

Cluster revamp policy for suburbs, MMR soon

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MUMBAI: The cluster redevelopment model, aimed at integrated development of a locality, will soon be extended to the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR). The state government is looking to introduce independent cluster redevelopment policies for the suburbs as well as the civic corporations of Thane and Navi Mumbai.

The policies will be based on the infrastructure impact assessment report that will be prepared by each of these civic bodies showcasing the total infrastructure footprint required for such reconstruction. A high court order last year had stayed the policy in the absence of the study of the fall-out of such massive urban

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renewal projects on civic infrastructure.

Currently, the cluster redevelopment policy is applicable only for the island city under the Development Control Rules 33 (9). The policy offers incentive Floor Space Index (FSI) of up to 4 to developers for taking up redevelopment of a minimum one-acre plot, accompanied with basic infrastructure. The

city has several such proposals, but the success of the policy rides on the redevelopment of Bhendi Bazaar across 16.5 acres by Saifee Burhani Upliftment Trust (SBUT), which has been taken as a test case by the state.

The urban development department has asked each of the civic bodies to submit a report envisaging broad contours of their cluster policy after working out the impact it would have on the existing infrastructure.

“What works in Mumbai suburbs may not work in Thane or Navi Mumbai. While DCR 33 (9) lays down basic guidelines, each of these policies can be independent with different incentive FSI, minimum plot requirement, different ratios of slums and old buildings,” said a senior UDD official.

» CONTINUED ON P8

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“It will have to be estimated how many clusters can be taken up in that civic corporation limits and then the rest can be worked around it,” said a senior UDD official.

For instance, the Thane civic corporation, which is likely to submit its report to the government in the coming two weeks, has estimated eight such clusters, each built on at least a minimum of one hectare plot in the city. The policy will allow the redevelopment of a mix of old buildings, slums, but at least 40-45% of such structures will have to be legal. Thane city has thousands of illegal structures and political parties have been demanding cluster policy to regularise these buildings.

The Thane report will also argue that the impact of this policy on infrastructure will be limited given the redevelopment projects will house 75% of existing residents.