

INDIAN RAILWAYS TECHNICAL SUPERVISORS' ASSOCIATION

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The Chairman & CEO Railway Board

Respected Madam,

Sub: Proposal to develop Villivakkam station as fourth Railway terminal for Chennai. Short comings in the proposal and alternate suggestions.

- 1) Southern Railway is having a proposal to develop Villivakkam station as fourth Railway terminal for Chennai city. IRTSA would like to highlight some of the short comings in the proposal and submit our suggestions for alternative proposals.
- 2) **Existing Terminals & scope for adding more train at Tambaram terminal:** Chennai, one of the important metro cities of India is having three Railway terminals Viz, MGR Chennai Central, Chennai Egmore and Tambaram. MGR Chennai Central and Chennai Egmore are functioning as full fledged terminals for long time. Third terminal at Tambaram station is not being utilized to its full capacity. With eight platforms and coaching depot attached Tambaram terminal's capacity utilization need to be improved.
- 3) **Coaching depots available for Chennai City under the control of Chennai Division**
Chennai Division is having 3 coaching depots all of them located inside Chennai City.
 - i. Basin Bridge Train Care Centre - BBQ
 - ii. Gopal Swamy Nagar (Egmore) Coaching Depot - GSN
 - iii. Tambaram Coaching Depot - TBM

	Infrastructure				Coach holding	Yard activities			Platform activities		
	Pit line		Stabling line			PM	SM	OEA	Pass through	PFTR	OEA
	24	>24	Lines	Holding capacity							
BBQ	8	10	9	169	1161	33	2	10	35	5	28
GSN	2	1	8	174	392	12	1	14	30	6	-
TBM	4	-	4	192	305	6	3	2	0	0	1
	14	11	21	535	1858	51	6	26	65	11	29

- 4) **Proposal for fourth terminal at Villivakkam and relocation of major workshops and part of ICF:** For the proposed fourth terminal at Villivakkam, Southern Railway through its press communication told that, two major Railway workshops i.e Carriage & Wagon works and Loco works and General Stores available in between Perambur and Villivakkam parallel to existing railway line have to be relocated. Major portion of land of ICF shell factory will also be taken for this purpose.
- 5) **Short comings in the proposal:**
 - a) **Rail network not taken to new parts of fast-growing Metro:** The proposal doesn't take Railway terminal into new parts of Metro City Chennai which is growing at much

greater phase. Big industrial areas located at Sripermbudur and part of Kanchipuram district is not covered under Rail network. Good number of educational institutions catering students from many parts of the country are located in this area. These areas are hot spots for development of residential and commercial complexes. These high potential areas should not be kept out of Railway map and the mistake of not developing Railways at Noida & Greater Noida should not be repeated at Greater Chennai.

b) Short comings in forming new terminal within existing network :

- i. Distance between Chennai Central and Villivakkam is only 9 km. A new terminal with in 9 km distance will not decongest the city traffic.
- ii. Already majority of trains going towards Chennai Central are stopping at Perambur which is located 3 kms away from Villivakkam towards Chennai Central. Perambur station is supplementing Chennai Central for many years effectively. There will not be much difference between Perambur and Villivakkam for large number of passengers of North Chennai and Central Chennai area using Perambur as their deboarding station.
- iii. Feeder roads for Villivakkam stations are narrow. Construction of four lane roads on both sides of station and construction of four lane road over bridge will not be possible since there was no Government land available near Villivakkam station.
- iv. Location of suburban tracks in between proposed terminal and main line express tracks will pose operational problems. Southern Railway had dropped the idea of constructing Railway terminal at Tondiarpet and Salt Cotaurs mainly for this reason.
- v. As cited earlier Tambaram one of the existing three terminals is not being utilized to its full capacity. Efforts should be made to utilize Tambaram to its full capacity.
- vi. Cost of relocation of Loco Works, Carriage & Wagon works and General Stores Depot (GSD) will be very high.
- vii. Taking away part of land from ICF shell factory will take away the life of shell factory because of the reason that main assembly shop needs to be demolished.

6) Cost of relocation of Southern Railway Workshops and General Stores Depot

Two major Mechanical Workshops of Southern Railway, (i) Loco Works and (ii) Carriage & Wagon works and (iii) General Stores Depot (GSD) are located in between Perambur and Villivakkam Railway Stations.

S.N	Southern Railway establishments	Total area in acres
1	Loco Works Perambur	53.6
2	Carriage Works Perambur	129
3	General Stores Depot (GSD)	47
	Total	229.6

a) All three establishments of Southern Railways mentioned above are being utilized effectively. Erasing out two major workshops and establishing them at a new location will have high cost implications running into hundreds of crores of rupees. Southern Railway cannot afford to eliminate these two major multifaceted POH workshops especially when Government is investing many fold to improve rail network and to add many passenger trains to achieve zero waiting list in advance reservation.

b) **Loco Works Perambur:** POH for around 75 AC locos, 600 coaches, 35 DPCs of DEMU, IOH of 1200 Bogies, shop schedules for Vande Bharat coaches etc are being carried out. Loco works is having around 1500 staff strength. Construction of new POH shed for LHB coaches at the cost of Rs.50 crore is about to be completed. Loco works is in the process of creating infrastructure for POH of Vande Bharat train sets. This work shop gives manufacturing support to ICF located in next compound. Relocation of Loco works to another place will cost more than Rs.800 crores.

c) **Carriage & Wagon works Perambur:** In 2023-24 POH for around 2000 coaches of AC & non-AC varieties and 5000 wagons were completed. Total sanctioned staff strength of this workshop is 5150. Various capacity augmentation and infrastructure improvement works for Rs.100 crore are progressing at various levels. Relocation of Carriage & Wagon works to another place will cost around Rs.1000 crores.

7) **Cost of sparing part of ICF Shell Factory:**

a) ICF shell factory is spread over approximately 50 acres of land adjacent to Loco works employing around 3000. This factory is one of the most congested industrial establishments starving for space. Around 1800 shells are manufactured per year from Shell Factory and LHB factory can manufacture equal number of shells given the material input.

b) ICF administration is continuously demanding Southern Railway Administration to spare land to decongest ICF shell factory working space.

c) Indian Railways is doing continuous investment in ICF to update the manufacturing facilities and for procuring new machinery and plants. For complete switch over to manufacture all stainless steel coaches (mainly LHB) from old ICF design steel coaches Government have invested Rs.350 cores and the project was completed in 2022 only. In the recent past new modernized spring shop was established at ICF shell factory at the cost of Rs.100 crore.

d) In switch over project more than 150 important M&Ps were purchased, resiting / retro fitment of 25 machines and many civil works were done.

e) Now, ICF administration is gearing up to manufacture “Vande Bharat” sleeper trains from Shell factory, which will be requiring more space.

f) If at all any part of land from ICF Shell factory located just before Villivakkam station parallel to existing rail track have to be taken for proposed Villivakkam terminal, it will be main assembly shop of Shell factory. Without main assembly shop there will be no life for ICF Shell factory.

g) ICF cannot achieve annual target of 4000 or 3500 coaches with only LHB factory and Furnishing factory. When yearly outturn is getting reduced, unit cost per coach will go up steeply.

h) Unique Design & Development department of ICF which is initiating, improvising and continuously improving the design of passenger coaches will be under utilized without shell factory.

i) Relocation of ICF Shell factory may cost more than Rs.1000 crore.

8) **Cost of relocation of staff:** There are around 10,000 employees working in Loco Works, Carriage & Wagon works, General Stores Depot (GSD) and ICF shell factory. Relocating

these large workforces and keeping them ideal or under utilised until new establishments are fully commissioned will have heavy financial implications.

- 9) **Financial implications will be very high:** For the reasons explained in previous points, cost of establishing new terminal at Villivakkam station by relocating Loco Works, Carriage & Wagon works, General Stores Depot (GSD) and part of ICF shell factory will be very high.

10) **Way forward:**

a) **New terminal at Avadi within available Rail network:**

- i. Railway can establish fourth terminal at Avadi located at a distance of 21 km from MGR Chennai Central, which will be ideal distance between two Railway terminals to decongest Chennai city traffic effectively.
- ii. Chennai – Tiruvallur high road is running parallel to railway track. It connects Chennai outer ring road at Pattabiram in 5.5 km.
- iii. Railway land at Ambattur station can be utilized for installing coaching depot. Distance between Avadi and Ambattur is less than 7 km.
- iv. Vacant lands available around Pattabiram military siding can also be used for carriage maintenance depot.
- v. Pattabiram station should be developed simultaneously as deboarding station for new Avadi terminal, as like Perambur for MGR Chennai Central.
- vi. In all the above locations new facilities can be developed on same side of existing mail & express tracks without interfering in the operation of suburban trains. Tracks for suburban trains are located on another side.

b) **New Rail terminal near Sripermbudur:**

- i. Kanchipuram and Sripermbudur are growing rapidly with massive industrialization and urbanization and they will be important constituent of Greater Chennai. Situated 40 km away from Chennai, Sripermbudur will be an ideal location to form a new Rail terminal and connecting it with existing Rail networks 50 or 60 km away from MGR Chennai Central and Chennai Egmore will decongest Chennai's rail and road networks.
- ii. Exclusive terminal facilities for mainline passengers, commuters' traffic and goods traffic should be developed.
- iii. Main line track and stations at ground level and tracks & stations for commuters' train at elevated structure will ensure economic utilization of land.

- c) To decongest BBQ and GSN coaching depots some of the trains originating from MGR Chennai Central and Chennai Egmore may be extended to cities like Tiruchirappalli, Madurai, Tirunelveli, Salem, Erode, Pondichery, etc.

Thanking you, with regards,

Copy to – For kind information & Necessary Action:

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- 2) General Secretary, AIRF.
- 3) General Secretary, NFIR.



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