

MY
CHENNAI
MY RIGHT



Right to walk

Plans are afoot to improve the footpaths along Metro stations that will be up and running by 2015

PEDESTRIAN-FRIENDLY METRO RAIL

Sunitha Sekar

CHENNAI: Footpaths in the city break pedestrians' stride and sometimes make walking nearly impossible on every road. The situation might however look up, at least for the ones near Chennai Metro stations when they are up and running by 2015.

Plans to improve the footpaths along the Metro stations are underway, say officials of Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL).

"We conducted a study in the Metro corridors to look at ways to make the pavements better and improve the number of people who will take the Metro. We expect at least 40 per cent of the riders to be comprising pedestrians. We are in discussion with stakeholders to look at the ways to incorporate the standards of Indian Road Congress as well as the ITDP (Institute for Transportation and Development Policy) manual while designing the footpaths," said an official.

Seamless integration of the footpaths with the entry of stations is planned, with special attention paid to the facilities for a distance of 500 metres. For the next 2.5 km, the footpaths may be developed for the benefit of commuters.

"It may be premature to talk about the width and design of the footpaths now. But there will be ramps to make them disabled friendly. Also, we are considering the idea of having 'tabletop' crossing, where the footpath would be raised to the road-level, enabling the pedestrians to cross safely while motorists will drive over a ramp," he said.

The width of the footpaths may slightly vary between



Following a study on Metro corridors, Chennai Metro Rail Limited is looking at making it easier for commuters to walk to the stations — PHOTO: S.R. RAGHUNATHAN

areas, depending on the size of the stations, say sources.

Shreya Gadepalli, regional director, ITDP, said, "The footpath should be around 4-5 metres wide and free of obstacles with good green cover considering the harsh climate we have round the year. Ideally, around the footpath there can be commercial activity, making the

CMRL is not only aiming at improving footpaths near stations, but is also exploring ways to create shorter routes

CHRISTOPHER KOST, ITDP

area vibrant and safe for commuters of public transportation as well as other street users."

According to CMRL, in 2016, during peak hours, there will be a train every 4.5 minutes and the number of people using the stations during the time is expected to be 24,968 on corridor I (from Washermenpet to Chennai airport) and 24,324 on corridor II (from Chennai Central to St. Thomas Mount).

At stations like Chennai

Central, where integration with other modes of transport including Southern Railway, MRTS and suburban stations is planned, a large number of commuters may enter and exit the station. This would necessitate larger corridors.

Raj Cherubal of Chennai City Connect said, "In the Metros around the world, people only walk up to the station. So, larger stations must have a special corridor to accommodate crowds. Also, footpaths should be integrated with road or street-crossing facility and have closer proximity to bus stops and other stops for feeder services."

Christopher Kost of ITDP said CMRL is mulling over ways to develop the street network and improve accessibility to the Metro stations.

"On many occasions, commuters may have to take a circuitous route to reach a station, which may dissuade them from using the system. Therefore, CMRL is not only aiming at improving the footpaths on streets near Metro stations, but is also exploring ways to create streets that provide shorter routes for pedestrians," he said.