

Justification for Locating the Project in Forest Land

Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) has decided to take up rehabilitation and upgradation of NH 48 (old NH 04) stretch in the state of Karnataka through National Highways Authority of India (NHAI). The project road starts from Chitradurga at km 189+000 and ends at Davangere at km 260+000 (includes Chitradurga Bypass) in the State of Karnataka. The project is part of Golden Quadrilateral. Total length of project road is 77 km. The project road traverses in Chitradurga and Davanagere Districts. Geographically it runs West to East between Latitude of 14°10'11.77"N & 14°25'58.96"N and Longitude of 76°28'19.97"E & 75°55'6.73"E. The project road passes through 2 taluks i.e., Chitradurga and Davanagere.

Major portion (98%) of the project road is passing through plain terrain while the remaining part (2%) is passing through rolling terrain. The Right of Way (RoW) of the existing road varies from 18 to 60m. Existing RoW at forest section varies from 20m to 26m. Existing project road is four/six lane bituminous carriageway with paved shoulder on either side. The pavement condition has been found to be fair to good in condition. The limited RoW and discontinuous service road coupled with heavy truck traffic leads to frequent mishaps and makes this stretch highly unsafe to travel. Improvement of existing road to six lane road with service road will provide better, fast, safe and smooth connectivity for the commuters between the districts as well as in the region.

As per traffic assessment, existing four lane road warrants six lane road with service road to cater to the traffic for the up-coming years. Moreover, considering the project viability, six lane with paved shoulder shall be implemented with additional land acquisition up to 60m to attain the traffic speed of 80 - 100 kmph. Project requires felling of 443 nos. avenue trees. The project road abuts Anagodu forest for 1.415 km from km 241+600 to km 243+015. At forest location, proposed RoW is restricted to 47m (concentric widening) to minimize the impact on ecology of the region. Widening of existing cattle/ pedestrian underpass (km 242+830), a minor bridge (km 242+674), a pipe culvert (km 242+012) and a box culvert (km 242+ 407) will be undertaken in forest section. No defense land and ASI monument are located along the project road. No wildlife sanctuaries and National Parks or any other protected areas are located within 5km from the project alignment.

The existing project alignment in the Anagodu forest section is having 4 lane with earthen shoulder configuration. Anagodu forest is shared among Anagodu and Hulupinakatte Village, where existing national highway road is bisecting the forest land which falls in both the villages. As the existing NH 48 project road is traverse through forest area, widening of road requires diversion of 3.155 Ha of forest land. Alternative option study for bypassing Forest land was explored, by bypassing entire forest and village. However, it found to be not feasible as forest extended upto 750m (aerial distance) on northern side and 900m on southern side. Hence, widening of existing alignment is found to be socio-economically, financially and environmentally feasible option.

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