to rules of parking. We will not block roads, cause traffic snarls, be rude and inconsiderate of our fellow citizens, cause any public inconvenience by not following rules of civility.

We, the Citizens of Pune commit to using Pune's resources judiciously.

We will turn off taps, switch off lights and fans that we are not using, use water sparingly, implement rainwater harvesting in our societies, and take care of the resources that the city provides us with.

REAL RICH

GETTING REAL ABOUT REAL ESTATE

It is very easy to look at world-class cities like Dubai and lament and complain. But here's why Dubai and Singapore look and feel like they do – because governments, bureaucrats and the citizens of these cities all act TOGETHER and treat the entire city like Real Estate which makes them Real Rich cities. Together they maintain the city, together they respect public spaces and keep them spic and span, together they create and strictly observe the rules of civic society – from following traffic rules, to even the less obvious ones like how to use public toilets and which side to stand on when on an escalator.

Here I would request all of you to join me in expressing our gratitude and admiration for the stellar work being done by Pune's key planning authorities under the leadership of our elected representatives – the Pune Municipal Corporation, the Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal



Corporation, the Pune Metropolitan Development Authority, Pune Police, PCCMC Police, the Collectorate - who are working relentlessly to make Pune a proud city of and for the future. But that is not enough.

The truth is that a key marker of a Real Rich city is how its citizens conduct themselves in public. And as responsible citizens of Pune, it is high time that we take a good, hard, long look at our

public, civic citizenship. Yes, in a democracy, it is one of our rights to ask questions to our leaders. But it is even more important that we hold ourselves just as accountable; which is why the Citizens' Manifesto, 5 simple points. But let us commit to working on each one of these points and see for ourselves the massive impact we can cause. If we have the right to demand answers on public infrastructure and development, it is also our responsibility to make a commitment in return to treat our shared infrastructure with care, to follow rules that are laid down for the efficient functioning of the city.

Pune is all set to become a Real Rich city. The only question is how soon we will accept our own responsibility as Citizens of Pune and fill in the gaps.

The sooner the better. Our Pune deserves it. (The columnist is a leading real estate developer and the author of the seminal work on Real Estate, Real Rich – Getting Real About Real Estate)

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