The ambitious Hyderabad Metro rail aims to solve many of the city's issues, from traffic to its carbon footprint. Its MD, N.V.S. Reddy shares how he hopes this will happen.

**URBAN REVISION**

Reddy calls this project a process of "urban rejuvenation and redesign, which will take a lot of tact and patience but can make a difference. We're redefining life for urban people," he says. "In 20 years, we will be a 10 million city and this development is essential. Most of the lower middle class lives in the suburbs, where commuting is difficult, especially with age. Connections at Uppal, Nagole, and Miyapur will go a long way to serving them, and also to developing those areas at a great rate."

Hyderabad to him is a very well-endowed city with a reasonably good climate, a cosmopolitan vibe, geographical advantages for growth, and a vibrant population. "Filling the transport gap will open up many possibilities, like the entry of banks and colleges," he says. "We need to capitalize on this and become a competitive global city with a high quality of life."

**CRITICISMS**

As with every public project, the Hyderabad Metro has received its fair share of criticism. Activists worry about the status of heritage monuments in the wake of metro rail construction. Reddy claims that this is a non-issue, since every plan made for the stations has taken heritage spaces into consideration. He also says the metro will take the least space as compared to other cities, using a structural engineering blueprint that reduces the number of pillars required to hold it up.

Another major complaint came from groups asking why the metro couldn't have been taken underground, as done in cities like London and Delhi. Reddy says that there are several reasons why this idea was discarded in Hyderabad. "In the Deccan plateau, we can certainly tunnel through the land, as has been pointed out, but constructing a station at kilometers distances will require a vertical cut-and-cover method that is very disruptive for the surface," he says. "We also found this to be the cheaper option. Underground stations will require air-conditioning and ventilation at every point. The operating costs would have been higher."

**GLOBAL ENGINEERING**

There are many components that define how global a project is. How does it make a difference, the jobs it generates, its carbon footprint, Innovation and competitiveness,” explains Reddy. It is in this regard that the 6th Global Infrastructure Leadership Forum in New York shortlisted 100 infrastructure projects from across the world based on these parameters. The top three came down to Azerbaijan’s Trans-Anatolian Gas Pipeline, Kazakhstan’s A. Abdaliyah Integrated Solar Complied Cycle Plant, and Hyderabad’s Metrorail. The long and short of it is that the Hyderabad Metro rail was selected as the Global Engineering Project of the Year, 2013. It's definitely a feather in its cap and potentially something that he hopes will silence critics.

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**IN A NUTSHELL**

- The Hyderabad Metro will have three corridors and 66 stations, of which three are interchange stations.
- The first phase will cover approximately 72 kilometers and will complete in 2014, while the entire project is aimed to complete in 2017.
- The metro aims to integrate with existing bus and railway stations for better connectivity.
- It will have a frequency of every 2-5 minutes during peak hours and is expected to complete at an estimated cost of Rs. 12,132 crore.