

End Of The Line: Bengaluru suburban rail's Whitefield-Kengeri corridor likely to be scrapped

The 35-km Parijatha Line, which connects tech hub Whitefield in the east to Kengeri in the west may face the axe as it runs parallel to Namma Metro's Purple Line.

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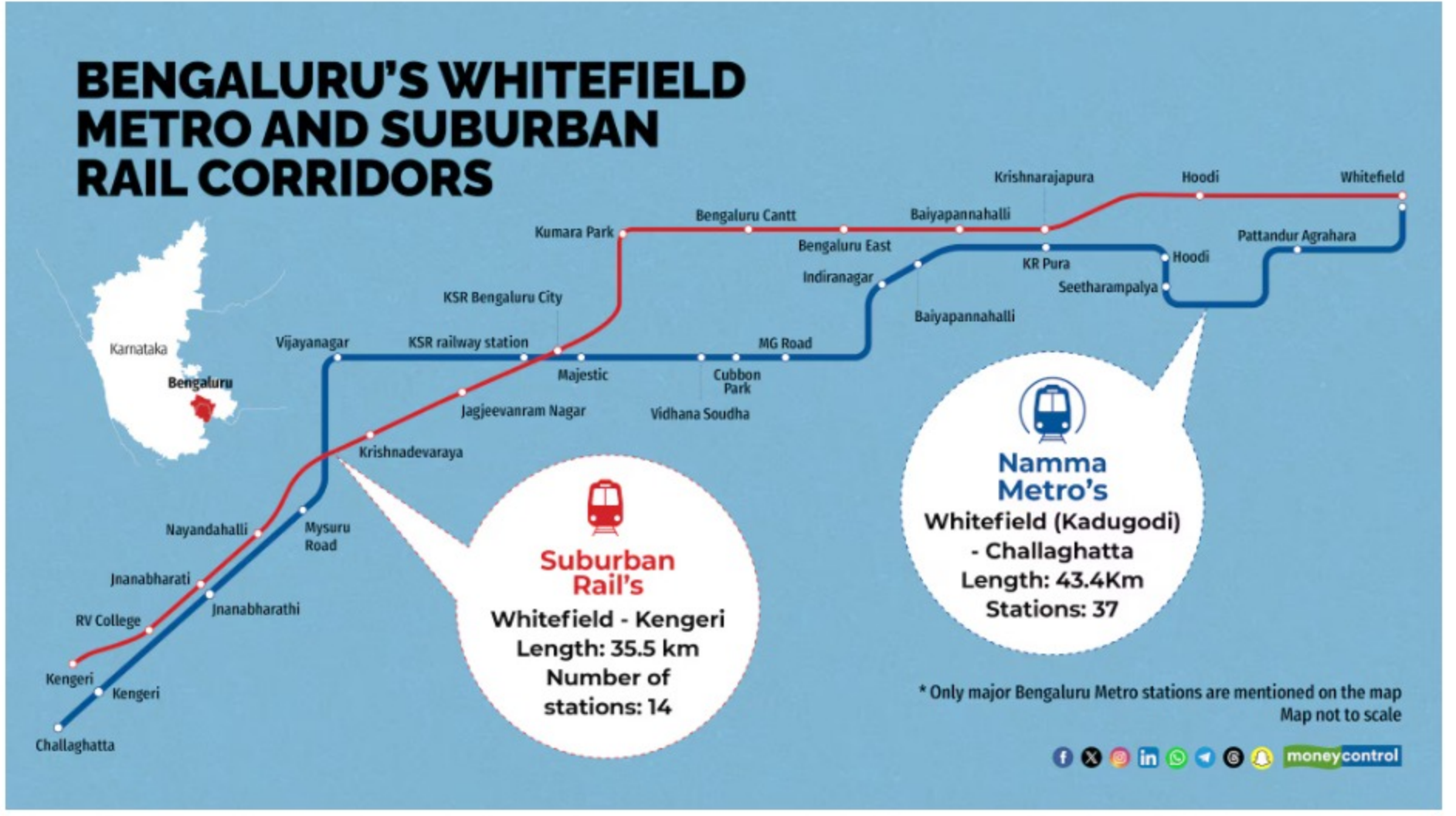
Bengaluru suburban rail project

The 35-km Whitefield-Kengeri suburban rail corridor, known as the Parijatha line, is likely to be scrapped, sources privy to the development told *Moneycontrol*.

This corridor, part of the 148-km Bengaluru suburban rail project, is now under review due to concerns about its alignment with Namma Metro's 43-km Purple line, which connects Whitefield (Kadugodi) in the east to Challaghatta in the west.

“A recent meeting chaired by Union Minister of State for Railways V Somanna and Karnataka Minister for Commerce and Industries MB Patil reportedly decided, in principle, to scrap the Whitefield suburban rail corridor,” a source said.

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Proposed alternatives

Instead of the Parijatha line, authorities are considering alternative routes to enhance suburban rail connectivity. Options include connecting Chikkabanavara to Tumakuru via Dobbaspeta, Chikkabanavara to Magadi, and Rajanukunte to Gauribidanur via Doddaballapur.

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“These routes would better serve Bengaluru’s outskirts and align with plans to enhance connectivity to emerging hubs like [Knowledge, Wellbeing, and Innovation \(KWIN\) City](#), spanning 5,800 acres in Doddaballapur and Nelamangala

taluku,” said the source.

Approved in October 2020, the suburban rail project comprises four corridors totalling 148 km. Construction has commenced on two of these: the Mallige Line — 24 km from Byappanahalli to Chikkabanavara, and the Kanaka Line — 46 km from Heelalige to Rajanukunte. Meanwhile, the Sampige line, a 41-km stretch from KSR Bengaluru to Devanahalli, via Yelahanka and the airport, is at the tendering stage.

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who laid the foundation stone in June 2022, stated that the project, first proposed in 1983, would be completed within 40 months. However, things are progressing slowly. Experts emphasise the need for multiple transit options, noting that suburban rail is both cheaper and faster than the metro. While the metro has stations roughly every km, the suburban rail will have fewer, more strategically placed stations for long-distance commute.

It may be recalled that K-RIDE (Karnataka Railway Infrastructure & Development Company) had promised that phase 2 of Bengaluru's suburban rail project would cover 452 km, connecting satellite towns and cities such as Kolar, Tumakuru, Mysuru, Bangarapeta, Hosur, and Gauribidanur. In response to K-RIDE's plans, the South Western Railway (SWR) had urged the Karnataka government to prioritise the faster execution and completion of works already undertaken by K-RIDE, highlighting that progress has been "extremely slow and behind schedule."

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K-RIDE’s double-decker flyover proposal

K-RIDE, the agency overseeing the project, opposes scrapping the Parijatha line and has proposed a double-decker flyover from KSR Bengaluru City to Kengeri. This structure is to have an elevated suburban rail corridor on the upper deck and a vehicular road on the lower deck.

“K-RIDE has not received any directive to drop the corridor,” an official said. “Suburban rail and the metro cater to different catchment areas. This issue was deliberated upon before the project was sanctioned by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) and approved by the Karnataka government. Once sanctioned, why should it be scrapped?”

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A similar [double-decker flyover](#) spanning 3.35 km between Ragigudda and the Central Silk Board on Marenahalli Road was inaugurated in June 2024. K-RIDE is also planning another double-decker flyover along a 1.5-km stretch between Mathikere and Lottegollahalli.

“A double-decker flyover between KSR Bengaluru City and Kengeri will provide a signal-free vehicular corridor and an efficient suburban rail line,” the official added.

Challenges on the Whitefield-KSR Bengaluru route

The SWR is planning to lay an additional track between KSR Bengaluru City and the cantonment. Earlier, K-RIDE proposed integrating the suburban rail with SWR’s third track, possibly as an elevated line. However, the Bengaluru division of SWR is yet to approve this.

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Similarly, K-RIDE had also proposed sharing the tracks between Bengaluru Cantonment and Whitefield, which are being quadrupled by SWR. In July 2024, a proposal was submitted by K-RIDE to use single track on either side of existing tracks. However, issues such as different signalling systems — CBTC (Communications Based Train Control) for K-RIDE and automatic signalling for Indian Railways — have raised feasibility concerns.

“Tunnelling on this section may not be viable as the metro runs underground near Tannery Road,” a source said. Heavy rail traffic further complicates operations, with 85 trains crossing daily. “Running suburban trains at 15-minute intervals, let alone every five minutes, is not feasible. A fully elevated corridor between Bengaluru Cantonment and Whitefield is an alternative,” the source explained.