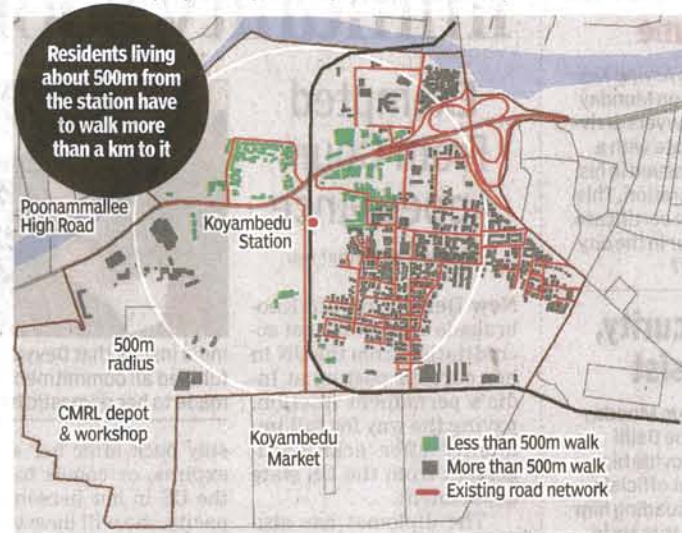


Improving Access To Koyambedu Station For Pedestrians, Changing Land Use Patterns Will Increase Patronage, Says Study Plan to make walk to metro stn easy

Karthikeyan Hemalatha | TNN

LIVING BY THE RAILWAY LINE

Simple changes around the stations will make it easier and more comfortable for people living near Koyambedu station to get to it



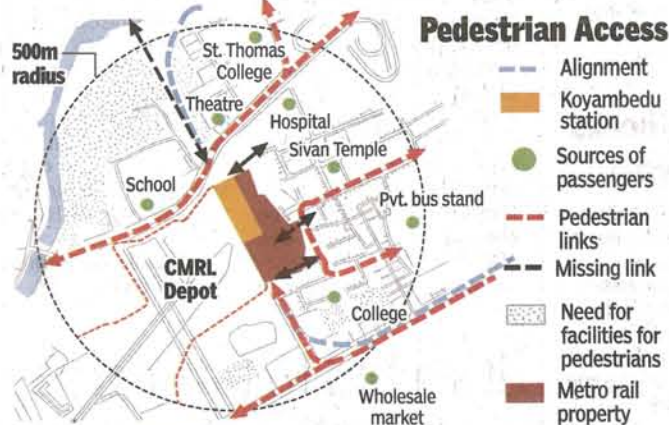
DEAD END: One of the busy streets near the station is not connected directly to it

ACCESSIBILITY

PEDESTRIAN & CYCLISTS
None of the streets that connect to the station are conducive to cycling as speed of vehicles is more than 30kmph. There no footpaths.

CARS & BIKES
ITDP has proposed a dynamic fare based on demand. Corporation is planning online booking of parking spaces at metro stations.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT: Recommendations are to streamline buses and autos so stations are well connected. Build bays to let buses and share autos close to the station. Build well-lit bus shelters.



As the crow flies, you may live less than 500m from an upcoming metro station but to get there on foot, you may need to walk more than a mile.

The first phase of metro rail between Alandur and Koyambedu is set to open in about seven months, and a study by Institute of Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP) has revealed that the lack of a good street network reduces accessibility to people living close to the station.

The study recommended changes in the vicinity of the station that would improve accessibility for all commuters and ensure that those in the neighborhood get the full benefit of living next to a station. Experts call this transit-oriented development. Some of these changes include improving access to metro stations for pedestrians and cyclists and changing land use patterns by increasing floor-space index (FSI), decreasing setbacks and improving public spaces.

According to previous studies by CMRL, 44% of those coming to the station either walk or cycle. About 16% use private transport and 40% use buses, autos and share autos. "The idea is to increase the percentage of people who walk and make their life simpler," said Chris Kost from ITDP.

As part of the study, an imaginary circle with a radius of 500m was drawn with Koyambedu metro station as the centre. "We used GIS, walked around the neighbourhood with GPS devices and found that a majority of the residents had to walk more than a kilometre even though they lived inside the circle," said Kost. Luckily, CMRL has a large chunk of property near the station that abuts the ends of several streets. "Just opening this up will solve 90% of the problem," he said.

The study also found out that only 26% of the streets within the 500m radius are conducive to walking. "On bigger roads, we need footpaths. Speed breakers would be required on smaller streets to make walking safer," said Kost. The study also found that none of the roads leading to the station supported cycling as vehicle speeds were more than 30kmph. With the absence of traffic, interior streets were safe for cyclists.

TRANSPORT HUB: Koyambedu station will be serviced by different modes of transport

For private vehicles, parking spots will be kept to the minimum. "We have suggested to the corporation that the parking fares be kept

Forms of transport passengers use to get to suburban, MRTS stations



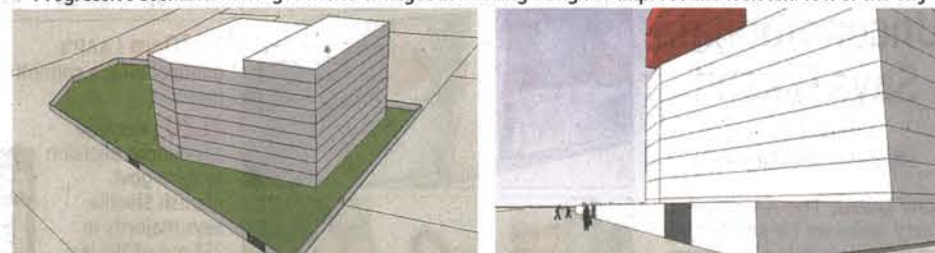
Source: Institute for Transportation and Development Policy

according to the demand. The higher demand, the higher the fare should be. This will discourage people from using private vehicles," said Kost. The corporation is planning to have a website through which people can book their parking spots in advance. It will have prepaid and on-the-spot

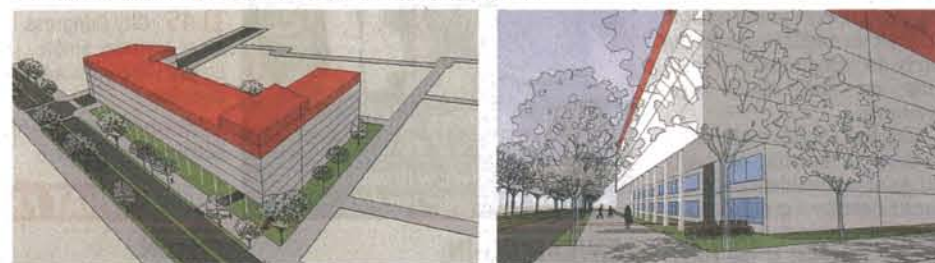
payment options. Located near the vegetable market, Koyambedu station will be first elevated station to come up and it is connected to the depot. Except for a skywalk across Poonamallee High Road, all structural work has been completed.

GETTING THE RIGHT LOOK

The Do-Nothing scenario, buildings are constructed as per existing development control rules, while the Progressive scenario envisages minor changes in building design to improve the look and feel of the city



Do nothing scenario: Multi-storied building | **Use:** Commercial Offices | **Floor space index (FSI):** 2.5 | **Coverage** (percentage of land with the built-up area): 30% | **Setback** (space between the building and the compound wall): 7m on all sides | **Parking:** 332 ecs (equivalent car spaces)



Progressive scenario: No coverage restrictions, improved street network, 50% parking requirements under existing rules. By having 'ground-level transparency' and no compound walls, streets become safer and walking is more enjoyable. Compound walls are to be avoided as they are usually used as urinals or for graffiti

RECOMMENDATIONS

Land use regulations: Relax norms on setback areas so that built-up area increases | Increase coverage area of the building on the plot | Increase floor-space index for buildings along public transport routes

No opaque walls: By having clear or glass walls for the ground floor of a building, there are more eyes on the street and it becomes safer. It also adds to the aesthetics of the street and makes walking a better experience

Tweak CMDA rules a bit to make walking convenient, say experts

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

A few modifications in Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority's (CMDA) development control rules improve walkability, reduce cost of flats and make streets safer, say experts.

These changes include relaxing the norms on set back area (the distance between the built-up area and the compound wall), increasing coverage area (percentage of the plot that is covered by building) and enforcing 'ground-level' transparency.

Instead of having a compound wall that faces the

street, experts say buildings should make the ground level transparent. "This makes the city safer as there are more eyes on the street," said Chris Kost of ITDP. "The walking experience is enriched." Compound walls are often covered with graffiti or used as toilets.

In the 500m circle around Koyambedu metro station, 45% of the streets have 'active frontages' or doors that open onto the street. "This is mostly on inner roads," said Kost. This has worked in several developed countries.

Buildings constructed according to CMDA's set back

norms must allot at least 30% of building space for parking. "This increases the price of houses," said Kost. Improving public transport gives an alternative to residents and relaxing the norms can reduce the cost of accommodation.

Increasing floor-space index of property along a transit corridor helps the city remain compact and more people can access public transport with ease. "We are in talks with CMDA to increase FSI along the metro rail corridor so that more people live along the line and commuting is easier," said a CMRL official.