

# HISTORY BEING CREATED IN MUMBAI’S URBAN LANDSCAPE AT EASTERN WATERFRONT



Home buyers looking for properties have always been told that Mumbai is a saturated market and that there is no space for new innovative projects built on international popular trends. Many of the major real estate developers in the city also agree to this conventional thinking that the space constraints of the city and the smaller ticket size of the existing old buildings also have a telling effect on the architecture and layout designs of the redevelopment projects in the city. The growing population and the need for raising the city to the international benchmarks in the recent years has forced the state and the central governments to think of releasing large tracts

of land in the eastern coast which is now dominated by ports. The state government over the years has been able to convince the Centre that the best course of development for a city like Mumbai which is so space-starved would be to release the port land for development of residential and commercial real estate which would not only give a breather to the city in terms of affordable and premium housing and commercial development that would make Mumbai’s profile comparable with some of the most popular liveable cities in the world. The plans that the government has conjured up for the development of Sewri

on the eastern coast have all the makings of smart city project with overarching open spaces and earmarked zones for civic facilities and soft infrastructure. The development of the eastern waterfront which is about 28 km from Colaba in the south to Wadala in the north can transform the outlook of real estate development in the city even while giving its inhabitants a new uber lifestyle. Sewri, which is in south Mumbai, has been a prime location for real estate and infrastructure development because of its proximity and access to other business districts in the city, and its sought-after real estate profile that its future plans hold.

## CHANGING DEMOGRAPHY & ATTENDANT LIFESTYLE TRANSFORMATION

All over the world major port cities have successfully managed this ultra-modern urban transformation but Mumbai is better placed than most other cities because of its demographic and topographic advantages. Maharashtra government has also officially stated that the development of south Mumbai as a luxury housing destination has been made possible with the development of mega infrastructure projects which will help quick transport of people who move in and out of the commercial districts of the city during the day. About five years ago the Centre appointed a high-powered committee of urban designers, architects and government officials to find the potential of dockland development. The city of Mumbai was designed by the British centuries ago and hence the government has taken up the eastern waterfront development to meet the modern needs of a

right mix of premium and affordable housing, transport links and public spaces. The development plans of Sewri come close on the heels of the release of mill land for mixed-use projects, and the trends seen in the large pockets of development in the 243 hectares of mill land give confidence that the government would be able to pull off the eastern waterfront with equal finesse. According to an urban development observer, the state government is keen to preserve the ecological balance of the city’s shoreline even while mega projects are being developed. The flamingo Point in Sewri is not only a draw for children who are exposed to the biodiversity that is rarely seen in Mumbai but also for nature lovers who spends hours enjoying the serendipity of the mudflats in the middle of the city.



## SOUTH MUMBAI HAS BEEN EARMARKED FOR PREMIUM REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT BY GOVERNMENT

Noted urban planner and architect Hafeez Contractor who has been in a state government committee has even made a proposal to reclaim over 700 hectares of land from the mangroves for building theme parks, sports complexes and housing and commercial projects. The waterfront development in which Sewri would be the center-piece will also have a convention centre for business meets and exhibitions. Today Mumbai desperately needs world class convention centres.

The location of Sewri at the centre of business districts in Mumbai has given the residents of this cluster a trump card. In the whole scheme of things, port activities on the eastern coast would be restricted to the core dock areas which would release over 400 hectares of land for development of various projects. The open spaces and parks would become a highlight of the development plans for Mumbai which would be half the size of New York’s Central Park with verdant greenery for people to have a good time. Fortunately, unlike the port cities in the West, Mumbai’s port area has not become an industrial

waste land. That has made the development of the eastern waterfront that much easier for the government. The development of the London docklands took over three decades, but urban planners in India have the benefit of learning from their mistakes and introducing the latest technology in construction and design of Mumbai’s eastern waterfront. The best example of the kind of changes in locational profile that development of high-end projects can bring to a region is proven by The Imperial Towers in Tardeo which is today considered as the most premium real estate in the country. The advantage that home buyers have in looking for projects in the eastern waterfront is based on the futuristic development plans of real estate projects in the region. Many industry observers state quite candidly that even if 30-40 per cent of the government plans to develop the eastern waterfront come to fruition the complete outlook of the city would change. The eastern waterfront would become a sought-after real estate destination than Worli or Marine Drive.

