

Chennai may soon get a light rail service

Feasibility study to be done for Tambaram-Velachery stretch

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In a few years, Chennai may have a light railway connecting Tambaram and Velachery, easing mobility for commuters along the route.

The State will soon conduct a feasibility study that will recommend possible alignments to connect the two areas, the estimated cost of the project and other details, highly placed sources told *The Hindu*.

Lower capacity

"After that, a detailed project report will be readied to go ahead with the project. The light rail system will either be elevated or be constructed at-grade (though not on the road itself, but similar to a railway line). There is a possibility that the stretch may be linked to the Velachery MRTS as well," said a senior official.

Light rail services, operat-



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ed in many places including Singapore, Sydney, Ottawa and San Francisco, will have a lower passenger capacity as compared to the Metro.

"It is still in a very nascent stage and we will finalise the routes and other finer details only after the feasibility study is complete," the official said.

One of the reasons for considering light rail service is that it is not as cost-intensive as the Metro. It will need less land to build, and can cover areas that may not be possible to link by the Metro. "For instance, while it will take ₹200-250 crore and

₹400-500 crore to build one kilometre of an elevated and underground stretch of the Metro, it will cost only around ₹80-100 crore for light rail. It will also not need the same right of way that the Metro does, and hence, it can be taken into narrower lanes and denser roads," another official said.

Sharper curves

Another important reason for considering light rail for this stretch is that, unlike Metro, it can take sharper curves.

"While a Metro cannot take very sharp turns, the light rail can. The radius of curvature for a Metro may be about 100 m, but for light rail, it may be about 25-30 m," the official pointed out.

Meanwhile, Chennai Metro recently conducted a study and made a presentation on light rail to the Ministry of Urban Development.