

Chapter – IX

Traffic Planning



In a growing economy like ours', the need for transportation keeps on increasing. Without a commensurate increase in capacity / efficiency in transportation, this growing demand leads to congestion and resultant strain on the existing assets. In order to avoid such a scenario, Network expansion and capacity improvement works are planned and executed by Railways.

Traffic planning is critical in deciding the scope and requirement of such works. It includes planning for new lines (Plan Head 11), doubling/tripling/quadrupling of sections (Plan Head 15) and works that remove the current constraints in the yards, terminals and sections improve the capacity and efficiency of train operations that are called as Traffic Facility Works (Plan Head 16). Apart from these works that form part of the capital expenditure budget of Indian Railways, private sidings/terminals are also planned and approved by operating department. These works are executed by private entities themselves or by depositing money with Railways for execution.

New Projects / Works

Any new work required to be executed in the Railway requires specific sanction of competent authority with associate finance concurrence as per Schedule of Powers and corresponding earmarking/availability of funds. Depending upon the nature of the work, they can be processed under different sources of funds.

Projects/works of very urgent nature/safety related works and works having lesser financial implications can be processed for sanction under Railway revenue expenditure. Projects/works related to passenger amenities which are having lesser financial implications can be processed for sanctions through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) fund duly following extant policy guidelines. Projects/works which are going to remove the bottlenecks at the serving station and enhance the mobility and throughput due to the additional traffic offered by the siding (siding related works viz., doubling of the lead line to the siding, Y connectivity, additional loop line etc.) can be processed based on the lumpsum amount deposited by the siding authorities with proper justification, associate finance concurrence and sanction of the competent authority as per the Schedule of Powers (SOP) or as per extant policy guidelines.

All the remaining projects/works having higher financial implications can be processed through Works Programme in the Indian Railway Projects and Sanctions Management (IRPSM) system.

Some projects/works which are of huge financial implications which have long term benefits for the private party and also going to decongest the existing Railway lines and increase the mobility of the trains for the additional traffic offered can be processed in Public Private Partnership (PPP) as per the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed at the Apex level of the respective organizations.

Traffic Survey

It is a detailed study of traffic conditions and prospects of an area with the object of determining the most promising routes for the railways in the area.

Traffic surveys are ordered and conducted to study the feasibility of major works like new lines, doubling/tripling/quadrupling, gauge conversion. It includes an assessment of Financial Internal Rate of Return to see if the project is economically viable. For certain strategic lines which are critical for country's defense, socio-economic development of a backward area etc., the sanctions are awarded by the government despite poor financial returns.

The traffic survey wing is headed by an experienced administrative officer of the traffic (Operating/Commercial) department. To ensure that the estimates of anticipated traffic, capital cost and recurring expenses etc. are realistic and the financial appraisal of the project including the phasing of investments and returns at each stage are worked out as correctly as possible and with great deal objectivity, an accounts officer of appropriate status is associated with the traffic survey officer. The traffic survey team is supplied with terms of reference containing instructions regarding the scope and nature of the investigation to be carried out.

The team should work closely with the HQ at various intervals both during the progress of the work in the field and during the period of recess in order to consult the General Manager and where necessary, have the original terms of reference modified by the competent authority. This enables the main line administration to determine the design of the new line under investigation.

The traffic survey team should also work in close collaboration with the engineering survey party if there is one in the field at the same time, and while collecting information should visit all the trade centers in the area, consult local authorities and prominent citizens freely both on regard to trade and industry and most suitable alignment for the proposed railway line.