

CMRL expects 19L patrons for phase-2

May Operate 138 Trains At 4-10 Minute Intervals

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Chennai: More than three years after Chennai Metro Rail Ltd first began operations, the daily patronage touched one lakh, about 13% of the total ridership estimated for the 45km phase-1. But for phase-2 line, CMRL expects an estimated daily patronage of 19.2 lakh and that it will have to run 138 trains at a frequency of four to 10 minutes when the 118.9km three-corridors are commissioned in six years. And these figures are projected to double in four decades.

Phase-2, which is planned to cover three times the distance of phase-1, will have metro trains reaching far flung areas in the four corners of the city.

According to CMRL's current projection, when metro begins the first operation in phase-2 corridors by 2025, it

TALL ORDER

PHASE-1	ESTIMATES FOR PHASE-2		
CMRL estimated daily patronage to reach 7.76 lakh in the 45km phase	Year	Daily patronage	No. of trains
PHASE-2	2025	19.2 lakh	138*
	2035	32.6 lakhs	179*
	2045	37.7 lakh	211*
	2055	43.5 lakh	254*
Corridor 3 Madhavaram to SIPCOT (45.8km)	* Three-car trains		
Corridor 4 Lighthouse to Poonamallee (26.1km)	FREQUENCY		
Corridor 5 Madhavaram to Sholinganallur (47km)	MMC-Adyar-Sholinganallur 4.6 minutes	MMBT-CMBT-Sholingallur 4 minutes	
	Sholinganallur-Sipcot 10 minutes	Lighthouse to Poonamallee 4.6 minutes in 2025/35	
	MMC-MMBT 8.5 minutes	4.2 minutes in 2045	4 minutes in 2055

hopes to operate as many as 138 three-car trains catering to 19.2 lakh people.

The ridership projection comes as construction for the lines is likely to begin early next year. The 52km line from Madhavaram to Sholinganallur and Madhavaram to CMBT, part of corridor-3 and 5, have been given top priority. "We will begin floating tenders in June 2019. It will take months for the work to be

awarded and the contractor to begin installing machinery at the site. Most likely, construction will begin in the first quarter of 2020," an official said.

According to their projections for phase-2, the daily ridership is expected to increase to 32.6 lakhs by 2035, a decade after commissioning. To meet the demand, CMRL will increase its trains to 179 three-car trains. By 2045,

CMRL expects the metro to attract an additional five lakh commuters every day, and it hopes to increase the number of trains accordingly.

By 2055, about four decades after phase-2 begins operations, CMRL is expecting daily ridership to touch 43.5 lakh with the operation of 254 three-car trains or 127 six-car trains.

Of the three corridors planned, corridor-5 linking Madhavaram to Sholinganallur and Sholinganallur via the western fringes of the city like CMBT and Adambakkam, Madipakkam, Kovilambakkam and Perumburbakkam is expected to see

PHASE-2 OPS TO START BY 2025

maximum daily ridership, increasing from 7.2 lakh in 2025 to 18.5 lakh in 2055.

For corridor-3 from Madhavaram to SIPCOT the patronage will increase from 6.6 lakh in 2025 to 13.6 lakh in 2055. Corridor-4 which extends from Lighthouse to Poonamallee bypass is projected to have 5.5 lakh daily patronage in 2025 and 11.4 lakh in 2055.

Though projections were

made during planning stage, there is no guarantee that so many commuters would use the trains going by the experience of commissioning the phase 1 lines, which was done in a piece-meal manner.

The entire 45km stretch was commissioned almost a decade after work began and after a delay of three years, but the patronage is only one lakh while the projected ridership was 7.76 lakh.

A year ago, the ministry of housing and urban affairs pulled up CMRL for low patronage of the existing line.

Experts said CMRL could achieve their projections only if they adopt measures to attract commuters including cut in ticket fares, co-ordination with MTC to provide last mile and first mile connectivity through feeder services like small buses and provide share autos, cycle and bike sharing services uniformly across all stations.

"Metro rail should improve walkability up to a radius of 500m from the stations, and not just along the Metro corridor," said Nashwa Naushad, senior associate with The Institute for Transportation and Development Policy.