

User Count at Bandra and Kanjur Marg Sky Walk (between 30th June and 8th July 2009)

MMRDA has undertaken an ambitious program to build skywalks for the convenience of pedestrians to get into and out of suburban rail stations as the surroundings of such stations are very crowded due to historical reasons and our inability to maintain regulated space use. This is a costly and controversial project . There have been controversies about the use of these skywalks. So far , two skywalks have been completed one at Bandra East and the other at Kanjur Marg. We conducted user count at both of these sky walks at peak hours in the morning and evening for a total of 4 hours each. During last fortnight. We are attaching a table and a location map for each skywalk as Annexures to this covering note.

At Bandra east , there was a fire at Behrampada during last week of June and as a result, the usual place below the old landing of the staircase was blocked . This forced people to use the sky walk as they could not get the buses or rikshaws at old place (marked A on the attached map) In fact, this has turned a partial blessing in disguise . Even now (i.e. 15 days from the fire was extinguished) the buses don't reach the old point A .

Previous to this fire (i.e. before 25th June) the use of sky walk to Kalanagar was quite negligible (we reckon it was barely 300 to 400 per hour.) During last fortnight of June, sky walk extension to WEH (i.e. Bandra court) was completed. Its use has been very good. It is a short distance from the Bandra east stn . It does not require people to climb additionally (in either direction) and it offers them a relatively better way of walking . The distance is not much and hence the popularity is quite high. It remains to be seen if the high usership levels to Kalanagar stretch attained due to current stoppage of bus service from to right next to the stn will remain high if the buses go to the starting point once again.(pl see the map)

Bandra Sky Walk

As can be seen from the enclosed Annex I , we found that the total use of the sky way per hour was about 4800 to 5000 which can be considered very satisfactory. Out of this , about 1000 exited right at the beginning and hence the net users can be considered about 4000 /hr. Out of this, about 2/3 used the short arm i.e. only upto WEH (Bandra court) But use of even 1300 all the way to BKC or Kalanagar i.e. by walking more than a km is quite remarkable. Obviously, rainy conditions helped this number. But it can be considered a good beginning. In fact, if we can take sky walk “across weh” to the other side, it will make a great difference but it must be very difficult due to height constraints.

We suggest this opportunity should be used to redevelop the entire area of Kanekar Marg .We should also explore whether there is any possibility of taking the sky walk below the flyover on the highway to the eastern side .

Kanjur Marg sky walk

The pictures and figures are clear. This skywalk is hardly used. Avg total use in both directions in peak hour of 776 is quite thin . It can be argued that if we close the crossing of the rail tracks, the use will increase is a valid argument. The use of skywalk will perhaps triple if this step is taken. It was not possible for us to quantify the number of people who simply cross the tracks. It is a number larger than the skywalk users but not more than two times at best. Hence the width , type of construction , cost and alignment makes it a very low priority and costly choice .

Which kind of sky walks should get priority ?

Sky walk from Bandra east to WEH is a high use one and we should give priority to such short distance high volume sky walks first (subject to other considerations) While thinking of only walks which are in “sky” , we can consider whether bike lanes and free parking for them at a railway stn should not get a priority ? This can discourage short distance use of motorized vehicles and provide zero emission and high health and low congestion alternative. We can certainly find a couple of such facilities for trials rather than build sky walks (and underpasses) which cost tens of crores and hardly used.

Use of Vertical space for Hawker *Resitement*

Another possibility is for stations with high hawker incidence and no home platform. Santa Cruz is an ideal example . At this station, it is possible to build a Hawker Plaza (strictly and *only to resite existing hawkers* in a compulsory manner and on a rent which recovers only the cost of construction – which cant be more than Rs. 2000 /sq ft. Thus freeing the valuable road space for traffic purposes (bus movements, paid parking etc.) Earlier, we had done a survey and identified the no and type of hawking that takes place on both sides of S Cruz Stn (identified about 1100 hawkers) They can be resited on top of the platform linked two sky walks across the rail tracks linking SV Rd to WEH with two separate plazas – for pedestrians and hawking but interconnected . This kind of project should be looked at . Because it offers a serious win win solution for the problem of hawkers around the railway stations. And since there is no home platform at S Cruz (we are not asking people to climb extra.) In fact, if we provide escalators at both SV Rd and WEH , this will lead to traffic calming.

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(pl see enclosed charts and maps showing the count as well as locations)