



## Introduction

The Infopark campus at Kakkanad is the IT hub of the city of Kochi. Kakkanad once was a peri-urban area characterised by low-density residential regions. With the establishment of Infopark, the town underwent rapid transformation in a decade. The status of Special Economic Zone (SEZ) accorded to the export industrial zone in Kakkanad attracted a large number of industries, resulting in the area transforming into a high-density industrial and economic centre. Today, the workforce of Infopark is around 30,000 and the number is rising day by day. The initiation of Smart City and the second phase of Infopark will only amplify the commercial activities in Kakkanad. When the growth of a town is rapid and unplanned, it needs to be supplemented with adequate infrastructure facilities. In the case of Kakkanad, the primary requirement is to provide better connectivity with other major cities and towns. The transportation issues faced by the employees of Infopark show the flaws in the transportation infrastructure here.

Most of the employees of Infopark depend on private vehicles, which results in traffic congestion and increase in the number of accidents near the campus. The issues of on-street parking and lack of parking space inside the campus also add to the difficulties of the commuters. An ideal solution to the poor traffic scenario is increasing the share of public transport in Kakkanad. The area needs a comprehensive mobility plan for identifying the gaps in public transport and mapping the traffic and vehicular movement.

There are two major reasons for the dwindling share of public transport usage by Infopark employees.

- 1) Poor connectivity of Infopark campus with the Kochi city, nearby residential areas and nearby towns
- 2) Inadequate facilities for travel inside the campus

The Infopark campus is poorly connected with the major residential areas in and around Kakkanad by means of public transport. The few buses that ply the region are packed during the peak hours. The commuters from other parts of the city also face the issue of crowded buses. The campus has only two entry and exit gates, which are located far from the Kakkanad town and bus stand. A commuter has to change at

least three buses to reach the Infopark campus from Vytilla. Unlike other areas in the city, the campus requires round-the-clock connectivity because of the varying working hours of the companies. Since ridesharing in auto rickshaws and taxis is not legalised, people have no ridesharing options, unless the companies are providing them with cabs or vans. The upcoming metro rail project will be attempting to link Infopark with the major areas in the city. However, without adequate provisions for feeder services and other forms of connectivity with metro stations, it will be difficult to forecast the shift of Infopark employees from private vehicles to metro rail. Lack of information on public transport systems is another impediment when it comes to the efficient utilisation of existing public transport networks, especially for non-Keralites.



Public vehicles are not allowed inside the campus, as per the SEZ policy, which has affected the utilisation of transport options at Infopark. Most of the Infopark companies do not provide transport facility inside the campus, which compels employees to use their own vehicles. There are no cycle tracks or pedestrian amenities within or outside Infopark, which would have facilitated non-motorised transport usage on the campus.

*‘Connecting the Dots on Public Transport’, a workshop organised by Centre for Public Policy Research (CPPR) and World Trade Centre (WTC), Kochi, held at Infopark assessed the issues and challenges regarding transportation in Infopark and discussed the way forward for developing public transportation in the area. Suggestions from the representatives of IT companies, NGOs and interested groups were collated during the workshop for further consideration. It was agreed that WTC would take the lead in coordinating the plans for building a robust mobility plan for Infopark with the assistance of CPPR and other stakeholders.*

### **Suggestions from the Workshop**

The authorities need to reroute buses or provide additional bus services to the area. Modern transportation infrastructures such as demand-based bus systems should be introduced, along with improving the existing water and road connectivity to the area. The idea of dedicated buses for Infopark employees should be proposed to the Ernakulam Regional Transport Office (RTO) that in turn will review the matter with KSRTC, KURTC, KMRL, private bus operators, companies in Infopark and the Infopark administration.



Providing information kiosks, ridesharing options, modernised bus waiting sheds etc will act in favour of increasing the share of public transport usage. Campus facilities such as street furniture, lighting, cycle tracks and other pedestrian facilities can be improved to facilitate and encourage non-motorised transport. Transportation data of the employees of Infopark can be collected with the help of the GPS tracking system to identify the major transportation corridors and trip generation points. This data can be used to efficiently plan transportation network for the area. This will also facilitate better planning for developing infrastructure provisions in and around the campus. If the 160-odd companies in Infopark come together, they can contribute significantly towards facilitating transport infrastructure and spreading awareness among the employees. The restriction on the entry of public vehicles to the Infopark campus should also be reconsidered, if the usage of public transport is to be encouraged.

The failure of transportation providers and development authorities to address appropriately the rapid development of the area surrounding Infopark has led to the existing traffic conundrum here. Most of the solutions or suggestions mentioned above are short-term plans. Infopark and Kakkanad require concrete long-term strategy to facilitate comprehensive and efficient mobility in the region.



## Suggestions and Plan of Action

Sl No	Issue	Suggestions	Short Term	Long Term	Plan of Action
1	<b>Bus Connectivity and Routing</b>	<p>1.1 Introduce new bus routes</p> <p>a) Tripunithura – Express Highway – Athulya – Lulu – Carnival – Kakkanad/Alwaye ✓</p> <p>b) Kakkanad – Carnival – Lulu – Athulya – CSEZ – Kakkanad (shuttle bus, preferably every hour) – Circular Feeder Buses ✓</p> <p>c) Start direct bus services from Palarivattam, Vyttila, Tripunithura and Alwaye to Infopark ✓</p> <p>1.2 Extend private bus routes from Kakkanad to Edachira ✓</p> <p>1.3 Introduce additional bus services on Mondays and Fridays ✓</p> <p>1.4 Introduce shuttle services that are</p> <p>a) private and owned by Infopark between Kalamassery, Kakkanad and Tripunithura ✓</p> <p>b) run every hour at least in the routes of Infopark–Kakkanad, Infopark–Palarivattam (Infopark–Kakkanad service may have lesser demand during off-peak hours, so it can be extended to Palarivattam for cost benefits) ✓</p> <p>1.5 Introduce safe bus travel for school children and aged people ✓</p> <p>1.6 Demand more trains to stop at Tripunithura, Kalamassery and Edappally railways stations ✓</p>			<p>Consult Ernakulam District Collector, Infopark CEO, Ernakulam RTO, KSRTC/KURTC and private bus operators</p> <p>Propose plan to Infopark officials</p> <p>Propose plan to Infopark officials</p> <p>Consult Indian Railway South Zone</p>

2	<b>Information Dissemination</b>	<p>2.1 Set up a dedicated help-desk for information regarding real-time availability of public transport</p> <p>2.2 Publish the information on transport facilities provided by Infopark on various identified areas</p> <p>2.3 Circulate traffic updates through web-based or app systems</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>		<p>Consult Ernakulam RTO, KSRTC and private bus operators</p>
3	<b>Infrastructure</b>	<p>3.1 Identify and develop bus stops and bus waiting sheds at appropriate places</p> <p>3.2 Install traffic signals at front gates, rear gates (Expressway via S A Road) and Carnival Infopark, as accidents have occurred here in the past year</p> <p>3.3 Allocate space for auto rickshaw stand in front of Carnival Infopark</p> <p>3.4 Develop a two-way road from Kakkanad/M G Junction till Infopark</p> <p>3.5 Moot road and infrastructure development on the following roads:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• M G Road – Pulleppady – Chalikkavattom</li> <li>• Vennala – Chithettukara – Infopark</li> <li>• Vallaradam – Kalamassery</li> <li>• Kakkanad – Kothamangalam</li> </ul> <p>3.6 Provide bus board names in all languages</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>Consult Thrikakkara Municipality</p> <p>Consult Traffic Police</p> <p>Consult Traffic Police and auto rickshaw unions and propose plan</p> <p>Consult Public Works Department (PWD)</p> <p>Consult Private bus operators and KSRTC</p>
4	<b>Feeder Services and Support Systems</b>	<p>4.1 Introduce prepaid buggies/share autos within the campus</p> <p>4.2 Introduce share auto systems connecting Infopark with nearby areas like Kakkanad bus stand, Edachira etc</p> <p>4.3 Introduce a prepaid auto counter near Carnival Infopark, similar to the one</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>		<p>Consult Infopark officials and companies and propose plan</p> <p>Consult auto rickshaw unions and Ernakulam RTO</p> <p>Consult auto rickshaw unions,</p>

		functioning near Infopark			Ernakulam RTO and Traffic Police
		4.4 Rent cycles within the campus with the cooperation of Infopark and companies	✓		Consult Infopark officials and IT companies and propose plan
5	<b>Parking</b>	5.1 Disincentivise parking within and in the vicinity of Infopark	✓		Consult Infopark officials and companies and propose plan
		5.2 Introduce app-based parking management system for efficient management	✓		
		5.3 Meet the minimum parking space requirements for commercial buildings – consider hydraulic systems for parking		✓	
		5.4 Link revenue from private car parking with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)	✓		Consult Infopark officials and IT companies and propose plan
6	<b>Other Initiatives</b>	6.1 Carpooling – Encourage companies to get less cars/bikes through pooling; refer current pooling system by Infopark companies (TCS is already doing this with a company)	✓		Consult Infopark officials and IT companies and propose plan
		6.2 Integrate Uber/Ola taxi aggregator systems for facilitating pickup and drop-off facilities	✓		Consult Infopark officials and Uber/Ola representatives