

07 Oct 2022

To

Rahul Narvekar, Speaker of the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly

Harshita Narvekar, BMC Corporator

CC: Ashwini Bhide, Additional Commissioner BMC

Re: Design Tweaks to improve both the Coastal Road and the City at large

Dear Rahul, Harshita & Ashwini,

Thank you for the joint-meeting on **28 September 2022** at the Vidhan Bhavan, Mantralaya, with Ashwini Bhide who oversees the Mumbai Coastal Road project.

Also, a big thank you for accepting my previous suggestion of connecting the entire promenade which was earlier disconnected at 2 places (Haji Ali & Lotus). This now gives the City a continuous 6.7km long promenade – it also shows that you are open to positive suggestions and we appreciate that!

We have cleared all doubts in the meeting and have proved that the design tweaks we suggested are keeping all traffic design and IRC codes in mind. Please note that the project will be completed in the coming year, however what is built will last us for a century at least, hence it is imperative it is done well. As the project is only 62% complete, there is scope for improvement now. Projects like these have been reversed even after 100% completion as illustrated during the meeting with several world examples. It is important we work (and design) keeping current and future needs in mind – thinking about the city as a whole - rather than with an outdated transport-only plan.

As discussed, please find a few of the easily achievable points.

All of these have been presented to the BMC in the past as well and I must thank you for personally taking the time, effort and energy in entertaining our larger basic needs – for looking at the city as more than just a Road!

1. We still strongly believe in the realignment of the road towards the land side rather than the current alignment along the seaside. This would make everything, from the proposed bus (mass) transit to the open spaces far more accessible & useful. The current design completely disconnects the city from the sea, and while the basic transport needs of the city are met, they destroy the city's urban fabric and potentially amazing waterfront. In case we cannot realign the road because the BMC insists it's due to court restrictions (this could be debated as we're sure the court would welcome the amelioration of a public project due to design improvements), then we have an easier and simpler solution on hand, albeit an inferior one. *In case you find this impossible for some reason, the road alignment remains unchanged and the following points can still easily be achieved.*

2. The median reduces from 11m to 1m as there is no potential for future expansion at any bridge or interchange as currently designed. This was discussed in detail and agreed to by the engineers present as well.

3. As a result of point 2, the promenade now increases from 20m to 30m. This is a 50% increase along the entire 6.7km long seafront.

4. Also as a result of point 2, the road width, and therefore the pedestrian crossings now reduce from 45m to 35m. This would be a major saving in cost!

5. The road crossings being underground and few and far between are unsafe and inaccessible. They would require staircases and ramps and ideally elevators as well. This is not only expensive but also inconvenient to the human being. Being unsafe and inaccessible, they would be underused, making it even more dangerous. Eventually the sea front would be locked up! A case in point is the promenade at the Bandra end of the Bandra Worli Sea Link which is and has been locked up for the last 20 years! This would be a great loss for the city...

To solve this easily and economically, we propose that the cars ramp down and up (simple underpass) allowing for the pedestrian citizen to easily cross the road at the same level (at grade). The reduction of road width (point 4) and unnecessary services such as staircases, elevators and ramps now makes this cheaper as well.

This would help connect the inner gardens with the external sea facing promenade. As we have a potential ridership on the road pegged at under 100,000 cars and a pedestrian (citizen) population of 21 million, we consider this a no-brainer. This can be easily done without changing the alignment, losing time or money in the project.

6. There is an exit at Breach Candy, but none at Nepean Sea Road. This would result in an enormous bottleneck at Kemps Corner (which is already over congested), since all the North and south bound traffic from Walkeshwar, Sachivalya and Nepean Sea Road would have to go via Breach Candy / Kemps Corner. As currently planned, Nepean Sea road only has an underground connector at PDP straight to Marine Drive. Therefore, we recommend an exit here to ease the inevitable future traffic congestion.

7. As per Rahu ji's suggestions during the meeting, we also advise relooking at the Ramps to the underground tunnels at Marine drive, this is simple enough as there is absolutely ZERO change to the tunnels themselves. Realigning the ramps is easy and will benefit the city tremendously, both in utility and in the reduction of the inevitable traffic there. Do note that this is also a Heritage zone and our solution while improving traffic flow also improves the entire look of the area.

After all, one would want this project to reduce and not increase traffic.

We are happy and ready to help you achieve these very easy design tweaks.

Looking forward to your quick and favourable response.

Warm regards,

Alan Abraham

Citizen and member of the Mumbai Architects Collective

*The **Mumbai Architects Collective** is a group of over 120 top urban and architectural design practices belonging to the City and as practising professionals and concerned citizens, we are offering our collective knowledge and experience to help the BMC deliver a better, more sustainable, and more economically viable design solutions to the city we love and cherish.*