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MMRDA Grounds, Bandra-Kurla Complex

CS - 02

Leading and Best Practices for Good Urban Governance

Date: 29 January 2009

Time: 16:15 - 18.00

Chair:

Shri Manu Kumar Srivastava
Secretary
Department of Urban Development (II)
Government of Maharashtra

Presenters:

Shri Anjum Parwez
Commissioner Municipal Administration
Government of Karnataka

Shri Sunil Kumar Sharma
Commissioner Municipal Administration
Hyderabad

Shri T. K. Jose
Secretary
Local Self Government Department
Government of Kerala

Shri James Titmus
Chairman
United Genesyst

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Sabarmati River Front Development (SRFD) Project

I. P. Gautam, Chairman

Sabarmati River Front Development Corporation Limited (SRFDCL)

Benefits

Ahmedabad, the seventh largest city of India and Commercial Capital of Gujarat State has unique identity recognized by River Sabarmati and Gandhi Ashram established on its western Bank. Sultan Ahmad Shah established the city in 1411. The City is spread over area of 466 Sq. Km. River Sabarmati flows from north to south in the center of the city and splits the city in almost two equal parts. The city Population is about 5.5 million. In Ahmedabad normally climate is hot and arid with scanty Rainfall. River Sabarmati is backbone of the development of Urban Sprawl of Ahmedabad.

Since long time the Sabarmati River has been subjected to severe pressure and abuse owing to the fast pace of urban and industrial growth of the city. The Sabarmati is a major source of water for the city due to the regular release of water from the Dharoi Dam and subsequently from Narmada Canal at upstream, however, for years, the riverfront remained neglected and characterized by unimaginative and unplanned development. It's potential to provide city level social infrastructure and recreation facilities was untapped.

Sewage contaminated the storm water out-falls and the dumping of industrial waste posed a major health and environmental hazard. Though the riverbank and bed provided a place to stay and source of livelihood for many poor citizens, the riverbank slums have been disastrously flood prone and lacked basic infrastructure services. The slums located along the riverbed have always been a major impediment to efficient management of monsoon floods in the river.

It has long been acknowledged that appropriate development of the riverfront can turn the river into a major asset, which can improve the quality of environment & life in Ahmedabad, improve the efficiency of its infrastructure, conserve the places of heritage importance, and create an opportunity for recreation / hospitality industry

In May 1997, the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation established the Sabarmati River Front Development Corporation Limited (SRFDCL) to develop the riverfront.

In 2004 after the intervention of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Gujarat Mr. Narendra Modi, the land of riverbed (162.79 ha) was transferred to Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation for execution of Riverfront Project through SRFDCL. The action plan prepared to expedite the execution of the project is being monitored by the State Govt. on regular basis covering the progress and minute details of the project.

The ambitious project involves creating embankments on both sides and developing a 10.6 km stretch of river front along each of the banks - from upstream of Subhash Bridge to Vasna Barrage.

The SRFD Project is expected to generate major city level benefits. Some of these are briefly discussed below:

An 'icon' for the city of Ahmedabad

The well developed riverfront will be a new icon for the city of Ahmedabad. An icon which would become a major tourist attraction thereby bringing investments in the area of hotels, entertainment, food courts, etc.

The facelift to conserve the monuments of heritage importance viz. Gandhi Ashram, Dandi Bridge, Fort wall & Manek Burj, Luli Mosque, Saptarshi Ghat etc would bring in lot many international tourists.

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AMC is planning to conserve the historical gates/ monuments viz, Delhi Darwaza, Astodia Darwaza, Teen Darwaza and Bhadra Fort. In order to connect it with the overall development, SRFDCL is going to co-ordinate this effort to bring all conservation activity together so as to give a fresh look to the heritage of the city.

The perennial presence of water Narmada Canal on this stretch of River in Ahmedabad would create a 10.6 km long waterway creating an opportunity for pleasure activities like boating, water sports, floating restaurants and also inland transportation from Subhash Bridge to Ambedkar Bridge if feasible.

Environmental improvement

• Recharge of the ground water aquifers of the city

Ahmedabad always remained heavily dependent on ground water to meet its water requirements. A significant component of Ahmedabad's water supply (nearly 42%) used to be met by the ground water sources, which were rapidly depleting. It was estimated that the ground water table fell @ 2.5 meters annually. The building of embankments on either side of the river and availability of water from Narmada canal have made it possible to retain water up to the upstream of the Vasna Barrage all year round. Retaining of this water in the river will result in recharging of the ground water aquifers and arrest the rapid fall in the ground water table in the city area.

• Diversion of the Sewer ensuring clean water in the river

Provision of sewer pipelines along both sides of the river will divert sewage to Ahmedabad's two sewage treatment plants instead of letting it flow into the river. The water in the river will remain clean, and the wells in the river bed will be recharged with clean water. The sewer pipelines, pumping stations and treatment plants are already under construction.

Within one year from now, the stinking water flowing in the river Sabarmati will be converted into clean, pure potable water.

Green Coverage

The project envisages a continuous corridor along the river edge in the form of a promenade of width varying between 5-17 m which would be a pedestrianised tree lined walkway of almost 10 kms. It would be possible to access the river directly from walkways. The plantation & Green Coverage will certainly convert the city into more vibrant and environment friendly urban neighborhood and will be an addition to the efforts of beatification of the city.

City level recreational spaces.

Ahmedabad has inadequate open spaces, gardens and city level cultural facilities. The SRFD Project will add forty hectares of parks and gardens, and spaces for cultural facilities. In addition about ten hectares of riverfront promenades will also be developed. These will provide a peaceful environment for all, particularly the old and the very young. These additions in the heart of the city will considerably enhance the availability of open space for the densest areas of the city.

Moreover the State Government has planned to construct an international Conventional Centre near Sardar Patel Ring Road Bridge on Sabarmati.

Elimination of flood hazard.

At present in case of a 3 lakh cusec flood nearly 7,000 slum households located on the riverbed, slopes of the river banks and adjacent get affected / get washed away by the flood. The magnitude of this problem has been ever increasing over time due to increase in number of slum households. The diaphragm wall and the second level retaining wall being constructed on both the banks are designed to provide protection against 4.75 lakh cusec flood which will not only eliminate the annual flooding of the low lying areas of the city but also prevent the washing away of slum households on river bank. In addition the possibility of increase in the number of riverbed slums will also be eliminated.

Strengthening of the transportation network of the city.

At present Ahmedabad has only one major north south link which is Ashram Road on the Western side of the city. The addition of a major north south road link on the east bank and strengthening of other roads will significantly add to the road



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network of the city, reduce traffic congestion and result in a more efficient flow of traffic. Hansol Bridge will add to strength of the transport network.

Flood management.

At present the flood management in the river Sabarmati is constrained by the presence of slum settlements along the riverbanks. The relocation of these settlements will ease the constraints on flood management.

Relocation and rehabilitation of slums.

The slum relocation and rehabilitation component of the Project will result in the transformation of slums affected by the Project. Affected households will be provided the housing units. This will eliminate the risk of flooding for many poor communities. Rehabilitation packages will improve the socio-economic well being of households. AMC is in the process of drafting a novel housing scheme for people from economical weaker section. The slum dwellers affected in project will be the main beneficiary of the rehabilitation scheme of SRFDL.

Provision for the informal markets.

At present the informal markets (Gurjari and Phool Bazar) which are of economic importance to the poor, lack accessibility, parking space, water supply, public toilets and ancillary facilities and take place in an unorganized manner. In addition they are disrupted due to flooding during the monsoon. The SRFD Project will strengthen, upgrade these markets. It is estimated that the markets will certainly generate a direct employment of few thousand jobs in informal sector. All the informal markets will be developed on elevated land and have a planned layout with semi permanent stalls, plinths and facilities such as parking spaces, water supply and public toilets. The informal vending activities thus can occur all the year round without the danger of being disrupted by floods. The provision of facilities will also mean that the high-income people of the city would frequent these markets.

Creating vibrant urban neighborhoods & Beautification of the city.

Ultimately, implementation of the riverfront development Project and the enforcement of appropriate urban design guidelines can transform the riverfront into a vibrant and aesthetically pleasing environment in the heart of the city – an environment that links the Eastern and Western parts of the city.

Commercial Hub

Creation of commercial areas is planned on certain areas of reclaimed land both on East and West Banks. The development of sky rocketing multi storied towers/ buildings in this commercial hub will bring in a new skyline for the city on riverbank

In conclusion....

The well developed Sabarmati riverfront will turn the river into a major asset, and will certainly enhance the quality of environment & life, will transform Ahmedabad's historic but neglected river into a vibrant and vital ENVIRONMENT FRIENDLY URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD for the city.

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