

## **Justification for Inclusion of Forest land in Nerul/Belapur-uran Railway project**

### **Background**

CIDCO was appointed as a New Town Development Authority in the year 1970. Government acquired the land from 95 villages and handed over to CIDCO for development of towns. To de-congest the mother city, Mumbai, CIDCO developed 14 nodes in Navi Mumbai. The development of Nerul/Belapur-uran Railway project was envisaged way back in 1997. Further, the detailed study was made and the site, as shown in master Plan, is finalized for this Railway project. The Govt. of Maharashtra through CIDCO is making efforts for development of this Railway project at Navi Mumbai. The total area of the Railway project is 144.96 ha., out of this 20.05 ha. Of land is Forest land.

Techno-economic feasibility study for Belapur to Uran was conducted by MTP(R) Bombay and the report was submitted to CIDCO in 1990. Three alternative routes were examined by the study team for the alignment of the railway line from Belapur to Uran. Considering the merits and demerits of the three alternatives, the report recommended the most suitable alignment for final adoption.

The final location survey was conducted by RITES and the alignment demarcated in the selected corridor, with modifications in small stretches as per the requirement of CIDCO/ MTP( R) keeping in view their future development plan for Nerul, Ulva and Dronagiri Nodes of Navi Mumbai.

### **Forest Issue**

The non-forest Project lands is owned by CIDCO. Some patches under Mangrove habitat are included in the proposal as directed by Forest dept. The patches of forest land is unavoidably included in the Railway project. Efforts were made to re-plan the area excluding the Forest land, however, due to the shape and size of the forest land pockets located scattered along the layout of Railway line, it was feared that major parts of the layout may have to be cancelled. Hence, there appears no option but to include the forest land in the layout. Considering unavoidable circumstances, CIDCO was constrained to submit a proposal for diversion of Forest land. The said land was inadvertently included in the Railway Project, for further planning.