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Chennai Corporation request to Tamil Nadu government for custody of 55 roads left in limbo

CHENNAI: The Greater Chennai Corporation's request to the State government to hand over to it 55 roads, stretching about 256 km in the city, from the State highways, has not seen any progress despite repeated reminders.

To ensure smooth vehicular movement and better traffic design, the civic body has urged the government to transfer the State highways in Chennai to it. These include Anna Salai (from Muthusamy bridge up to Kathipara) and GST Road (Guindy-Tambaram) that connects Chennai- Tiruchy National Highway-45 and EVR Periyar Salai (Poonamallee High Road) from Muthusamy bridge, near Park Town, up to Maduravoyal that connects Chennai-Bengaluru bypass.

In addition, the corporation has also said several other roads that run for about 3 km to 5 km, including Velachery-Taramani link road, Velachery-Thorapakkam road, Velachery-Tambaram road, Muthuramalinga Devar Salai, Thyagarayar road and 100-feet road be brought under its jurisdiction for improvements.

“To improve the traffic design of the roads, we have proposed to develop many junctions where the city inner roads join Anna Salai and EVR Periyar Salai. For such projects, we need these roads to be handed over to the corporation. There are also plans to provide digital boards and other improvement works at these junctions under the Smart City programme,” explained a corporation official.

The civic body has also a dedicated wing to maintain storm water drains in the city. “During floods, the corporation is forced to clear the storm water drain of State highways as well,” the official added.

The civic body maintains about 33,747 inner roads, spread over 5525 km in the width of 10 feet to 40 feet. In addition to this, 471 bus route roads (above 40 feet width) for a length of 387 km are under its jurisdiction.

However, State highways officials said highway roads are developed once in three years based on traffic volume. “Anna Salai and Poonamallee High Road carry more than 1.75 lakh vehicles a day. These roads are to be maintained at the highest standards. The top layer of the road is 50 mm thick to ensure that the roads withstand heavy vehicle flow and different climatic conditions. In addition, the roads are inspected and certified by a senior official in the quality control wing, which the corporation does not have,” an official said.

The official said that only qualified contractors can participate in highway road works as the value of tenders are above two crore and tenders are regularly issued to maintain the storm water drain.”

A professor of transport engineering in Anna University, who did not wish to be named, said for better transportation planning, roads that pass through the city should be administered by the corporation. “For better traffic design and planning, road network should be integrated and administrated by one department,” he said.