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# Keep off Juhu beach, locals tell BMC again

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MUMBAI:

The ongoing peer review of the BMC's ambitious coastal road project has sparked a new debate. The review consultants have suggested four options for constructing the proposed road at the Juhu beach section: an undersea tunnel, an underground tunnel below the beach, a sea link connecting the beach's ends and a wall on the beach after artificially extending it (the road will run atop the wall). Citizen activists are aghast at all the plans and say the beach deserves to stay untouched.

Last August the locals of Juhu had formed a human chain to protest against an undersea tunnel proposed in the coastal road's draft project report (DPR). Now that more options have been suggested, it has only toughened the resolve of those who are opposed to any coastal road-related construction on or along the beach.

Filmmaker and civic activist Ashoke Pandit said, "By exploring such options they will completely finish the beach. The beach and the sea are natural areas which deserve to stay untouched. Lakhs of people visit Juhu beach daily to enjoy fresh air. We will never allow our beach to be touched. If the BMC really wants to improve the city's transport infrastructure, it should improve the existing conditions of trains and buses."

Hansel D' Souza, founder member of the Juhu Citizens' Welfare Group, said that all the options suggested now are going to affect tidal patterns. "Firstly, our objection is against tampering with ecology. By implementing any one of the newly proposed options, the planners would damage the coastline. Also, in case they plan an undersea tunnel or one below the beach, they would need ramps, which will again have an effect on the coastline," said D'Souza.

Architect P K Das said, "Whatever the engineering knowledge in the construction of the coastal road is, it is not enough to deal with the forces of nature. All four options speak of construction along the coastline. Even if the planners go deep under the beach or the coastline, it is sure to have an adverse impact on the pattern of tidal waves and sediments.

"Also, a big shift may take place in future on sand bed formation on the beach. It is difficult to understand that when there is the option to construct an underground tunnel from Koliwada ahead of Khar Danda, which can come out near Ritambhara College in Juhu, why isn't it being considered?"