

Broadway to get park back from metro rail by Nov-end

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Chennai: Lone Square Park, the green lung for residents of Broadway, which was closed for metro rail construction seven years ago, will reopen by November-end. It was one of the four parks taken over by Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) during construction of the 45km phase-1.

A metro rail official said 83 saplings have been planted and the park has been restored with facilities for visitors, including benches and walkways. "Some final work is going on. We will most probably open the park in 10 days," the official said. Located on Prakasam Street opposite Madras high court, the park was the only green lung in the locality comprising commercial and residential units. It was closed in 2013 when construction for the tunnels between Washermentpet and Mannady stations was underway.

The park was turned into a construction site as CMRL used the space to cut and build cross passages in the tunnels between Washermentpet and Mannady. Cross passages



GREEN SPACE RESTORED: The park is likely to be opened in 10 days, an official said

were built for passenger evacuation during emergencies. "We needed the park for grouting during the construction of the cross passages," an official said. But even after the completion of the tunnels and stations, the park remained a shambles. Leftover construction material and garbage were strewn all over the park, which was cordoned off. Many shanties cropped up along its periphery. While residents blamed CMRL for uprooting trees and plants and turning the park into an open-air storage facility, metro rail officials said there were trees only on the periphery of the park,

which were not disturbed.

"We used to regularly go for walks and spend evenings sitting around the water fountain in the park. Metro rail closed the only escape we had from the concrete jungle we live in. We are happy at least, we are getting the space back," said S Payal, a resident.

Thiru-Vi-Ka Park at Shenoy Nagar, Nehru Park at Poona-mallee High Road and May Day Park in Chintadripet were also taken over by CMRL during phase-1 construction. Except for Thiru-Vi-Ka park, where CMRL is building an underground amenities centre, the other two parks were restored.