

# Corp'n to buy more e-bikes for virus-free city travel

## Building Broader Footpaths Is Also On The Agenda

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**Chennai:** The Greater Chennai Corporation plans to buy more bicycles and e-bikes so that you can use them to commute from one part of the city to the other, instead of using crowded public transport, and thus reduce transmission of the coronavirus. This follows a Union ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs advisory to metro cities to opt for environment-friendly non-motorised transport to ferry people to offices and educational institutions.

At present the civic body has about 250 cycles at 30 locations under its cycle-sharing system. L Nandakumar, chief engineer, said they planned to have 1,500 cycles at 79 locations. "About 500 e-bikes were imported ten days ago and assembly is taking place in An-



**BREATHING SPACE:** The pedestrian plaza in Pondy Bazaar at T Nagar ensures there is ample room for citizens to walk freely

na Nagar. The cycle sharing stations will resume in a few days. These e-bikes will help people travel longer distances with less effort," he said. Apart from this, he said work on about 150km of footpaths will resume so that people can walk safely and avoid hiring autorickshaws and cabs.

The footpaths would be wide to aid social distancing, he added.

Kumaravel Pandian, deputy commissioner of works department, said the footpaths around T Nagar will be completed in a month. "50% of the work is over. We will undertake Covid-centric ap-

proach in all these projects that were already in the pipeline," he said.

Raj Cherubal, CEO, smart city private limited, said they will change the strategy of all these projects. "We were focused on last-mile connectivity. But now we will identify locations for cycle-sharing systems and ensure more e-bikes are available," he said.

But is Chennai ready for all this? The ministry has advised cities to look at projects in New York, which has added 40 miles to non-motorised transport to support cycles, and Oakland, which has closed 10% of its streets to motor vehicles.

Milan in Italy has converted 22 miles of streets into cycling lanes while Auckland in New Zealand has removed on-street car parking and built 17km of temporary bike lanes. China is also promoting bike sharing.