

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC HEARING FOR PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF 8-LANE SPUR STARTING FROM KM 26.582 OF VADODARA-MUMBAI EXPRESS WAY ALIGNMENT (DESIGN CHAINAGE 0+000) & TERMINATING AT PROPOSED JUNCTION WITH THE MULTI-MODAL CORRIDOR OF MMRDA (DESIGN CHAINAGE 79+783) IN THE STATE OF MAHARASHTRA FOR THE 18.900 K.M. PASSING THROUGH TALUKA – VASAI, WADA, DIST – PALGHAR, MAHARASHTRA BY PROJECT PROPONENT M/S NATIONAL HIGHWAYS AUTHORITY OF INDIA, MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT & HIGHWAYS, GOVT. OF INDIA, NEW DELHI

- Ref :**
- 1) Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Govt. of India, New Delhi's Notification Dated 14-09-2006 and Amended Notification Dated 01-12-2009
 - 2) Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Govt. of India, New Delhi's Office Memorandum Dated 14-09-2020
 - 3) Maharashtra Pollution Control Board's directives vide no. B-200917-FTS-0082, Dated 17-09-2020
 - 4) Ministry of Environment & Climate Change, Govt. of Maharashtra, Mantralaya, Mumbai's directives vide dated 03-12-2019

The public hearing for Proposed Development of 8-Lane Spur starting from k.m. 26.582 of Vadodara-Mumbai Express Way Main Alignment (Design Chainage 0+000) & Terminating At Proposed Junction With The Multi-Modal Corridor of MMRDA (Design Chainage 79+783) in the State of Maharashtra for the 18.900 K.M. stretch passing through Taluka – Vasai and Wada, Dist – Palghar, Maharashtra by project proponent M/s. National Highways Authority Of India, Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, Govt. of India, New Delhi was conducted on Wednesday, the 24th March, 2021 at 11.30 A.M. at Makwana Farm House, Near Hanuman Temple, Village – Bhatane, Tal – Vasai, Dist - Palghar, Maharashtra.

As per the Notification dated 14-09-2006 issued by Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Govt. of India, (MoEFCC, GoI), New Delhi and subsequent amendment on 01-12-2019, Member Secretary, Maharashtra Pollution Control Board, Mumbai has constituted Public Hearing Panel vide Office Order No.E-25 of 2021 issued under letter no.BO/JD (WPC)/PH/B- 210303-FTS-0073, Dated 03-03-2021 as below :-

- 1) District Magistrate, Palghar - **Chairman**
or his representative not below the
rank of an Additional District Magistrate

- 2) Regional Officer, MPCB, Thane - **Member**
(Representative of
Maharashtra Pollution Control Board)
- 3) Sub Regional Officer, Thane-2 - **Convener**
Maharashtra Pollution Control Board,
Thane

Shri Ishwar Thakare, Sub Regional Officer, Thane-2, MPCB, Thane and Convener of the Public Hearing Committee while welcoming all informed that, as this Physical Public Hearing is arranged in the background of Covid-19, we all have to follow the directives of the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Govt. of India, New Delhi dated 14-09-2020 [referred at sr. no. (2)] and subsequent Order as issued by Maharashtra Pollution Control Board dated 17-09-2020 [referred at sr. no. (3)] above. Hence, 100 persons are allowed in the meeting hall in a session. If the participants are more, subsequent sessions will continue until all the participants are given opportunities to attend the meeting.

As per the directives, it is requested all the participants to follow strict guidelines of Govt. of India. The thermal checking and use of sanitizer are kept at the entrance of the meeting place and in the meeting, it is compulsory to wear mouth mask and follow the social distancing amongst the persons.

Convener of the Public Hearing Meeting welcomed Dr. Manik Gursal, IAS, District Magistrate, Palghar and Chairman of the Public Hearing Committee, Shri Rajendra Rajput, Regional Officer, MPCB, Thane and Member of the Public Hearing Committee, Project Officials, Government Officials, Environmentalist, Journalists and public who were present in the meeting. It was informed that as per the EIA Notification of Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Govt. of India, (i.e. MoEFCC, GoI) dated 14th September, 2006 as amended on 1st December, 2009 and as per Coastal Regulation Zone dated 06-01-2011, it is mandatory to conduct prior public consultation to certain projects which are covered in the schedule of the said Notification.

He informed that, the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board in receipt of application from Project Proponent M/s. National Highways Authority Of India, Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, Govt. of India, New Delhi to conduct public hearing for their proposed development of 8-Lane Spur starting from k.m. 26.582 of Vadodara-Mumbai Express Way Main Alignment (Design Chainage 0+000) & Terminating At Proposed Junction With The Multi-Modal Corridor of MMRDA (Design Chainage 79+783). In the state of Maharashtra for the 18.900 K.M. stretch passing through Taluka – Vasai and Wada, Dist – Palghar, Maharashtra. As this project falls under Category A – 7 (F) as per EIA Notification, 2006, public hearing is mandatory for obtaining Environmental Clearance.

Convener informed that Project Proponent had submitted application to the MoEFCC for obtaining ToR for conducting EIA study in July 2019, the Sub-committee of EAC visited the proposed SPUR site in November 2019 and MoEFCC issued ToR for conducting EIA Study on 16th March 2020.

Shri Ishwar Thakare, Convener of the Public Hearing Committee informed that ,today's date of public hearing was approved by District Collector, Palghar Wednesday, i.e 24th March, 2021. Accordingly 30 days in advance public notice was published in local newspaper Daily Sakal in Marathi and in national English newspaper Daily Free Press on 20/02/2021 as per provisions in the Notification .The people were appealed to send any suggestions, objections regarding expansion of the proposed project from environmental angle only.

A copy of EIA report and executive summary were made available to general public at various notified offices of Government i.e. Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, West-East Division Office, New Secretariat Building, Ground Floor, East Wing, Civil Lines, Nagpur – 440 001; District Magistrate Office-Palghar; Additional District Magistrate Office- Palghar; Zilla Parishad Office- Palghar; District Industries Centre-Office, Palghar; Tahsildar, Tahsil Office- Vasai and Wada, Dist – Palghar; Sarpanch, Grampanchayat Office – Koshimb, Khardi, Shirad, Kashid-Kopar, Mandavi, Chandip, Navsai, Bhatane, Adane, Bhinar, Ambode, Kalambhon, Tal – Vasai, Dist – Palghar; and Grampanchayat Office – Gorad, Keltan, Nimbavali, Tal – Wada, Dist – Palghar; Sub Regional Officer, Thane-2, MPCB, Thane; Regional Officer, MPCB, Thane; and at Head Office of MPCB at Mumbai; Environment & Climate Change Department, Govt. of Maharashtra, Mumbai and on the website of MPCB.

The public were appealed to send any suggestion or objection regarding the above project. He informed that few objections are received by Sub Regional Office, Thane-II.

Shri Ishwar Thakare requested permission from Chairman of the Environment Public Hearing Committee to start the proceedings.

With the permission of the Hon'ble Chairman of the meeting, the Environment Consultant appointed by the NHAI and Shri Shivaji Pawar, DGM (Tech) of National Highways Authority of India gave the presentation regarding project and EIA study carried out for the project. He informed that the proposed expressway starts from Koshimbe village of Vasai Taluka and ends at Morbe village of Panvel Taluka, near the Multi Modal Corridor of MMRDA. He informed that, 12 villages from Vasai Taluka and 03 villages from Wada Taluka (total 15) will be affected and 18.900 km stretch of the expressway lies in Palghar district.

After the presentation, Environment Public Hearing Committee appealed participants to raise their suggestions, objections if any.

The details of peoples who participated during the discussions with their questions and the answers given therein by the Project Proponent / Project Consultant / Public Hearing Committee is as below:-

1) Shri Ashok Shantaram Kasar, Resident – Bhatane village, Tal -Vasai, Dist – Palghar:-

Shri Ashok Kasar remarked that Project Proponent has given good presentation. But for the sustainability of the local people, certain things need to be clarified. The Under-Pass will not be provided to our village. The Under-Pass will be provided to our neighboring village Vatarde-Usgaon. Then, whether there will be construction or soil filling?

Project Proponent answered that as informed in the Presentation, this is Express Way. Your demand is for soil filling as fencing will be at the both side of the express way and people have to cross the road. The provisions have been made as per the criteria of Expressway and they will be followed. When VOP is built, the tunnel is at both sides. The soil filling is carried there to increase the height. If there is fly over, the pillars are built. Soil filing is as per the design and plan.

Project Proponent further informed that often the material which is available in the area is filled in. Here soil will be used for filling. Now-a-days, waste material is also used e.g. if the fly ash from the power plant is made available, it will be used while filling.

While answering the questions raised by the participants, the Project Proponent informed that a big interchange will be developed at Kashid Kopar village in Vasai Taluka. You can go both sides by Express Way to Ahmedabad or Mumbai. The person who came from Ahmedabad can go to Koshid at Vasai Taluka. Hence, local people have to go upto Interchange spot.

Project Proponent further answered that, the water level in the area is studied so that the road is not closed during the rainy season. The 1.5 - 2 meters of soil layer is laid on it and there is a layer of cement on it, so the road is above the water level. At this moment, the participants informed that the roads in the area are completely flooded during the rainy season.

It is informed that here people are staying at sea level only. But after development of the road, the water will not be obstructed or accumulated, and village will not be drowned as there will be tunnels. The rainwater will not accumulate on the road as it will connect to the natural resources along the road.

The participants informed that if there is rain for one day at Wada Taluka, flood-like conditions prevail here. Here a whirlpool of water is formed.

At this moment, Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee informed that the suggestions raised by the participants are noted and it will be included in the minutes of the meeting. Chairman of the Environment Public Hearing Committee directed the Project Proponent that utmost care should be taken in the rainy season so that water should not accumulate due to roads during monsoon. Chairman further informed that excessive rainfall is defined as 65 mm of rainfall. Now nothing happens because of 65 millimeters of rain. If it rains 100-200 millimeters one day in the rainy season, it floods.

Chairman of the Environment Public Hearing Committee opined that the local people should not suffer even after completion of the project. They should not lose the contact and should not get hurt after completion of the project work also. He directed Project Proponent to insert the measures to be taken in this regard by him in the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) report.

2) Shri Krishna Bhoir, Resident – Wada, Tal – Wada, Dist – Palghar: -

He informed that the height of the road is 3-5 meters only in this area as per the information obtained by him. He said that he walked from Talasari to Badlapur many times. The proposed road is taken at a distance of 200-500 mtrs and the road is close to the hill. Due to which, our agriculture fields will be submerged and barren. The human settlements will sink. Water should be carried/flown properly.

The second question that raises here is much of the proposed road will pass through the forest area. This will destroy a lot of forest resources.

The third question arises is that in our area at Satori Ghani, Kangon, Lendi Kangon, Nimboli, there are “Hot-Water Ponds.” If the construction of project is carried there and if earthquake occurs due to it, the Government Administration needs to make alternative arrangements and study, so that local farmers do not have to suffer.

While giving answer, Project Proponent informed that Shri Bhoir actively participates since the beginning and he has given written suggestions also to Grampanchayat Office. Project Proponent informed that care has been taken to ensure that natural flow will not be affected. Hence, the rainwater will not be accumulated. If there is nalla, the bridge will be built on it. In many places square tunnels will be constructed at regular intervals. Hence rainwater will not be accumulated.

The next question is raised regarding FOREST area. This issue totally falls under jurisdiction of Forest Department and we will have to obtain separate permission from the Forest Department. The proposal is scrutinised. It is studied that which species of trees have to be cut down, which species of trees have to be planted to minimize the impact of the project, it is totally guided by the Forest Department.

Whatever the Forest Department claims, the compensation will be paid by the project proponent, so as to minimize damage to forest lands and the environment. The proposal is already submitted to Forest Department. Project Proponent further informed that the Government has already specified Seismic Zones and constructions is always made as guided depending on the magnitude of the earthquake. Hence, there will not be any loss of local people and construction. There will be no danger to traffic and roads.

He further informed that proposed road does not pass through a hot water pond. We have already seen at Vajreshwari that hot water comes from underground. Road construction is not going on till then. We are not digging the road; we are filling the road. Therefore, hot water ponds are not likely to be damaged.

3) Shri Shantaram Jadhav, Resident – Bhatane, Tal -Vasai, Dist – Palghar:-

He informed that the situation of the Bhatane is totally different. The proposed road passes through Bhatane. If the agriculture fields are at other sides, the question arises how local farmers will go there for cultivation. If there is only one underpass, then we have to walk for 3 – 4 k.ms to go to our agriculture fields. Hence, the underpass be provided in-between for the farmers. Our village is at north side and crematorium is at other side. What you will do about it?

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee directed Project Proponent to provide underpasses keeping in view the needs of the local people. He suggested that considering the difficulties likely to face by the local people, separate cemetery be developed at other side with the consent of the villagers and it should be handed over to Grampanchayat.

Project Proponent answered that there will fencing at two sides of the Express Way. Hence, VoP and tunnel will be provided at the spot of crossing big crowded roads of the villages. As per the norms of Express Way, the underpass will be provided at every 500 meters. Hence, the villagers will not have to go more than 500 meters for crossing the road. But if local people desire to raise their suggestions, objections for this, they may submit it in writing. It will be considered.

Chairman of the Environment Public Hearing Committee here remarked that though the recording of the discussions is in progress, it is informed to give suggestions, objections in writing. Further, Chairman of the Environment Public Hearing Committee directed to try to increase / give maximum underpass to avoid obstructions to the transport of local residents and non-obstruction to two-wheeler traffic.

4) Mrs. Sugandha Sachin Jadhav, Ex Sabhapati, Vasai Panchayat Samiti, Dist – Palghar :-

Mrs. Sugandha Jadhav said that the farmers living in the area from Navsai to Adane mostly have their agriculture fields to the south side. Hence, footpaths and underpass require for the farmers. As discussed during the meeting, if the alternative location/plot is made available, a new crematorium can be developed. The local farmers can provide alternate site for the crematorium.

She further demanded that the information should be made available of the tunnels which will be provided to farmers for going at their fields at south side.

As the fields are so long, it now takes us half an hour to reach the fields. If these tunnels are given somewhere in Navsai Phata or inbetween place, we will suffer a lot.

Chairman of the Environment Public Hearing Committee here informed that above points have been already discussed previously and it is noted also. He remarked that after completion of the project, the standard of living of this area will increase. Mrs Jadhav informed that along with agriculture, we have developed mango orchards as a side business. It will also ruined by this project. Chairman of the Environment Public Hearing Committee said that after completion of the project, the rate of the land will be increase.

5) Shri Sujay More, Resident – Palghar, Dist – Palghar :-

Shri Sujay Bhojar said that he wants to ask two technical questions: -

- a) Lot of wild animals stay here. They migrate seasonally. Many wild animals migrate from Tanasa to Kalsubai seasonally. What effect will this project have on them?

- b) There are many small and big forts from Hajimalang to Matheran. Will the archeological/ ancient principles affect due to this project?
- c) If we look at the alignment, we add that C is the section and we are making joint of it. What is the need to build so much even though the rest of the road exists?

Project Proponent answered that Archaeological Department works independently. The detailed report is already submitted to them. As per the latest information, Archaeological Department, Govt. of India has issued No Objection Certificate (NOC) to this project. Archaeological constructions / monuments within 300 meters were studied in the survey while preparing the Environmental Impact Assessment report. There is no need of separate No Objection Certificate for this.

Project Proponent further said that question was raised why so long design is prepared and remarked that the answer is given by the participants only. If we have designed straight road, then there are villages like Bhivandi, Ambernath. This project is planned to avoid traffic congestion. This project is for Heavy Vehicle traffic.

While giving answer for seasonal migration of wild animals, it is informed that separate Cell is in existence at Forest Department. The project report is already submitted to it.

However, it is to be noted that this project does not go through the wildlife area/sector. The Forest Department Committee has already visited the project site and carried the survey. The directives which will be given by Wildlife Board for seasonal migration of wild animals will be implemented strictly and it will be included in EIA report also.

6) Shri Krishna Bhoir, Wada, Dist – Palghar:-

Shri Krishna Bhoir asked about the rehabilitation issue and informed that there are 49 households which will be affected due to this project at Nimboli village of Wada Taluka. We are sending our representations since 2018 and several times correspondence is made. But there is no response. He further informed that the land for rehabilitation is already available at Nimboli village only. Now the question arises that where we can go now?

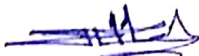
Chairman of the Environment Public Hearing Committee promised to look into the matter and to inform concerned officials. He further informed that here and at Vasai, there is a package.

Convener of the Environment Public Hearing Committee appealed all to raise their suggestions, objections regarding the proposed project in environmental angle. There was no response.

Convener of the Environment Public Hearing Committee thanked all for attending this meeting and raising the questions. He informed that the suggestions, objections raised during the meeting are noted and it will be included in the minutes of the meeting in Marathi and in English. The minutes of the meeting along with written objections received and Final EIA report will be submitted to Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Govt. of India, New Delhi. An Expert Committee will take further decision accordingly.

Convener on behalf of Chairman of the Environment Public Hearing Committee declared that the meeting is concluded.

The meeting ended extending thanks to the Chair.



(Ishwar Thakare)

Convener

Environment Public Hearing Committee

And

Sub Regional Officer, Thane – 2,
MPCB, Thane



(Dr. Rajendra Rajput)

Member

Environment Public Hearing Committee

And

Regional Officer, Thane,
MPCB, Thane



(Dr. Manik Gursal, IAS)

Chairman,

Environment Public Hearing Committee

And

District Magistrate, Palghar,
Dist – Palghar