THE WUHAN PLACEMAKING WEEK 2018

PLACEMAKING FOR SUSTAINABLE ECOLOGY OF CITIES’:
THE RE-INVIGORATION OF IRLA NULLAH, MUMBAI

4th DECEMBER 2018
THE NULLAHS OF MUMBAI
Evolving a Plan for Transformative, City-Wide Change

Mumbai has a large network of water channels and water courses that aid the natural storm water drainage in the city. The city authorities are apathetic towards their protection, conservation and integration with the city’s Development Plan. Instead, these assets are merely looked upon to maximize construction and to accommodate real estate interests.

This initiative addresses the abuse and exclusion of over 300 kms of watercourses, that includes four rivers within the city that have been turned into ‘nullahs’ or drains. It brings to light the continuing degradation of the vital 140 sq. km of natural areas of the city -- its mangroves, wetlands, creeks, salt pans, rivers, lakes, beaches, hills and forests.

The Irla Nullah Re-invigoration Plan -- part of a larger citizens’ movement advocating the Juhu Vision Plan that covers an area of 4 sq. km -- focuses on cleaning and turning the waters of a polluted and much-abused natural watercourse backyard and its immediate precinct in the western suburb of Juhu into a vibrant public space and neighborhood fore-courts generating rich social, political and environmental dividends since these are the natural storm water drains of the city.

Imagine a scenario where Mumbaikars have easy access to over 600 kilometers of landscaped walking and cycling tracks and open spaces along the watercourses that intermingle and interweave through various parts of the city’s urban fabric?

This is the over-arching vision that has manifested itself in a tangible pilot effort – the Irla Nullah Re-invigoration Project.
A LARGER ECOLOGY & THE CITY
RECLAIMING WATERFRONTS AND EXPANDING PUBLIC SPACES
A Movement for Protection of Mumbai’s Seafront

One of Mumbai’s greatest assets is its coastline which forms a series of unique and picturesque waterfronts. Unfortunately, these have become the backyard of the city and degenerated into its biggest dumping ground.

Reclamation, sewage disposal and encroachment have ravaged the waterfronts.
WHAT WE DON’T SEE AND REALIZE AS OUR PUBLIC SPACES ASSETS:

482 SQ KMS OF TOTAL AREA
149 KMS OF COASTLINE
16 KMS OF BEACHES
40.7 KMS OF RIVERS COVERING 1.5 SQ KMS
09.25 SQ KMS OF CREEKS
48 KMS OF ‘NULLAHS’
305 KMS OF POTENTIAL PEDESTRIAN AVENUES ALONG ROADS
64.31 SQ KMS OF FORESTS AND HILLS
155 ACRES OF 51 RAILWAY STATIONS
PRODUCTION OF BACKYARDS
INTEGRATION: IRLA NULLAH RE-INVIGORATION PROJECT
NEIGHBOURHOOD PROJECTS TO A CITY-WIDE MOVEMENT
22 years and continuing

ON THE WATERFRONTS: RECLAIMING MUMBAI'S OPEN SPACES
A Published Book

WATERFRONTS PROJECTS
- Bandra Bandstand Promenade
- Carter Road Promenade, Bandra
- Land's End Amphitheatre, Bandra
- Juhu Beach Restoration Plan
- Gateway Of India Precinct Refurbishment
- Dadar Prabhadevi Chowpatty
- Versova Beach Development Plan
- Andheri Beach Development Plan

IRLA NULLAH RE-INVIGORATION PROJECT

IRLA NULLAH RE-INVIGORATION PROJECT & RE-INVIGORATION OF MUMBAI'S WATERCOURSES
A STUDY

VISION JUHU: EXPANDING PUBLIC SPACES
RE-ENVISIONING THE CITY & ITS OPEN SPACES
A Published Book

RE-ENVISIONING THE CITY MUMBAI: EXPANDING PUBLIC SPACES

VISION JUHU PLAN
- Development of Public Space
- Irla Nullah Development and Creation of Public Space
- Locating Metro Rail
- Roads Network and One-ways
- Integration of Social Amenities and Institutions
- Improvement of Amenities in Slums & conservation of Goathans

Open Mumbai Plan
Open Mumbai – A Public Exhibition

Plan Elements:
- Sea Fronts
- Beaches
- Rivers
- Creeks & Mangroves
- Wetlands
- Lakes, Ponds & Tanks
- Nullahs
- Parks & Gardens
- Plot & Layout Recreational Garden
- Historic Forts & Precincts
- Hills & Forest
- City Forest
- ‘Open’ People Friendly Railway Stations
- Roads & Pedestrian Avenues
- Area Networking

OPEN MUMBAI: RE-ENVISIONING THE CITY & ITS OPEN SPACES
A Published Book

RECLAIMING PUBLIC SPACES

NEIGHBORHOOD BASED CITY PLANNING

IRLA NULLAH RE-INVIGORATION PROJECT: RECLAIMING AND INTEGRATING THE BACKYARDS
the vision juhu plan
This was a project campaign poster made for response and reaction in public meetings from citizens and local stakeholders. The idea was to popularize the movement and thereby the planning process of such public interest projects in cities.
VISION JUHU - EXPANDING PUBLIC SPACES

Juhu is a residential suburb in the western part of Mumbai, synonymous with glamorous bungalows of movie stars and one that houses one of the most popular public spaces in the city - the iconic Juhu beach.

Vision Juhu has evolved keeping the larger issues of the city in mind. It includes conserving re-served open spaces and creating new ones, pedestrianisation, significant solutions to flooding in Juhu, development of the Irla nullah, improvement in transport infrastructure by skillfully integrating the proposed Metro rail and re-planning traffic flow, opening up of several accesses to the beach, appraisal of social amenities like educational and health facilities and making them accessible to all, improvement in the standard of living in slums and gaothans (urban villages), provisioning of space and security to hawkers and most importantly networking this public realm.
The Vision Juhu Movement has been rooted in public participation and democratic planning ideals. These clearly manifested themselves when citizens would turn up regularly in large numbers to oppose wrong doings and malpractices when it came to open spaces in their neighbourhood.
The Irla Nullah runs through the western suburb of Juhu with a total length of 7.5 kms. Owing to its geographical footprint, most areas of the neighbourhood have direct access or are in close proximity to this water body.

A host of public institutions and amenities are found adjacent to this nullah. The re-invigoration proposal looks to interconnect these amenities and open spaces to the nullah in order to increase participation and thereby improve vigilance of these public spaces.
Importantly, this movement and the project are a unique example of the need for waging citizens’ struggles for exercising their Right to the City and in scripting its current and future growth and take on several challenges.

A plan that networks and integrates the nullah into the neighbourhood as well as with the multiple amenities and institutions in the precinct through green streets and roads that promote a walking culture along the nullah as well as within the Irla precinct.

These include the conservation of a vital natural asset; its integration with the neighborhood and the city; expanding public spaces — both in physical and democratic terms; popularising and demystifying the planning process for effective participation in conceptualisation and implementation process, primarily effecting a paradigm shift in understanding of sustainable ecology and building with nature and its benefits to the quality of life and environment.

Phase 1 of the project includes the development of three citizens’ parks namely the Kishore Kumar baug, Kaifi Azmi Park and the Childrens’ Forest Park; a public, open air amphitheatre - the Vijay Tendulkar Rang Manch; walking and cycling tracks along the nullah complete with lighting and landscaping, and most importantly the cleaning of the waters in the nullah itself.
The chain of public parks along Irla Nullah in the form of the Kaifi Azmi Park, Kishore Kumar Baug and the Childrens’ Forest Park form an immaculate ‘city forest’ within a dense urban setting.
KISHORE KUMAR BAUG + VIJAY TENDULKAR RANG MANCH
CHILDREN'S FOREST PARK
CLEANING THE IRLA NULLAH

One of the focal points of the project and one that was key to the success of the re-appropriation and re-invigoration of the nullah itself was the challenge of cleaning the water. It has been mentioned earlier that these water bodies were originally built as natural and open storm water channels that would take water from inland into the sea. Unfortunately over the years, most of the flow in these water bodies is contributed by illegal sewage and waste water connections from adjacent areas.

There is a tremendous amount of silt that has accumulated over the years on the nullah bed, and the effective cleaning of the water would also entail reducing this bio-waste silt from the bed itself in order to reduce the foul smell and odour of the water too.

The design team has worked closely with the National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) to develop a system for cleaning the water. This system comprises of several elements that include 1) a floating matter filtration gate, 2) silt trap beds, 3) compact treatment units and 4) floating beds of phytorid plants.
PLACEMAKING:
A CONTINUING ECO-STRUGGLE
THE MOVEMENT TO RECLAIM PUBLIC SPACES IN MUMBAI

22 years and continuing

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

- Clearwater Citizens Award to PK Das & Assoc. by Waterfronts Center, Washington, 2002
- The Urban Age Award by The Deutsche Bank, 2007
- Changemakers of Mumbai Award to PK Das by Hindustan Times, 2013
- The International Jane Jacobs Medal to PK Das by Rockefeller Center, 2016

PROJECTS AND CAMPAIGNS

- Juhu Beach Restoration Plan
- Land's End restoration + Amphitheatre
- Vision Juhu Plan
- Irla Nullah campaign
- Irla Nullah Re-invigoration Project
- Students project + publication
- PUDDI Research: Re-invigoration of Mumbai’s Watercourses

TIMELINE

- 1996
  - Mumbai waterfronts survey
  - Juhu Beach Restoration Project
- 1997
  - Bandra Bandstand Promenade
- 1998
  - Carter Road Promenade
- 1999
  - Gateway Of India Precinct
- 2000
  - Bhaji Prabhi Garden
- 2001
  - Mapping Mumbai’s Natural Areas + Open Spaces
- 2002
  - Juhu Beach Restoration Project
  - Land's End restoration + Amphitheatre
- 2003
  - Dadar - Prabhadevi Beach Restoration
- 2004
  - Open Mumbai Plan + Exhibition
- 2005
  - Childrens’ Forest Park
- 2006
  - Vision Juhu Plan
- 2007
  - Irla Nullah campaign
  - Irla Nullah Re-invigoration Project
- 2008
  - Students project + publication
- 2009
  - PUDDI Research: Re-invigoration of Mumbai’s Watercourses
- 2010
  - Kishore Kumar Baug + Vijay Tendulkar Rang Manch
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  - Carter Road Promenade
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  - Mapping Mumbai’s Natural Areas + Open Spaces
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  - Childrens’ Forest Park
- 2017
  - PUDDI Research: Re-invigoration of Mumbai’s Watercourses
- 2018
a continuing movement..