

Happy hours! Corpn advances cycle sharing window to 5am

5am To 10pm – New Timings To Benefit Early Morning Fitness Enthusiasts And Commuters

Srikanth.D@timesgroup.com

Fitness enthusiasts can make use of Greater Chennai Corporation's bicycle sharing system for their morning activity. The civic body has tweaked the timings for using cycles which will now be available from 5am to 10pm. Earlier, these were available between 8am and 8pm.

The cycle sharing system under the smart city project was inaugurated by chief minister Edappadi Palaniswami in February. The project took off at 25 locations in Anna Nagar, Shenoy Nagar and at the Marina with a fleet of 250 bikes.

"Recently, the services have been extended to 15 more locations on OMR, EVR Salai and in Pondy Bazaar," a corporation official said adding that work was on to add 10 more locations.

It has been a week since the timings have been revised and the response has been positive thus far, said a corporation official. "We received several requests to advance the timings as most of health-conscious citizens wanted to make use of the bicycles early in the morning," said the official.

The new schedule has been welcomed, especially at the Marina where fitness enthusiasts flock early in the morning. "A decent bicycle costs more than Rs 3,000. It is economical to use the public sharing system instead," said P Vimal Sankar, a bank employee.

However, safety remains a concern as many said the city was not bicycle friendly. The few kilometres of dedicated cycle tracks that the civic body experimented with were not successful. "Without dedicated bicycle tracks throughout the city, such systems might fizzle out in the longer run," said S Karthik, an IT professional.

In T Nagar, the cycle sharing system is put up on the pedes-

trian plaza. While the plaza is yet to be inaugurated, the wide footpath is instead used as a parking space for two wheelers and four wheelers, defeating the purpose.

Apart from fitness, the extended timings are also a boon for office-goers. "One of the concerns relayed to us was that people were unable to use the smart bikes for last-mile connectivity as the services were shut by 8pm. So we also extended the service in night also by two hours," an official said.

For instance, if people get down at Thirumangalam metro station, they can use the smart bike to com-

mute till Anna Nagar 18th Main Road, 21st Main Road or Ambattur Estate and lock the bicycle at the designated spot. "This is more economical instead of taking an autorickshaw," the official said.

A corporation official said work was also underway to expedite the launch of e-bike sharing system in the city.

“We received several requests to advance the timings as most of health-conscious citizens wanted to make use of the bicycles early in the morning

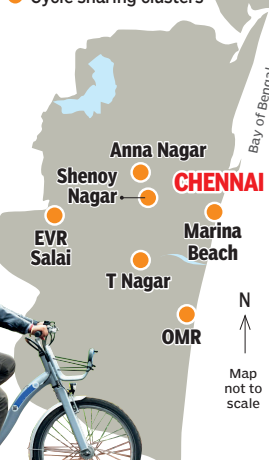
– Corporation official



Pic: A Prathap

MAKING WAY FOR MORE

● Cycle sharing clusters



The corporation has expanded its cycle sharing project to 15 more locations on OMR, EVR Salai and in Pondy Bazaar

HOW IT WORKS

- Download Smartbike mobility app and register
- Scan QR code or enter bicycle number to release cycle from the dock
- Return bike at any smartbike station

THE FARE

Registration ₹1

Rent for one hour ₹5

For every 30 minutes ₹9

Corporation plans to make **5,000 bicycles** available at **500 locations**

SHARING CLUSTERS

Marina Beach | 6 stations

Anna Nagar | 10 stations

Shenoy Nagar | 9 stations

NEWLY ADDED CLUSTERS

OMR | 4 stations

EVR Salai | 2 stations

T Nagar | 7 stations

THE PAST

In 1965, Amsterdam implemented the first bike share system. Known as witte fietsen, or white bikes, the programme collected bicycles, painted them white and placed them on the streets for public use.

(Source: smartcitiesdive.com)



Wikipedia

OVER THE YEARS

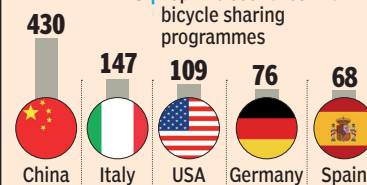
➤ In 2004, there were **13 bike-sharing systems** across the world

➤ By 2016, there were **855 systems**

(Source: Down to Earth)

THE LEADERS

Top five countries with bicycle sharing programmes



Source: Statista.com