

EPCA report no. 24 (July 2006)

Implementation of High Capacity Bus System in Delhi: A Progress Report

In the matter of W.P.(C) No.13029 of 1985; M.C. Mehta v/s UOI & others

- 1. This report is in continuation to the EPCA report no. 21 of May 2006 *The imperative of public transport: Implementing the High Capacity Bus System: a progress report* which was in response to the Hon'ble court's order dated November 30, 2005.**
- 2. This report reviews the progress made in implementing the first HCBS corridor**
- 3. The report informs that MoU has been signed between RITES and transport department for execution of work of the first corridor. Accordingly the tender has been awarded on August 1, 2006.**
- 4. It recommends scheduling of the next set of targets for the execution of the other HCBS corridors planned for Delhi**

Background

EPCA submitted to the Hon'ble Supreme Court a progress report (Report No. 21) in May 2006 *The imperative of public transport: Implementing the High Capacity Bus System*. This was in response to the Hon'ble Court's order dated November 30, 2005. The Hon'ble Court in its hearing of November 29, 2005 stated the need for a fixed time bound implementation schedule for the high capacity bus system (HCBS) from the Delhi government.

Accordingly in its hearing of November 30, 2005 the Hon'ble court passed directions on the implementation of the HCBS in the NCT of Delhi with fixed time-bound implementation schedule and the relevant deadlines. The deadline for the first corridor from Dr. Ambedkar Nagar to Delhi Gate was stated as follows:

- Feasibility/design: Already completed
- Expenditure Finance Committee approval: By December 31, 2005
- Tendering Process: By February 28, 2006
- Construction Period: 18 months (by August 2007)

For the implementation of the HCBS, the Hon'ble Court in the same order pointed out:

"In case of any difficulty to the implementation of the aforesaid time schedule, which has been provided after discussion with Mr Madan, the matter shall be brought to the notice of EPCA by the transport department and the EPCA shall forthwith file a report in this court and seek further directions."

EPCA informed to the Hon'ble Court in its Report No. 21 that various meetings were held with all the key agencies involved in the implementation of the HCBS and all the concerned parties are working towards implementing the HCBS. Considerable progress has been made in implementing the first corridor of the HCBS.

It also informed the Hon'ble Court that the technical bid have been opened on March 28, 2006. After the evaluation of the technical bid, the financial bid has also been opened on May 2, 2006. After the necessary negotiations with the concerned parties, who are the bidders, the final tender would be awarded soon in the coming weeks.

EPCA did not seek any directions from the Hon'ble Court in its May 2006 Report No. 21, given the overall progress on the first corridor of the HCBS and also the fact that all the concerned agencies were working together to implement the first corridor of the HCBS. The Hon'ble Court needs to be informed about the current status of the project as per the directions issued on November 30, 2005. As per this order the tendering process was required to be finished by February 28, 2006. Following this the construction period was to take another 18 months and by August 2007 the first corridor was expected to finish.

EPCA takes this opportunity to inform that though there have been delays, significant progress have been made towards the implementation of the first HCBS corridor between Ambedkar Nagar and Delhi Gate during the last two months.

EPCA has held various meetings with concerned agencies since the Report No. 21 (May 2006) was submitted to the Hon'ble Court. Following issues were deliberated upon during the meetings held since May and follow up decisions were taken by EPCA in consultation with agencies including Delhi Traffic Police, Transport Department, Govt. of NCT of Delhi, RITES, IIT Delhi. This

has helped to smoothen the process of implementation. Some of the key milestones that were discussed in these meetings include:

- MOU between Delhi transport department and RITES for execution of the project
- Award of the tender
- Work Plan of RITES for executing the project
- Design issues with respect to lanes for non-motorised and motorised vehicles
- Diversion of the traffic
- Road signals
- Shifting of electricity utilities of BSES
- Handover of the concerned corridor from PWD to the contractor
- Trees clearance and plantation issue
- Depot for the contractor

Progress on key milestones

EPCA is pleased to note that some key milestones have been achieved. This can now speed up the construction of the first high capacity bus corridor. These include:

1. MOU between Delhi transport department and RITES for execution of the project

The transport department informed EPCA that a MOU has been signed by both RITES and transport department for execution of the work.

2. Tendering process

EPCA has been informed that tender for the construction works related to widening/modification of roads to create multiple lanes of the existing carriageway for the high capacity bus system in Delhi (for the section Ambedkar Nagar and Delhi Gate) has been awarded on August 1, 2006 to Joint venture of M/s B Seenaiiah & Co. (Projects) Ltd. and M/s C&C Constructions (P) Ltd. This now takes the project to the next stage in which the time schedule for execution of the work and its completion will have to be worked out.

This process has been further facilitated by the key decisions that were taken in the cabinet meeting on certain issues related to the first corridor of the HCBS. The Cabinet decision no. 1091 dated 4.7.2006 decided the following:

- i. Approval was granted to the proposal to implement HCBS project at a cost of Rs. 153.05 crore
- ii. Approval was granted for a project management consultancy fee payable to M/s RITES @ 5 per cent of the project cost subject to ceiling of Rs. 6 crore
- iii. It was decided that the work relating to implementation of HCBS may be assigned to Delhi Integrated Multi-modal Transit Systems (DIMTS) as soon as DIMTS obtains a certificate of 'Commencement of Business'. Till then the transport department shall handle this work and accept various recommendations made by M/s RITES on engineering and other related matters
- iv. It was decided that the PWD shall handover the possession of the stretch of road (Ambedkar Nagar to Delhi Gate) to M/s RITES for undertaking the work
- v. It was further decided that the Environment department shall grant clearance for cutting trees in a phased manner and provide assistance on compensatory afforestation as in case of DMRC.

Other observations related to the construction of the HCBS corridor

i. Design issues with respect to lanes for non-motorised and motorised vehicles

Based on extensive deliberations with all the concerned agencies on this issue in various EPCA meetings over the last few months, EPCA has decided to go ahead with the current design of the HCBS. It has also communicated the same to the Transport department, Government of NCT of Delhi (GNCTD) in its meeting of July 8, 2006. The Delhi traffic police have some reservations regarding the current design. EPCA received a letter from Mr. Qamar Ahmed, Joint Commissioner Police, (dated May 17, 2006) on the need for additional space for private vehicles in the corridor. EPCA respects the reservations of the Delhi traffic police on the current design. However in view of the significance and the urgency of the project in Delhi, EPCA holds that if any problem is encountered during the implementation phase, EPCA will call for design adjustments to provide extra lane for the motorised traffic in vulnerable segments.

ii. Diversion of the traffic

RITES informed during the EPCA meeting of July 8, 2006 that it is important to discuss this issue with Joint Commissioner of Police (Traffic). In the meeting held on July 29, 2006, EPCA was informed that RITES had a meeting with the Traffic Police where they presented their plan but there was a difference of opinion. RITES further informed that the Traffic Police wanted a traffic diversion plan. The Traffic Police informed EPCA that nearly one-third of right of way (ROW) would be under construction work. EPCA stated that RITES should explain to the Police what are the lanes that will be blocked during the construction phase and what portion of a road will be closed at one time so that it is adequate for the traffic to move on. EPCA stated that the main concern of Traffic Police is that any section that is closed for construction should be blocked for a minimum time and as little as possible so that they do not have problems in diverting the traffic. EPCA stated that it would convene a meeting where RITES would give a presentation to Traffic Police on these concerned issues.

iii. Road signals

RITES and IIT Delhi brought to the notice of EPCA that for the high capacity bus corridor, a new signalling system would be required. The Authority was further informed that the cost estimation for the same has already been accounted for in the HCBS project. IIT Delhi and RITES had informed EPCA that the concept design for signal phasing for all the intersection along the corridor and the concept design of signal poll location is ready. It sought the advice of the Delhi traffic police to finalise the new signal systems.

iv. Handover of the concerned corridor from PWD to the contractor

EPCA was informed by the concerned agencies during the EPCA meeting of July 8, 2006 that transfer of road from the current holding agency, PWD to the contractor was on track. The Cabinet decision No. 1091 dated 4.7.2006 decided that the PWD shall handover the possession of the stretch of road (Ambedkar Nagar to Delhi Gate) to RITES for undertaking the work.

v. Depot for the contractor

RITES informed during the EPCA meeting of July 8, 2006 that the necessary depot for the contractor is still not made available to them and thus it would be difficult for them to force the contractor to commence the necessary work. The available depot is located at Sarai Kale Khan and is under the jurisdiction of DDA. The Chairman, EPCA had spoken to the Vice-chairman of

DDA and apprised him of the urgency of the situation. The Vice-chairman of the DDA has agreed to meet RITES to sort out the necessary pending issues.

Related issues: Shifting of electricity utilities, clearance of trees, shifting of underground utilities

The transport commissioner informed during the EPCA meeting of July 8, 2006 that other pending issues like forests clearance, shifting of underground utilities among others are at various stages of getting finalised. The Authority was informed that the transport commissioner would be resolving these pending issues at the earliest.

On the issue of clearance for cutting trees, the Cabinet decision No. 1091 dated 4.7.2006 has decided that the Environment department shall grant clearance for cutting trees in a phased manner and provide assistance for compensatory afforestation as in case of DMRC.

Recommendations

It is encouraging to note the significant progress of late with regard to some key milestones – signing of the MOU between the Delhi government and RITES and awarding of the tender for the construction of the first corridor from Ambedkar Nagar to Delhi Gate on August 1, 2006. This will certainly enable Delhi government to accelerate the process of construction of the corridor.

It is therefore time to set the next set of targets and milestones for the completion of all the HCBS corridors that have been planned in a time bound manner. The urgency of the situation stems from the rapidly growing numbers of personal vehicles in Delhi that are continually adding to the congestion and pollution. In view of this EPCA would like to make the following recommendations:

1. Tender for the construction of the first corridor from Ambedkar Nagar to Delhi Gate has been awarded on August 1, 2006. The time schedule for the commencement of the work and its completion is to be submitted to EPCA. The implementation of the corridor must begin by October 2006, as agreed between Delhi government and EPCA.
2. Simultaneously, the work must begin on the other high capacity bus corridors that have been planned. As per the schedule given to the Hon'ble Supreme Court, the next corridor was scheduled for tendering by January 2007 and the subsequent corridor by April and then by September. Despite the delays in the first corridor, the schedule for the next corridors will have to be expedited. Therefore, Government of Delhi must be directed to tender all the agreed corridors by February 2007 so that the work on this public transport system can be implemented and the growing pollution checked.