

Removal of trees to be seen in wider environmental context

The issue at hand is that trees have been planted on land earmarked for the Crown, including the Crown Right of Way

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PUDUCHERRY

The removal of trees needs to be seen in the wider environmental context of Auroville and the region, sources in Auroville said.

While the issue at hand is that trees have been planted on land earmarked for the Crown including the Crown Right of Way (RoW), a break-up of data shows that the total Crown RoW area is only 0.36% of the total master plan land area with a Crown RoW width of 16.7 m, they said.

The Crown is defined in the Auroville Master Plan as a key special use zone, “which traverses all the four zones in a concentric fashion with a width of 75 m, consisting of a

circular road with buildings facing it. This Crown area will provide most of the service facilities required to support the activities in the four zones mentioned above”.

Under the proposed implementation of the master plan, the land area of the main RoWs (Crown, 12 radials, International Zone loop road, outer ring, one link road) accounts for 1.64% of the total master plan land area, and the land area of the Crown RoW barely 0.36% of the total master plan area (RoW width of 16.7 m assumed), sources said.

With the total number of trees to be cut estimated at around 500, this intervention needs to be put in the



At loggerheads: The total Crown RoW area is only 0.36% of the total master plan land area, sources said.

context of the total number of trees planted elsewhere in Auroville, the CO2 sequestration impact that needs to be compensated for (or has already been compensated

for) and other parameters, according to sources at Auroville Foundation. Moreover, it was clear from the beginning that trees that were planted on land not earmarked for

☞ If this principle is being put into question, the idea of building a township will have to be given up... since there are trees everywhere in Auroville

forestry would have to be cut when township development in a particular area commences, sources said.

“If this principle is now being put into question, the idea of building a township will have to be given up in its entirety since there are trees everywhere in Auroville. There is a green belt and there are green corridors inside the city. Green work must take place on the designated space and not on land

earmarked for roads, infrastructure or other urban development. At present, about 3,500 people are staying on 3,200 acres of land owned by Auroville Foundation. This can hardly be called “sustainable”, one source said.

The sources also contended that the alternative routing being suggested could cause, in the long term, a significant negative environmental impact in addition to being an unacceptable deviation from the Master Plan (2025-26), of French architect Roger Anger, whose idea for a galaxy-shaped layout was endorsed by Sri Aurobindo’s collaborator, The Mother (Mirra Alfassa), who founded Auroville in 1968.