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Last-mile connectivity is worst in far-flung areas

Residents, tech parks experiment with car pooling and free shuttle service

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Where BMTC services are scarce or non-existent, residents, communities and companies have joined hands to come up with their own versions of ‘pool’ or ‘share’ rides to ensure more sustainable last-mile connectivity.

At Electronics City, for instance, Electronics City Industrial Township Authority (ELCITA) operates free hop-on-and-off shuttle buses. Employees need to download an app that allows them to notify their pick up and drop off points. They have to show their work ID card while boarding the bus that connects Phase 1 and 2.

The initiative was launched a year ago. Four buses make three trips each in the morning and evening, starting at 7.30 a.m. Officials said more buses are being introduced.

“Many people were using their own cars or taking cabs owing to the lack of BMTC buses between the two phases. The entire E-city is around 18 km, and the distance between the two phases is around 10 km. We introduced the shuttle service to reduce traffic and encourage more people to stop using private transport,” said an ELCITA official.

Similar free services have been operating in Embassy Manyata Business Park for a

decade. Pradeep Lala, CEO, Embassy Services said five shuttle buses are operating within the campus, with each bus making approximately 45 trips in a day.

Self-help

Residents, especially those living in gated communities or apartment complexes in the outer areas, have either successfully sought last-mile connectivity from the BMTC, or devised their own options.

Prakruthi Subramanya, who lives in Good Earth, a housing community off Kengeri, said residents formed their own WhatsApp group almost three years ago, which also serves as an indigenous vehicle sharing platform.

“When we moved in, there was absolutely no transport. There are quite a few people who don’t drive and are looking for options. We tried starting a shuttle service, but it was not feasible as we were few people. Now, daily commuters post their travel plans in the group. Most people travel to the Mysuru Road metro station. They don’t mind waiting for someone who wants to tag along,” she says.

She added that residents of Sunworth Provident, an apartment complex near Good Earth, were instrumental in getting the BMTC into allotting a bus service into the interior road.