120 buses to provide last-mile link for metro

809 Cycles To Be Part Of Phase-2

Chennai: When Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) begins its operations on the first leg of the MRTS phase-3 by 2025 with more than 120 trains, it would need 120 feeder buses and more than 800 bicycles to provide last-mile connectivity and attract commuters.

In three decades, CMRL has projected doubled the numbers — 296 feeder buses and 1,301 bicycles on rent by 2055 — to provide an efficient intermodal transport system. Providing last-mile connectivity is vital if CMRL intends to achieve a majority of its projected daily ridership of 19.1 lakh by 2025.

CMRL is likely to begin construction for a fifth ‘priority’ corridor from Madhavaram to Sholinganallur and CMBT by early next year. The line is expected to be ready by 2024-25. Simultaneously, the construction of the corridor section is also likely to begin.

At present, only 11 stations: MTC small buses are being operated as feeders from 6 stations including CDMR, Vadapalani, Guindy and Central. CMRL also operates shared autos and taxis to 13 stations. However, a few of the newly opened stations between Washermenpet and AC-005 do not provide connectivity.

Experts have observed that the current feeder service enables users to reach their destinations from the stations but is not convenient for those who want to reach the station from their location.

"Small buses and more shared autos at frequent intervals should be introduced to encourage people to use the metro. With the metro in operation for 4 years, a good system of frequent feeder service is pivotal to ensure ridership increases 201 times to reach the phase-3 target of seven lakh," said Nithin Nandakumar, senior associate, PSU.

She said, "In order to expand feeder services, a study should be conducted to understand how users access the station now. Investments in creating parking lots can then be diverted towards improving feeder services. The service would serve a very small percentage of people and would contribute to less than 2% of targeted ridership."