

Urban forest along Buckingham Canal

12 August 2019

Chennai: The Greater Chennai Corporation plans a Rs 20 crore makeover for the 2km stretch of the Buckingham Canal from Madhya Kailash Junction to SRP Tools, but local residents point out that walkways, cycle tracks and an urban forest on its banks can all be overwhelmed by the stench from the sewage flowing into the water body.

The project will be funded by the state government and Chennai Smart Cities Limited has begun contacting architects and designers. The corporation has also begun contacting NGOs for suggestions on what can be done under the project that was announced by the rural and municipal administration minister, S P Velumani. "We have begun work on preparing the detailed project report and the government is keen to begin the project soon. We have already started talking to NGOs and organisations that work on environmental projects to get suggestions on how we can beautify the section," said a corporation official.

"There are several modern techniques such as the Miyawaki method of growing trees that will ensure not just an urban forestlike environment, but also attract biodiversity that can be used. This will not take much investment either," said an official.

There are four MRTS stations – Kotturpuram, Kasturba Nagar, Indira Nagar and Tiruvanmiyur – along the south Buckingham Canal. The plan is to develop cycling tracks and pedestrian walkways along both banks that will also help better connect these stations to the hospitals and institutions on the stretch. "We will ensure that there is connectivity to the interior roads as well so that the area can bustle with activity," said an official.

Anand M, a resident of the area, however, said it won't be enough if the stretch alone is beautified. "If people must visit and use these tracks, the civic body should first stop sewage entering the canal. This poses a huge health hazard and the entire project will be useless unless sewage outlets are plugged," he said.

Clean-up of the canal has been planned since the 1980s and in 2010, the Chennai River Restoration Trust was entrusted the project. "This particular stretch which is part of the core city will be taken up by the corporation and could be brought under smart city for faster execution," said an official

Source: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chennai/keep-security-group-out-of-ymca-hc-tells-cops/articleshow/70635321.cms>