



No car depot for Metro line at “eco-sensitive” Aarey, demand residents

Want Mumbai's Metro 3 line car shed to be shifted to Kanjurmarg or Kalina



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#Mumbai #Aarey Milk Colony #Metro 3

Alleging that the state government has misrepresented facts on alternative sites for constructing a car depot at Metro line 3 of Mumbai, citizen groups and NGOs have expressed strong opposition against any construction activity at the city's lone green lung, Aarey Milk Colony.

On the main parameters for site selection, namely size, proximity to alignment, current status, ownership, shape and topography, alternatives were disregarded on the basis of false facts, said the coalition under Apna Mumbai Abhiyan, formed to protect city's natural resources. The group demands that the Metro 3 car shed be shifted either to Kanjurmarg or Kalina.

As per the Detailed Project Report (DPR) of 2011, the Metro 3 line (Colaba-SEEPZ) has a requirement of 25 ha land for the car shed. The report said that Kalina had 20 ha of land available for the construction of car shed while Aarey had 34.3 ha available. Thus, as per its findings Aarey would be more suitable. But as per an independent survey, it was found that Kalina had 26 ha available to build the shed while Aarey had 27 ha. Though Kalina was preferred on all parameters, Aarey was finalised on the basis of its plot. Without conducting any ground surveys, the area of these plots was calculated via online mapping,” said Priya Mishra of Aarey Conservation Group.

“The reason for ignoring Kalina was that the depots must be located at the terminal end of the line but a survey of depots in India and around the world shows that it could be located anywhere along the route. Kalina and Kanjurmarg are sufficient to accommodate the needs of metro 3 car depot,” said Stalin D of the NGO Vanashakti. He added that Vanashakti was waiting for the National Green Tribunal hearing next month after the NGO had filed a petition to declare Aarey colony an ‘eco-sensitive’ zone.

The group says that Kanjurmarg has also been identified for the car shed for Jogeshwari-Kanjurmarg Metro VI. Its advantage is that it's a government-owned vacant land and has an available area of 41 ha with sufficient space for both lines. Similarly, Kalina is also a government-owned vacant land and is adjacent to the metro route.

Opening up Aarey, a contiguous part of Sanjay Gandhi National Park, can result in ecological damage, loss of habitat to wildlife and flooding not only in Aarey but also downstream the airport and Chakala areas. Besides, being an important catchment area for Mithi river, the 3,000 acres of Aarey and its 5,00,000 trees serve to increase water table of adjoining suburbs.