

Minutes of the 198th Meeting of Maharashtra Coastal Zone Management Authority (MCZMA) held on 16th June, 2026

Item No.30: Proposed underground road connectivity from Eastern Freeway-Orange Gate to Coastal road at Marine Drive, Mumbai by Shekhar Bhadane, MMRDA
(Proposal No.: IA/MH/CRZ/569827/2026)

INTRODUCTION

The officials from the MMRDA along with consultant presented the proposal before the Authority.

The MMRDA had proposed the construction of tunnel road from Orange gate at the Eastern freeway road to the Mumbai coastal road at Girgaon Chowpatty. The total length of the RHS alignment was 3.547 km long and LHS alignment was 5.687 km long. The project was accorded the CRZ clearance by Maharashtra Coastal Zone Management Authority (MCZMA) vide File No. IA/MH/CRZ/453444/2023 dated 7.3.2024.

However, while execution of the project certain changes in the project design were identified such as widening of roads at Eastern Freeway side, construction of promenade near Mumbai coastal road and provision of electric substation. As per revised alignment construction of tunnel road is proposed from Eastern freeway road at the Mumbai Port Trust (MbPT) up to Maratha Bhavan on Netaji Subhash Chandra road near Marine drive in Mumbai. The revised total length of the RHS alignment is 4.6 km long and LHS alignment is 4.9 km long.

MMRDA officials presented that, the project is necessary to reduce the traffic congestion at P D'Mello junction and provide a seamless East-West connectivity across the Mumbai city.

The proposed project is located in South Mumbai in Maharashtra. The project alignment starts at existing road behind the Mumbai Port Trust at 18°57'54.14"N 72°50'44.58"E and ends near marine drive at 18°57'2.39"N 72°49'5.22"E.

The proposed East-West connectivity in south Mumbai involves two tunnels originating at the Eastern Freeway in Mumbai, with one exit planned at Mumbai coastal road near Saifee Hospital. To accommodate the expected surge



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in traffic emerging from this tunnel, it is essential to expand the existing marine drive road/lane configuration (4 lanes towards Nariman point and 4 lanes towards Girgaon) to 3+3+3+4 lanes (3 lanes towards Nariman point, 3 for the tunnel exit traffic towards Nariman point, 3 lanes for the tunnel entry towards eastern freeway and 4 lanes towards Girgaon). Without this lane expansion, traffic bottlenecks will severely compromise the efficiency and intended benefit of the tunnel infrastructure. However, due to space constraints on the landward side, the only viable option is to expand the existing promenade towards the sea. This approach is to ensure the structural stability while also maintaining the iconic Queen's Necklace Arc. Therefore, the promenade extension is not only integral to managing traffic dispersal but also represents balanced solution between infrastructure needs and engineering challenges.

Consultant presented that the proposed underground road is passing through CRZ IB, CRZ II (NDZ), CRZ II and outside CRZ area and activity is permissible as per provisions of the CRZ Notification, 2019.

DELIBERATION:

| Proposed Project Activities | CRZ IB (Intertidal Zone) (m ²) | NDZ - Within CRZ II - Greater Mumbai (m ²) | CRZ II (CRZ Landward of HTL) (m ²) | Outside of CRZ Area (m ²) |
|-----------------------------|--|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| Project area | 12238.81 | 3533.4 | 118500.5 | 82382.02 |

The Authority noted that the MMRDA has submitted the EIA report prepared by M/s Building Environment Pvt Ltd (Nabet Accredited consultant). Observations and mitigations measures as suggested in the EIA report has been noted. Certain observations of the EIA report is as follows-

- Project is located in urban developed environment of Mumbai city. The ramps near eastern freeway and cut and cover near the entry and exit points of the tunnel are the above ground structures. Eastern end of the project is mainly surrounded by commercial land of MbPT, central railway car shed, truck parking areas, Godowns etc. The western end of the project is represented by coastal urban area near Marine Drive in Mumbai. There is no dense vegetation in immediate surrounding of the



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project. Very small patch of trees is present near railway car shed, along P D'Mello road and MbPT parking. Marine drive and Girgaonchowpatty are important tourist places in west south Mumbai.

- The promenade construction in intertidal area will have impact on benthic fauna from habitat disturbance. Therefore, the severity of the impact is classified as high. The spatial extent of the impact is anticipated to be confined to the construction area, hence ranked as moderate. As the impact is limited to the construction phase, the duration of impact is ranked as moderate. The impact on marine flora and fauna can not be avoided. Hence probability of impact is ranked high. The overall significance of the impact is estimated to be low.
- Sedentary benthic fauna will be affected during promenade construction activity due to loss of habitat and burial.
- Construction activity should be carried out during low tide period to minimize sediment resuspension and avoid turbidity of water
- Vehicular traffic management plan to be implemented so as to maintain the smooth traffic flow and avoid congestion inside tunnel during normal operations.

The Authority noted the permissibility of the project as per CRZ Notification, 2019-

| Project Activity | CRZ category | Permissibility as per CRZ Notification, 2019 (Clauses) |
|---------------------------|--------------|--|
| Proposed underground road | CRZ IB | 5.1.2(i)(c) |
| | CRZ II | 5.2(i) |
| | CRZ II (NDZ) | 10.3(i) |
| | Outside CRZ | |

The Authority noted that the proposal was earlier deliberated in 196th meeting of the MCZMA held on 17th April, 2026 wherein as per the decision taken in the said meeting, the MCZMA recommended the proposal to MoEF&CC, in view of the para 7(iii) of the CRZ Notification, 2019.

Consultant presented that, the proposal was considered in EAC, New Delhi meeting held on 13.5.2026 wherein the EAC observed that, the proposed change in road alignment, for which amendment has been sought from the Ministry,



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would require consideration by MoEF&CC only if the alignment passes through CRZ I or CRZ IV area. In the present case, the revised road alignment does not involve any CRZ I or CRZ IV areas. However, the Committee noted that the additional component, namely the proposed promenade, falls within the CRZ IB area and was not part of the CRZ clearance granted vide letter dated 7.3.2024 by MCZMA as per the CRZ Notification, 2019.

EAC, New Delhi suggested that MCZMA, being competent Authority for CRZ II areas, may examine the PP's proposal for amendment to the existing CRZ clearance dated 7.3.2024 with respect to the Change in road alignment at their own level, as it is in the CRZ II area and take appropriate action. However, for constructing the promenade the PP may submit a separate standalone application for CRZ clearance as per the existing procedure. Accordingly, the Committee recommended that, the proposal, its present form, may be returned with advise to take action.

Accordingly, the PP requested to consider the application only for road alignment in CRZ-II & CRZ-II (NDZ). The PP has submitted the separate application for promenade which is in CRZ IB area.

The Authority noted the present proposal of the underground road connectivity from Eastern Freeway-Orange Gate to Coastal road at Marine Drive, Mumbai which is passing through CRZ II and partly in CRZ II (NDZ) area.

The Authority noted the para 7(iii) of the CRZ Notification, 2019

"For all other permissible and regulated activities as per this notification, which fall purely in CRZ-II and CRZ-III areas, the CRZ clearance shall be considered by the concerned Coastal Zone Management Authority and such projects in CRZ -II and III, which also happen to be traversing through CRZ-I or CRZ-IV areas or both, CRZ clearance shall, however be considered only by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, based on recommendations of the concerned Coastal Zone Management Authority"

Further, as per para 10.3 of the CRZ Notification, 2019, construction of civic amenities is permissible activity in CRZ II (NDZ) area.



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The Authority noted that, the project is vital infrastructures project for the city of Mumbai for easing the traffic and reducing the travel time. However, considering the underground project, MMRDA need to implement all safety measures along with proper disaster management plan during construction and operation phase of the project.

DECISION:

In the light of above, the Authority after deliberation decided to grant CRZ clearance to the proposal under CRZ Notification, 2019 (Road alignment in CRZ area) subject to following conditions:

1. The proposed construction should be carried out strictly as per the provisions of CRZ Notification, 2019 (as amended from time to time) and guidelines/ clarifications given by MoEF&CC from time to time.
2. Construction activity should be carried out during low tide period to minimize sediment resuspension and avoid turbidity of water
3. Vehicular traffic management plan to be implemented so as to maintain the smooth traffic flow and avoid congestion inside tunnel during normal operations.
4. MMRDA need to implement all safety measures along with proper disaster management plan during construction and operation phase of the project.
5. No labour camp are allowed in CRZ area & it should also be ensured that the waste water from these entities should not be released into sea. Mobile toilets with mobile STPs to be provided in work front area.
6. Debris generated during the project activity should not be dumped in CRZ area. It should be processed scientifically at a designated place.
7. PP to ensure that best industrial practices should be followed for fire safety measures and for conservation of coastal environment
8. There shall be no disposal of solid or liquid waste in the coastal area. Solid waste management shall be as per Solid Wastes Management Rules, 2016.
9. During the construction phase, all possible efforts/ measures should be taken to maintain the coastal ecology and biodiversity.
10. MMRDA to ensure noise barriers are erected at appropriate locations.
11. Project proponent should implement Environment Management plan for the project effectively and efficiently during construction and operational phase of the project to ensure that coastal environment is



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protected. It is also suggested to have a third-party monitoring/Audit of all such management initiatives by Govt agency during and after completion of project from time to time.

12. All the other mandatory permission from different statutory authorities should be obtained prior to the commencement of work of project



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