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Santhome Road to be widened

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The 1.6-km-long Santhome High Road is all set to be the first among the major roads suffering from traffic bottlenecks to be widened by Chennai Corporation.

The civic body will soon commence preparation of a land plan schedule for widening the stretch from Light House to Foreshore Estate. Following the preparation of the schedule, the district collectorate will appoint a special officer for the land acquisition process.

“The land acquisition will take a long time. Transfer of Development Rights could be a good option if land owners cooperate. The widening can be done in a few months. Option is left to the land owners,” said an official of Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority (CMDA).

The crucial link for the city's southern zones passes through wards 125 and 126. Councillors of the wards said there was heavy traffic congestion on the road and the widening would have a positive impact on the neighbourhood.

“Residents need a wider road. But the widening should be done without any loss to land owners,” said Vijaya Lakshmi, councillor of ward 126.

“The Corporation should convince the land owners of the importance of widening the road. Otherwise residents may not accept it,” said R. Bommi, councillor of ward 125.

As a number of educational institutions and heritage buildings are located on the road, the Corporation will also have to obtain clearance from the Heritage Conservation Committee of the Chennai metropolitan area.

At a council meeting last year, the Corporation had announced its plan to widen a number of the city's major roads that witness traffic bottlenecks. The Corporation had already decided to use development rights certificates (DRCs) to

facilitate implementation of its road-widening projects. The Corporation council will recommend issuing DRCs to property owners likely to be affected by widening of other roads including Nelson Manickam Road, VOC Road in George Town, Paper Mills Road, Kaliamman Koil Street and Red Hills High Road. DRCs entitle owners to claim additional built-up area (floor space index) in lieu of the plot of land handed over. Based on the recommendation of the Corporation, CMDA will issue DRCs to affected residents.

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