

# One square to link them all

A commercial and transport hub is in the making

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From a 33-storey building to a massive underground parking lot, Chennai Metro Rail has got an ambitious plan ready to develop a mini-commercial intersection in the centre of the city – a Times Square of sorts.

After months of work, CMRL's consultant for 'Central Square' – Voyants Solutions – has submitted a detailed study on the design and construction of the project. The underlying aim of this project is not just to ensure seamless movement from one mode of transport to another but also change the whole atmosphere of the area with beautiful landscaping.

This area will be developed around the Chennai Central station where the largest underground Metro Rail station in the city will come up soon. According to officials of Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL), though the underground Chennai Central Metro Rail station will be up and running by early next year, the larger project may take at least two years.

"The State has sanctioned ₹400 crore for this project. This place will be transformed for the better when it is finally completed," an official said.

The project will see the Metro Rail station getting linked with the neighbouring buildings, as well as help commuters access

other modes of transport easily.

The Metro Rail station will have six entry/exit points leading to the Southern Railway headquarters building, the Park Town Metropolitan Rapid Transit System (MRTS) station, the suburban rail station, Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital and Ripon Buildings. Covered pathways will be constructed for pedestrians to walk from the Metro Rail station to the suburban station and Chennai Central station.

Bus stops, auto stands and taxi drop-off points will be added for the smooth movement of vehicles.

## Covering a canal

There is also a plan to cover the Buckingham Canal and develop a landscape garden with covered pathways. In addition, a landscaped garden has been planned in front of Ripon Buildings and Victoria Hall. Some of the statues in the area will be relocated so as to ensure better 'visual geometry'.

A check-in counter will be set up at the Chennai Central Metro Rail station through which air passengers can

complete the procedures and head directly to the Chennai airport.

For this extensive project to take shape however, Chennai Metro Rail needs to get permission from many agencies.

