

Project Thiruvanmiyur Mada Veedhi

A Community-Led Initiative



Pilot Event Report | Nov 14-25, 2025



Who We Are

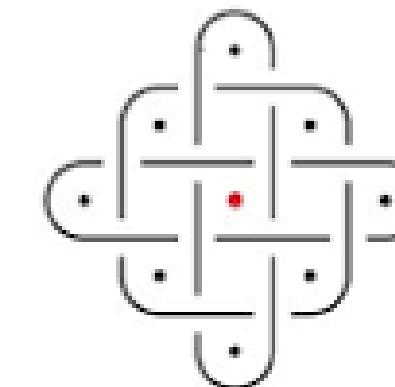
We are locals, residents and urban designers who care about our neighbourhood.

Since 2022, we have been actively campaigning to enhance a deteriorating heritage precinct of Thiruvanmiyur Mada Veedhi in the southern Indian City of Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

Through community care & collaborative design, our initiative aims to celebrate & rejuvenate Thiruvanmiyur Mada Veedhi's public realm, creating an environment that every user can genuinely take pride in!



In collaboration with



*Socratus Foundation, for
Collective Wisdom, Bengaluru*

Thiruvanmiyur Muthamizh Sangam, CBO

Acknowledgements

Crowdfunding Donors

Santhosh Loganathan, London
Radhakrishnan, Chennai
Viji Sriram, Chennai

Volunteering & Project Support

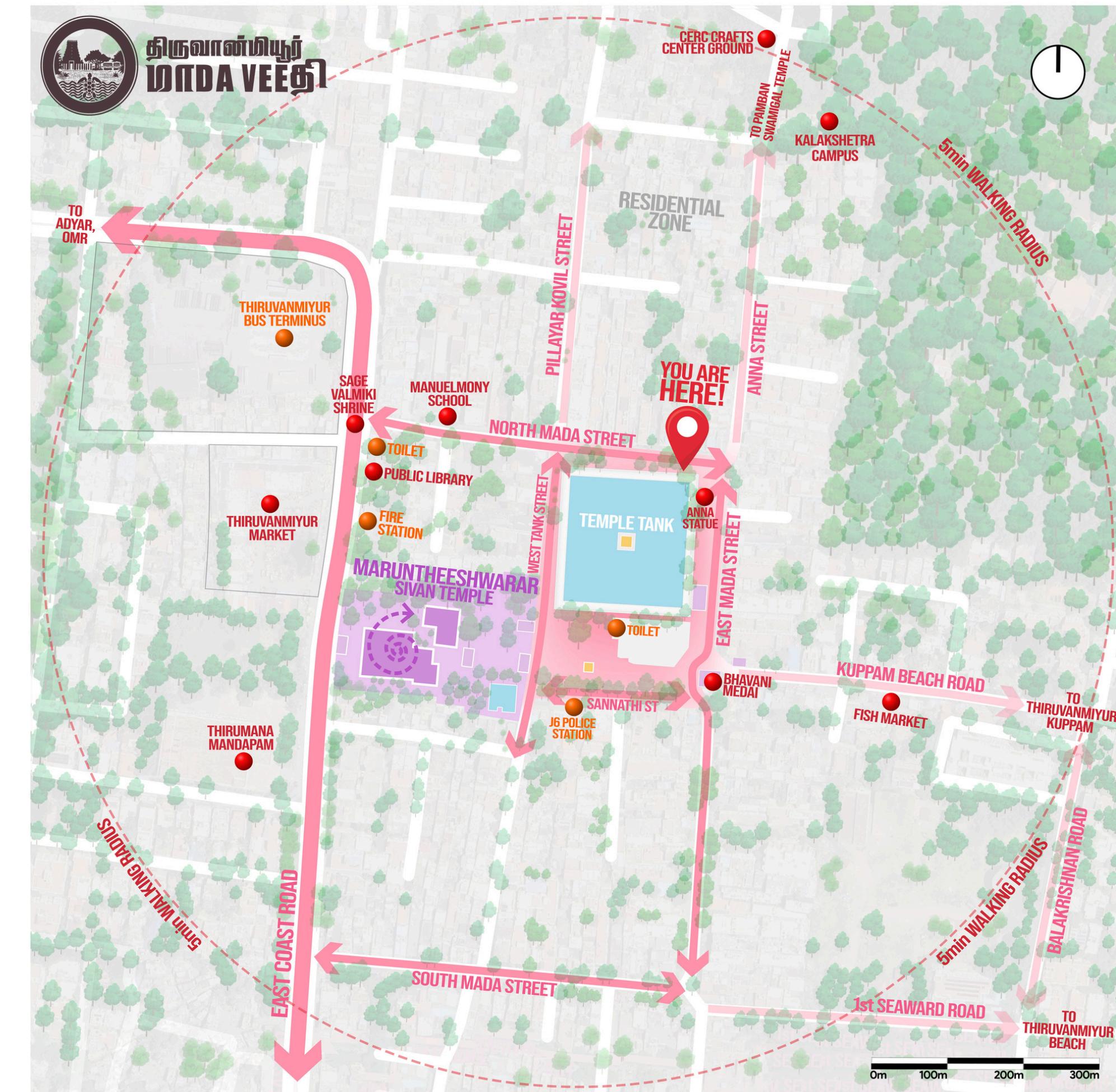
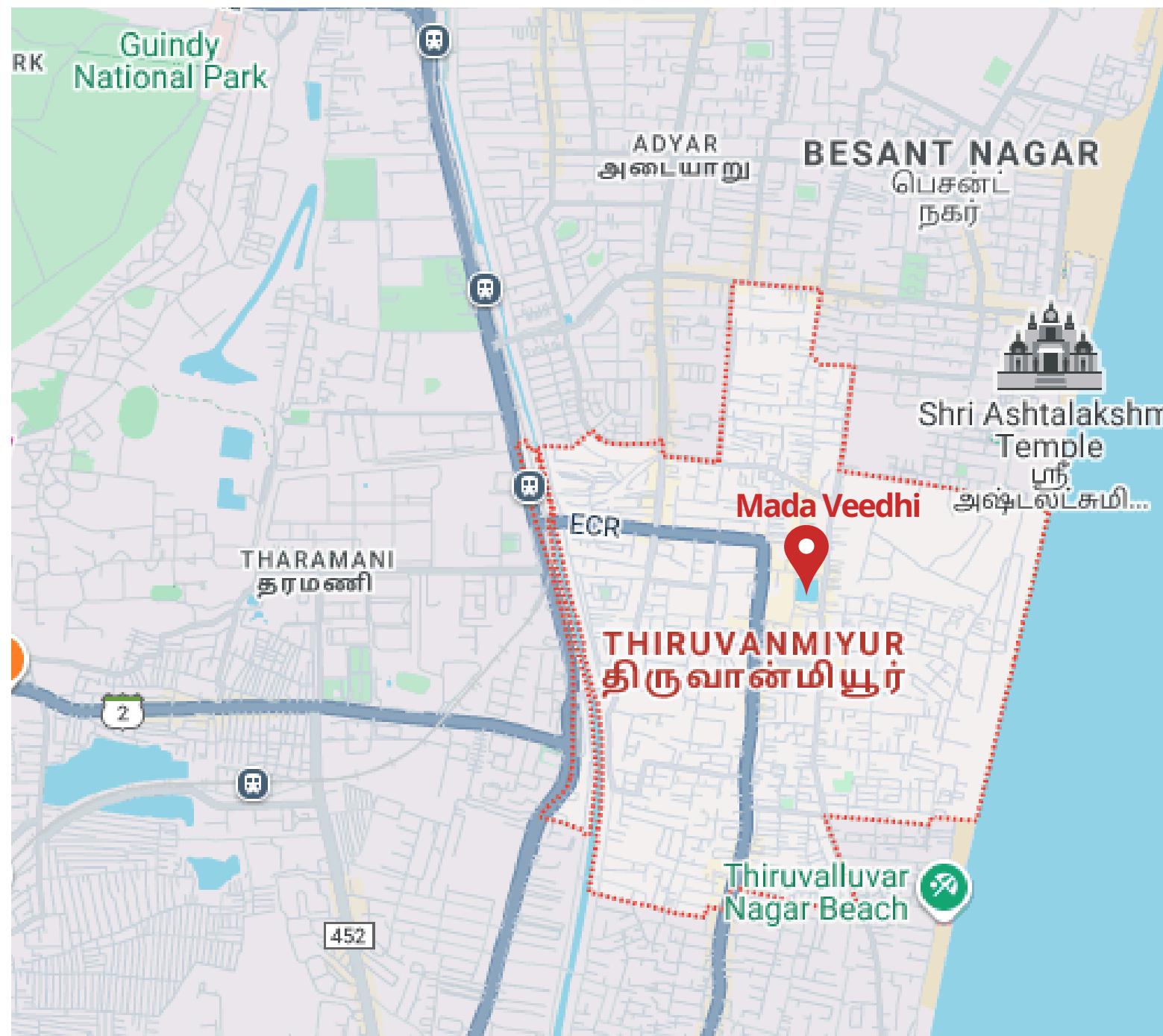
Dhavalya Sagar
Archita Suryanarayanan
P.M.Srinivasan (Muthamizh Sangam)
Srinivas Rajagopal
Sindhuja Balamurugan - Video Reel
Sabari Anna
Darshini Flower
Tubelight Media Works

We also acknowledge Support from GCC

Regional Deputy Commissioner (RDC)
Visalakshi Kapilan (Ward Councillor, 179)
Kayalvizhi Jayakumar (Ward Councillor, 180)
Urbaser Sumeet Team
Chennai Traffic Police & J6 Police Station



Thiruvanmiyur is a coastal area in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, with a diverse population of low to high-income households. The Heritage precinct & Mada Veedhi, anchored by the 1200 year-old Marundeeshwar temple is an important part of this neighbourhood that is deteriorating in quality.



WELCOME TO OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD! அந்புடன் வரவேற்கிறோம்!

North Mada Street BEFORE



East Mada Street BEFORE



AFTER

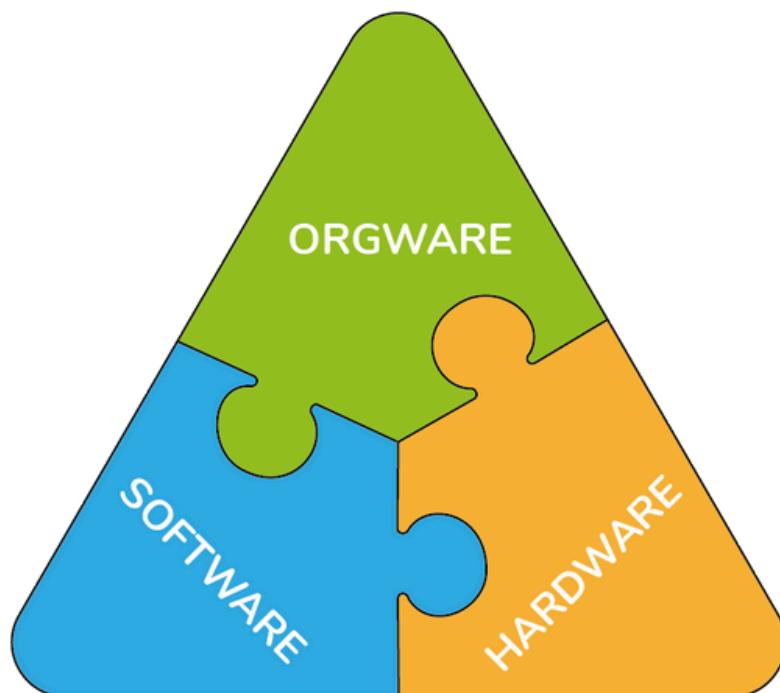
AFTER

AFTER

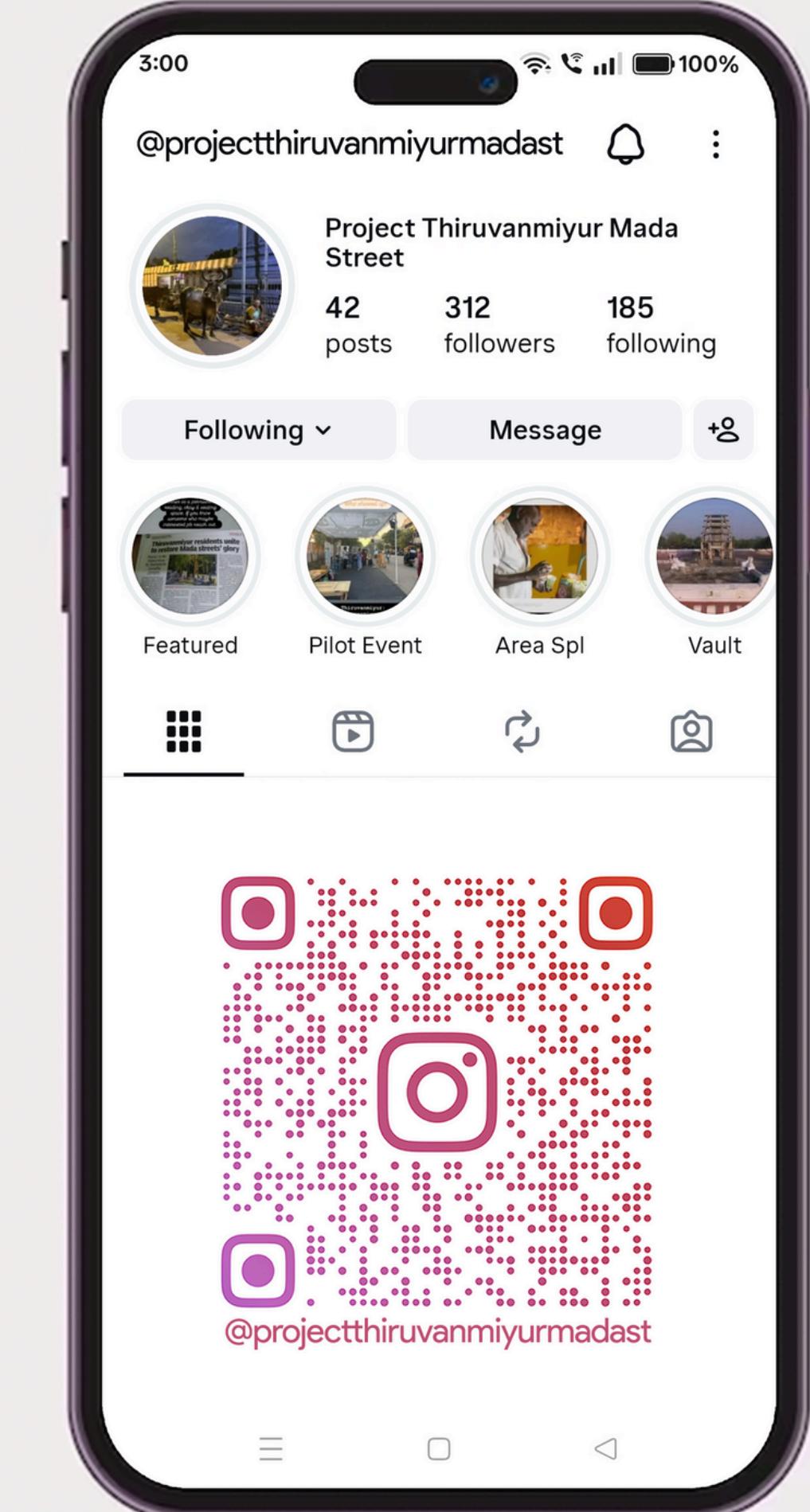
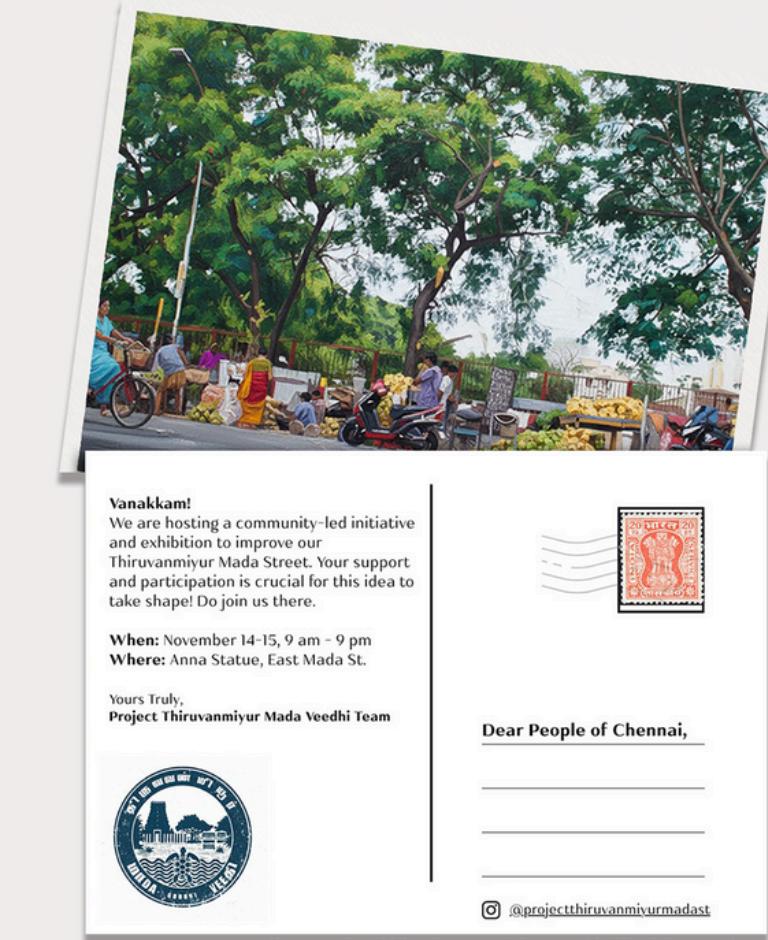
Building networks of Care

We took an **Asset-Based Community Design (ABCD)** approach using **Participatory Design-Research Tools**.

Physical design isn't the end goal rather it is one of the many layers of improvement we wish to see in the public realm.



Software, hardware & orgware ('triangle of use') - Karssenberg et. al (2016)



Total Event Footfall

on Nov 14 & 15 2025

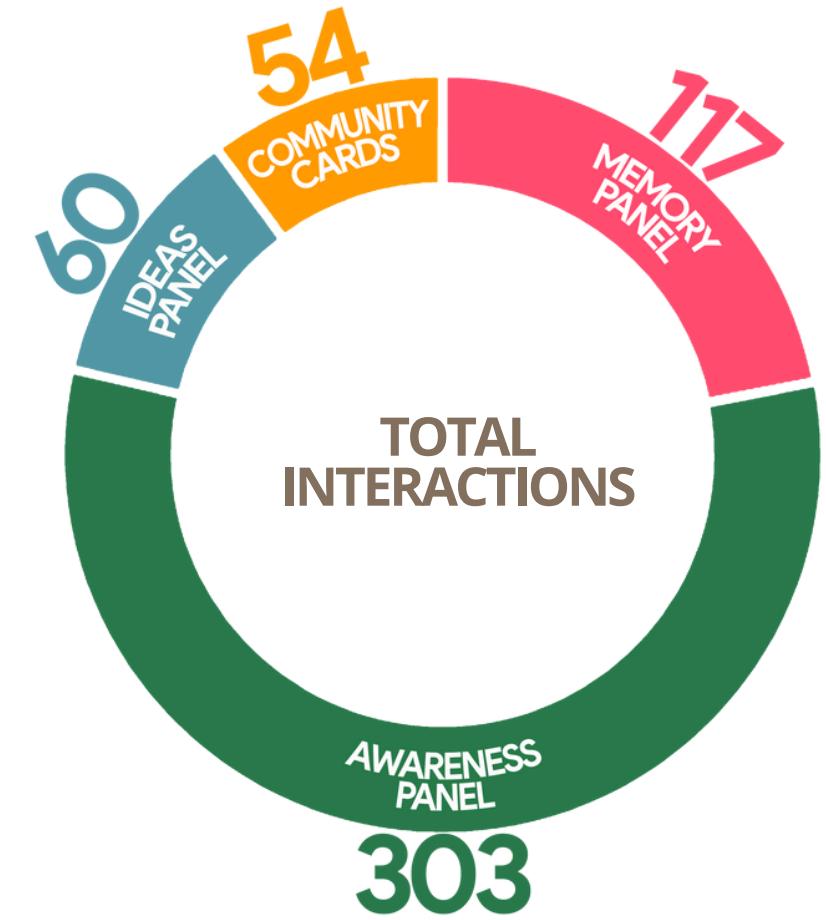
1200+
people from diverse walks of life

80%
of visitors were within
500m
from the Mada Veedhi



Panel Participation

534 people interacted with us through panels & cards



Showing community care for their street.



Purpose:

To collect real on-ground data, while also building awareness and understanding of the street's value.

Curated Events

03 Heritage walk, art session & music event brought people together.

47 Additional participants

We hosted photowalk, sketching session with Chennai Weekend Artists and a heritage tour of the Marundeeshwar Temple led by Dr. Pradeep Chakravarthy and Vinita Sidhartha of Kreeda Games. The events also saw enthusiastic participation from 25 students of Abacus Montessori School.

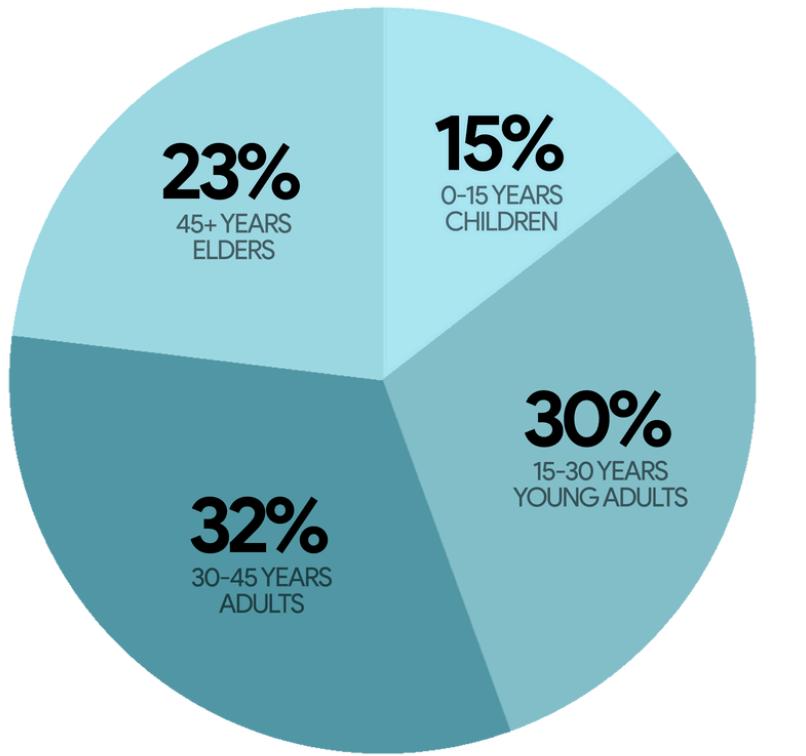
To build connection & ownership by revealing the area's stories, heritage and its potential as a vibrant public space.



Add Photowalk group photo also

Across age groups & Socio-economic strata

from **5** year old to **87** year old



A street for all ages, all communities & all income groups with diverse needs.

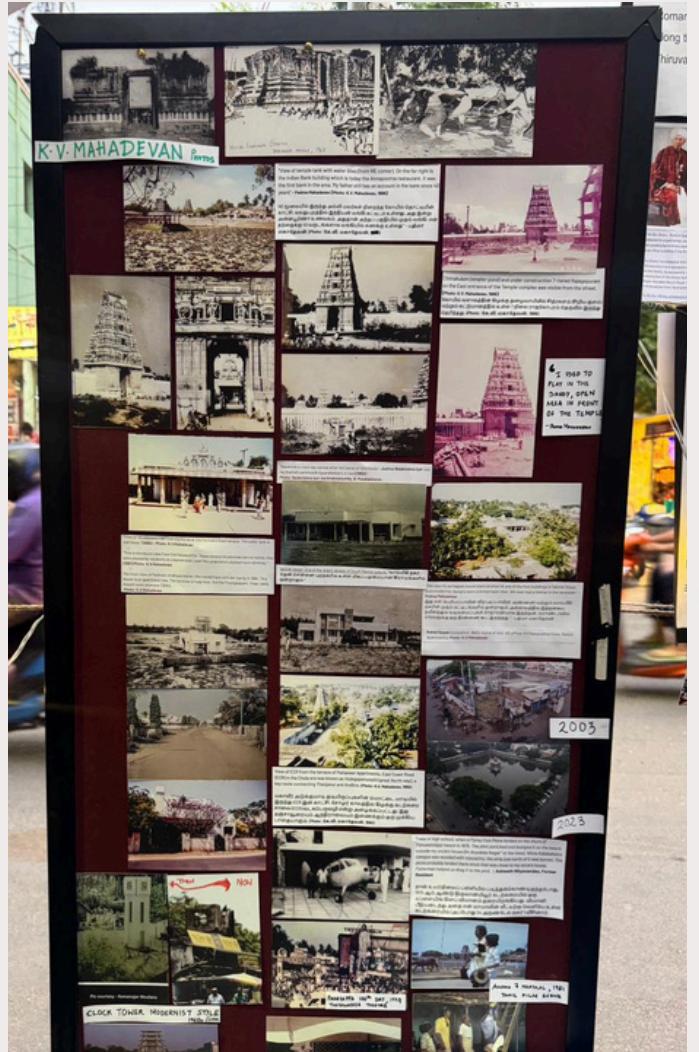


Neighbourhood Archives

46
new facts & stories collected

Through social media and on-ground conversations, we gathered valuable neighbourhood stories, old photographs, and personal insights from residents and shopkeepers.

To preserve Thiruvanmiyur's stories, identities & lived experiences for the future, we created a digital archive & neighbourhood guide.



Thiruvanmiyur Mada Street

Neighbourhood Story
Portal & Walking Guide

Project Thiruvanmiyur Mada Street | Oct 2025
October 21, 2025

Welcome to Thiruvanmiyur Mada
Street's Story Portal

Explore the guided tour map &
Neighbourhood archive portal to learn
more about Thiruvanmiyur Mada
Street & its surroundings.

Reclaiming Public Spaces from parking and trash

8

Car Park spots turned
into 110 sqm of public space

We demonstrated how a few
parking & garbage dump
spots can be transformed into
simple public spaces for play,
gathering and learning.



Exhibition space



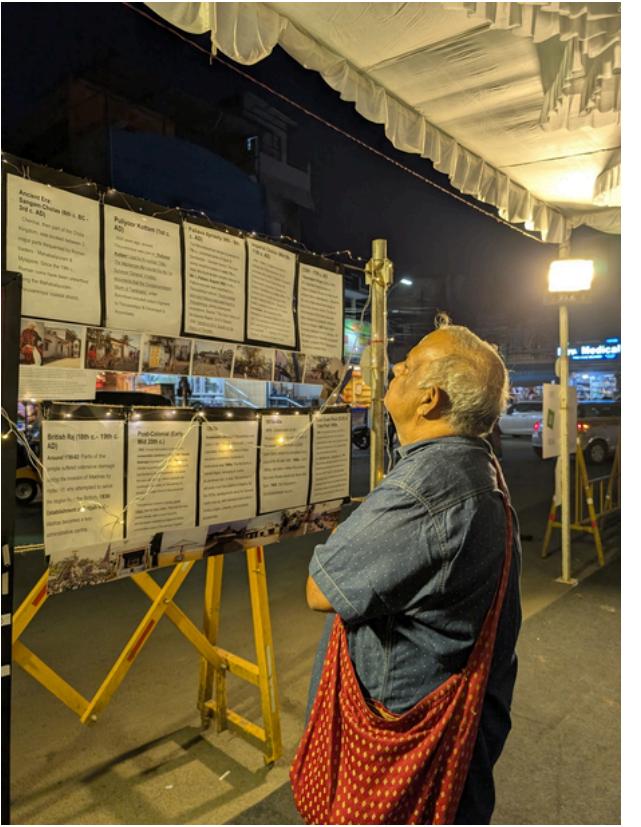
Childfriendly spaces on a Parking lot



We invited Kreeda Games, who have documented traditional games in Marundeeshwar Temple, to use one of the cleaned-up spaces on East Mada Street for their games. This was well-received across age groups and helped get more children to participate in our visioning. There was also some impromptu music and singing in the evening.

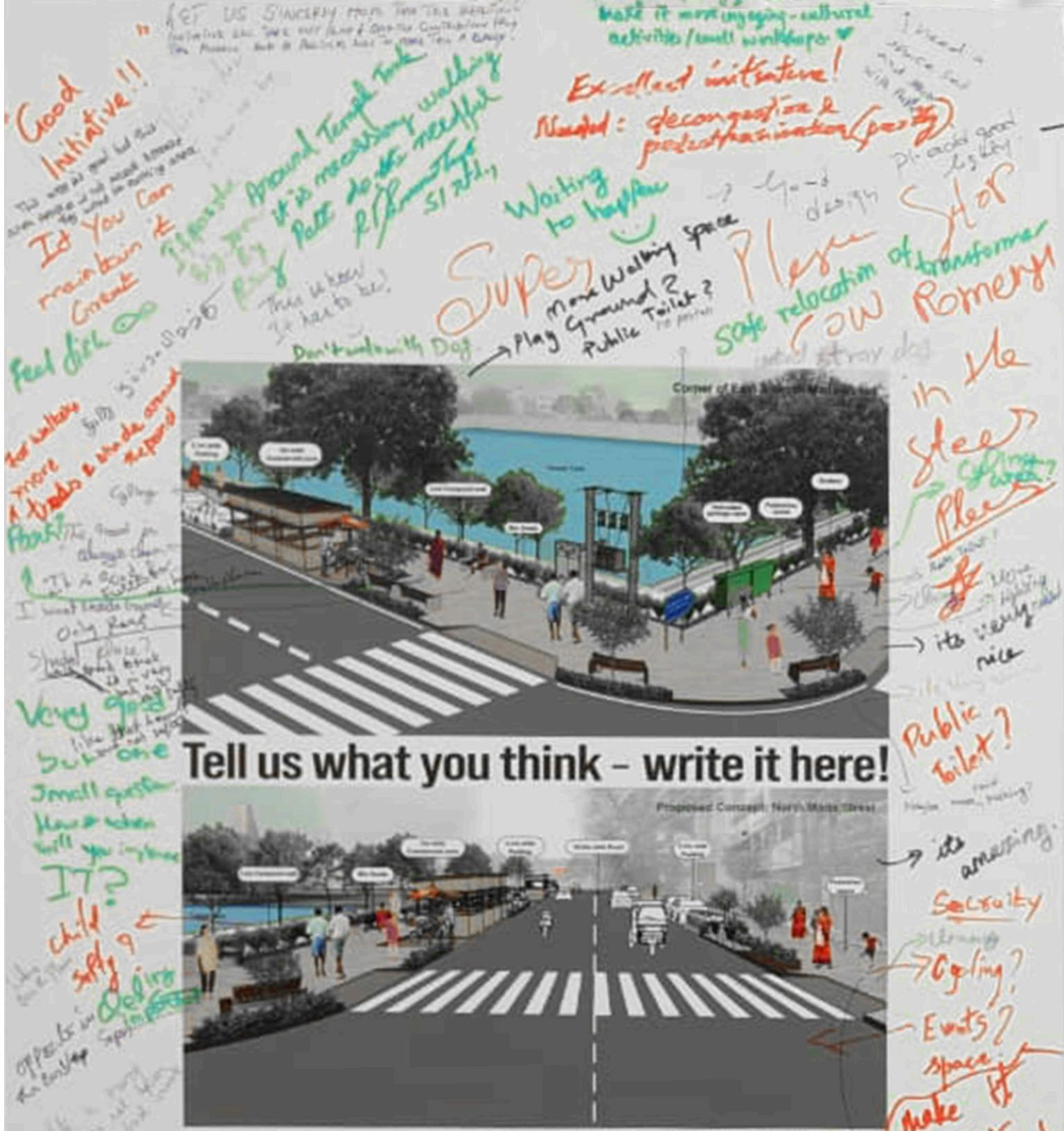


Documenting the past, envisioning the future!



Feedback received across ages, gender and socio-economic groups.

The community's feedback strengthened our vision. There's an overwhelming demand for an **intergenerational public realm that is accessible, clean, safe & joyful.**



What we heard

Neighbourhood Pride & Stories of Stewardship

“Any sustainable improvements need community participation. We are ready to help. **Nithya, 72**

It has all the potential to be a world class neighbourhood.

“Living here, as a woman for 16 years, I've never really felt "unsafe". No other place in Chennai could hold a heart like Thiruvanmiyur holds. -

Leah, 40

This place gives me peace of mind. I never go hungry - **Umamaheshwari**

This place used to be a “Makkal Medai for people - **Sundal Akka, Resident for 40 years**

There is so much history to this place. People believe in the temple's healing power - **Ganesan Sastrigal, 70**

This area has all the amenities I need



Pain Points

Walkability & NMT

I would like a walking path without encroachments.

No cars. But allow vending supporting local livelihoods - **Dharmaraj, Poo kadai**

I walk twice a day, every day, around the tank. - **72 years**

Sundays without cars in Mada Veedhi

Extend sidewalk, make space for people to walk & cycle - **Arjun, 13**

Shops & vendors should be placed in designated vending zones only.

Stray cows can be a problem for cleanliness and also for safety.

Elders find it hard to walk around the temple - **Dharmaraj, Poo kadai**

Violation by the corporation that allows encroachment, unpaid parking and garbage dumping should stop.

Inside the street, a small bus service can be provided - **Nagaraj, 45**



Pain Points

Cleanliness, Public Toilets

Shopkeepers must put their waste in their own bins, not dump it on the road.

Work out a parking management and waste management plan for festival times. - Logesh 35

Storm water management

Debris dumping by residents should be fined.

Public Toilet for Men & Women

Move the dustbins to a better location. Not in the junction.

Owners of cows should be responsible for cleaning up their waste.



Pain Points

Parking, Stray Cows & Traffic

*Political rallies, festivals, meetings should be planned better. Traffic during events & political meetings is a big disturbance. -- **Richard, 25***

Reduce noise decibels here. Talk to the traffic police. -

Retired Advocate, 70

Parking can be shifted elsewhere & make more space for walking. A separate parking plan for non-festival & festival days is needed. -

Vignesh, 30

*A signal & traffic crossing in Anna St - **Sagan, 9 years***

*A space for the cows that roam on the streets! It is unsafe for both the cows and people. Maadu Pavum – **Gugan, 11***



Pain Points

Public Space, Play, Cultural Programing

A place to sit and talk. Greenery around the pond
so we can spend time with kids

I like to have games like chess, carrom.

A central place for social networks, entertainment, commerce - **Meera**

Park in East Mada Street. - **Dhanya, 12**

Some Thevaram or Thirupugazh teaching in temples
for kids. - **Poet, Faculty , 56**

Green space around the banyan trees. - **Lakshmanan, 12**

Spend time with kids near the pond, also helps seniors spend time
peacefully in the evening.

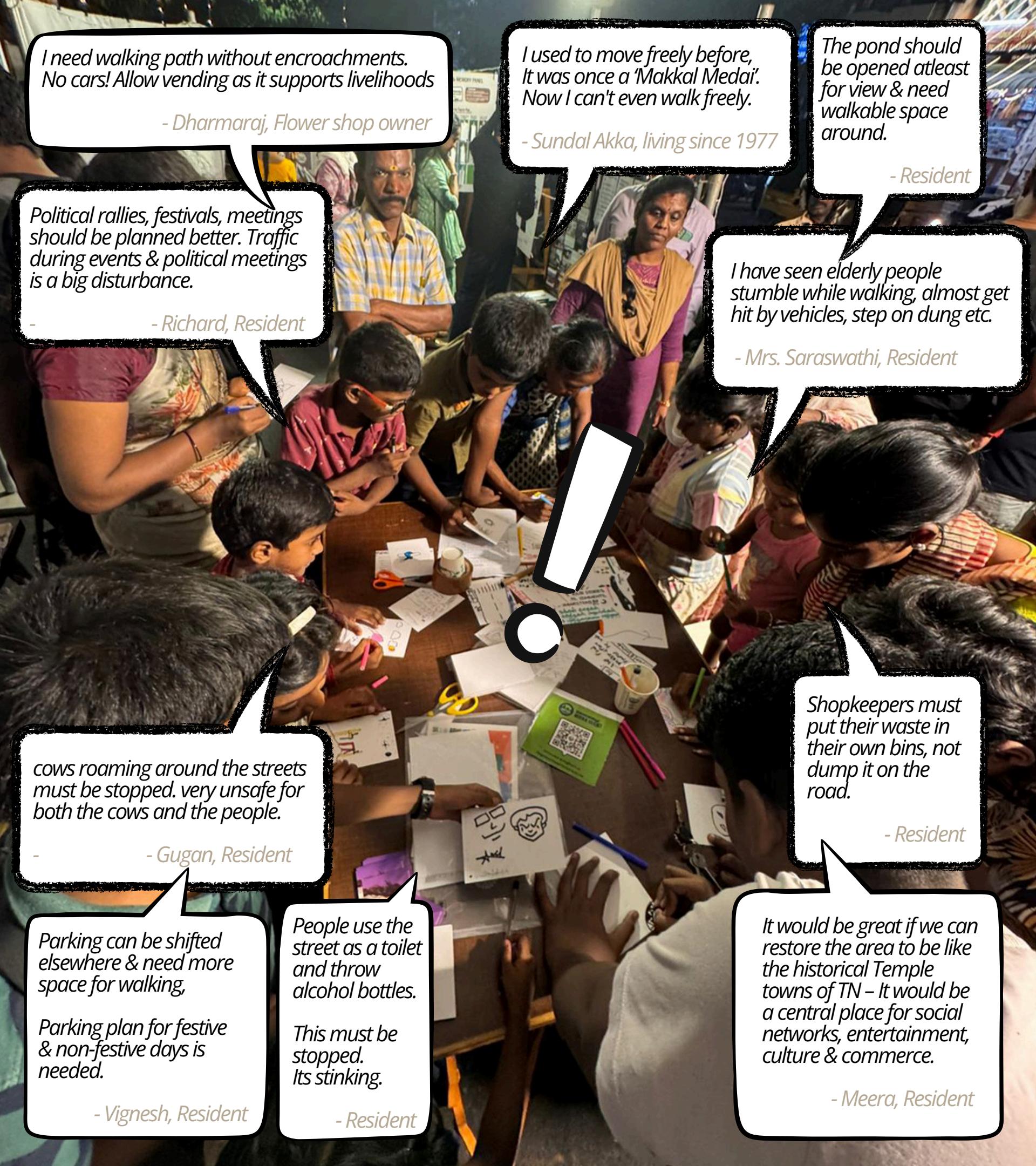


A hope for the future!

Residents shared their ideas, concerns, and priorities. Many also expressed their wishes through small doodles.

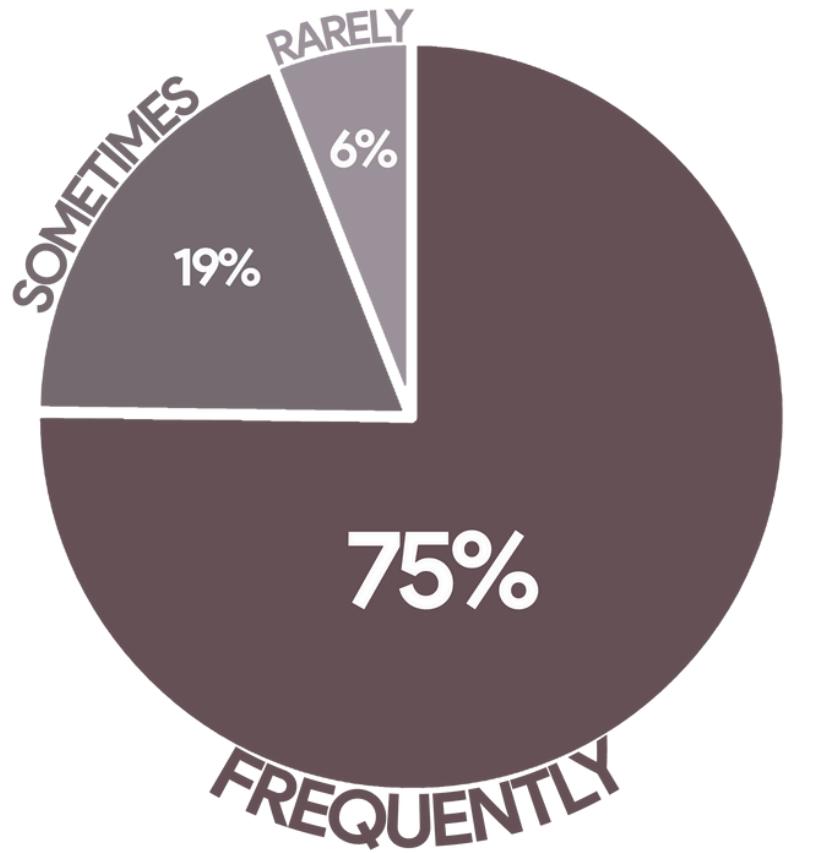


A word cloud of common themes we heard from the locals.



Actively used street-
not occassional or event-driven

75% who interacted
visited
frequently



**A busy everyday street with high
pedestrian & vehicular traffic.**





திருவாண்மீயூர்
மாடா வீதி

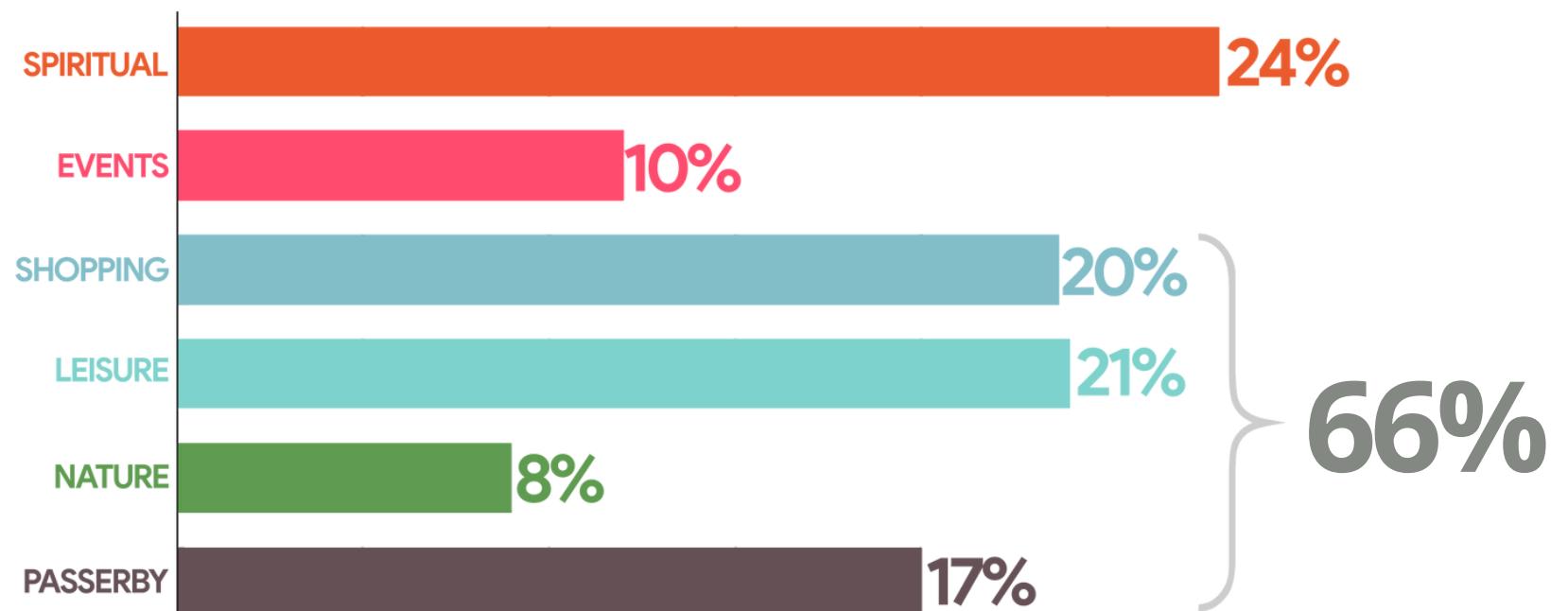
MEMORY PANEL

Memory Panel

Findings

66% come for **shopping, leisure, nature and daily movement**

34% come for temple-related reasons



This heritage precinct supports diverse users and diverse everyday needs.



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Choose the reasons why you come here.
2. Write your memory on a given card.
3. Tie it where it fits: Frequently / Sometimes / Rarely.

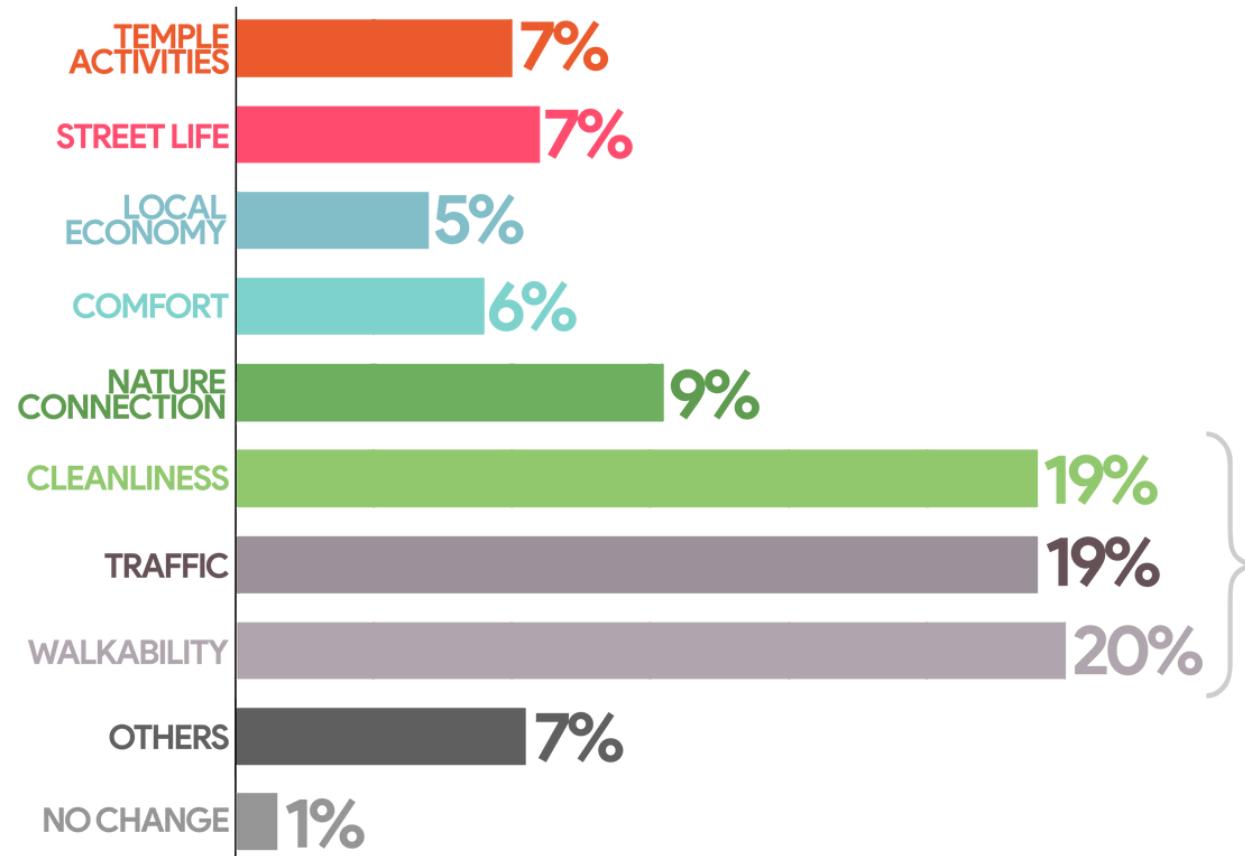
ஏன் இங்கு வருவதற்கான காரணம்...

நான் இங்கு வருவதற்கான காரணம்...



Awareness Panel Findings

99% demand improvements



58% say the street falls short in its basic everyday usability.

The community calls for change to make the street safer and truly usable.



or No Change needed?

Media Coverage



Our initiative reached far beyond Thiruvanmiyur, gaining citywide attention & support.

Reading space:

Our first experiment & area of permanent improvement on East Mada Street

Post event, we left behind the tables, mini library and water dispenser, installed lights at the Anna Statue on East Mada Street, so that it can be used as a reading space, so that miscreants don't abuse it

This also helps us to observe how the community cares or does not.



A small fledgling community library in Chennai watched over by shopkeepers

This reading nook is in a space near the Marundeeshwarar temple tank that is being promoted as a social congregating point in an effort to reimagine the Mada streets. The library is a work in progress. It is currently up against the elements, owners of roadside shops coming to its rescue during rains. It is carried to a resident's house at night for safekeeping and brought back in the morning

Updated - November 24, 2025 06:23 pm IST



PRINCE FREDERICK

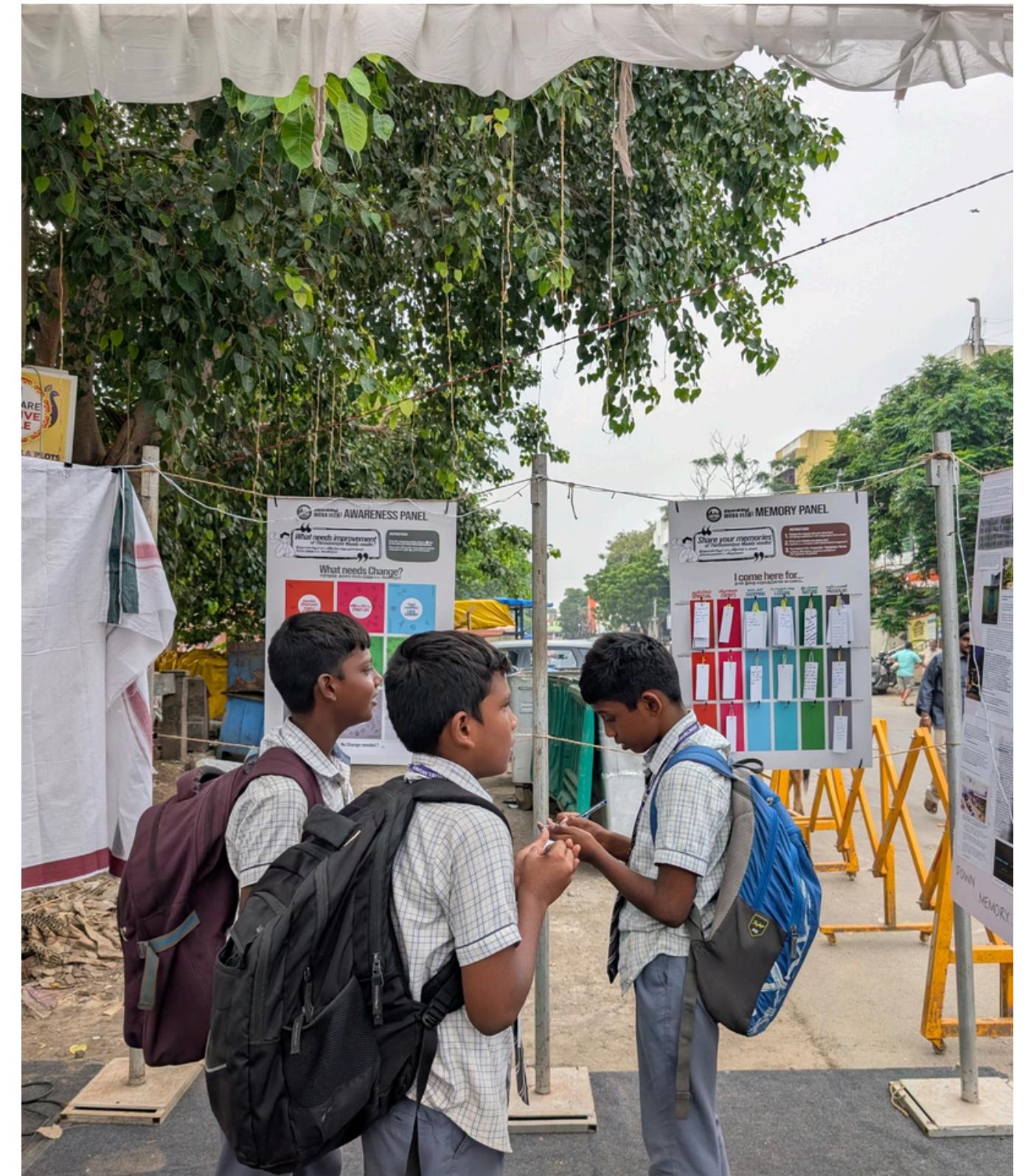
Road Map for Next Steps

Short to Mid-Term

- Design & Improve East Mada Street Corner for reading & play.
- Install a Neighbourhood Map & Plaque
- Public-Private Partnership - Approach CSR Funds & Grant
- Build on the Neighbourhood Archives digital portal
- Connect Volunteers and create a stewardship group.
- Parallelly create programs like walk tours & grants for the same.

Long-Term

- Stakeholder meetings to share data with the Officials & public.
- Stewardship model for the neighbourhood
- Explore a place management framework.
- Integrate feedback & Impact Assessment methods
- Parking Management as a street-wide policy
- Study the local economy
- Secure project tender.
- Work on design details and drawings



A win-win for residents, visitors, local businesses, vendors, temple & bio-diversity

To Support our Initiative

Write to us at: thiruvanmiyurmadastreet@gmail.com

