

After 2-way system, Metro Rail patronage up by 26%

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OMJASVIN M D @Chennai

METRO Rail commuter patronage at the LIC and Thousand Lights stations has gone up by 26 per cent after the Mount Road stretch was made two-way in September.

According to the data provided by the CMRL to Express, in July when the stretch was one-way, 47,816 commuters travelled from LIC and 71,146 from the Thousand Lights station. However, in September, 64,086 passengers and 98,126 used the LIC and Thousand Lights stations respectively. Feeder service for the last-mile connectivity provided at the two stations could have boosted the patronage after the stretch was made two-way.

Both these stations are in close proximity to prime places such as Spencer's Plaza, Express Avenue, Sathyam Cinemas, Devi Cineplex, Regional Passport Office and the LIC office. On weekends, the patronage touched 1.5 lakh, said the data.

The 23.1-km-long blue line corridor connects Airport and Washermanpet Metro stations. Commuters at the LIC and Thousand Lights stations said the feeder service, mainly to Ethiraj Salai 1.5 km away, facilitates them to use the Metro Rail service. "There are plenty of share autos which connect to Nungambakkam and Anna Nagar from Ethiraj Salai and the feeder service is mostly available throughout the day," said G Priyanka, a commuter from Nandanam.

However, despite an increase in Metro patronage, the traffic authorities are yet to figure out a way to bring down traffic density. "Traffic is partially smoother on the two-way stretch than it was during the one-way period as the Anna Salai is slightly wider. But people definitely need to switch to public transport for a permanent solution," said a traffic personnel.

Experts said that multi-modal integration could provide safe and efficient experience for public transport



users. "This can be achieved through formulating a long-term plan on the integration of Chennai's rail-based systems such as the MRTS, suburban train network, CMRL with one another and with other modes such as buses (MTC), para-transit, walking, and cycling," said Sivasubramaniam Jayaraman, Manager, Transport Systems, Institute for Transportation and Development Policy.

"Several government agencies are responsible for individual aspects of transportation and there needs to be an effective coordination between them. This can be facilitated by creating a single agency to bring the different departments together," he said, pointing out that there was a lack of coordination between the departments.

Currently, there are no traffic signals at the Wellington and Royapettah Junctions and it is manned by traffic personnel. However, officials expect a signal to be installed there soon.

CMRL began chugging out between Koyambedu and Alandur Stations
| A RAJA CHIDAMBARAM

Integration of city rails

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