

# Works on two Metro lines in Chennai could begin this year

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IF all goes by plan, work on the 15.3-kilometre Metro Rail stretch from Chennai Airport to Kilambakkam will begin this year, said Deputy Chief Minister O Panneerselvam, while presenting the Interim Budget on Tuesday. He added that a detailed feasibility report was underway for the Velachery-Tambaram stretch.

The project report is in its final stages and would be completed soon, said officials from the Chennai Metro Rail. Recently, the Metro also held field surveys on this stretch. "The 15-km stretch connects densely-populated areas and the line would be an elevated stretch on top of the GST Road," said officials, pointing out that since the roads were already wide, works may be completed sooner.

Meanwhile, on the Velachery-Tambaram stretch, the Metro has planned to build a light rail which will weigh less than current trains. Officials said that the light rail project has been proposed as the Metro may travel through areas where there is less road space. If both these stretches are completed, the commuters would have faster travel in the city.

Activist Dhayanand Krishnan, who has filed multiple petitions and RTIs to the Metro, for the expansion of the two Metro lines, said it would benefit residents who live in the suburbs. "People here are dependent on public transport to commute. It is good to see that the lines are becoming a reality," he said. Krishnan added the Metro must consider the Tambaram-Velachery line to be integrated with existing Electric Multiple Unit line as it would provide further integration with other modes of public transport.