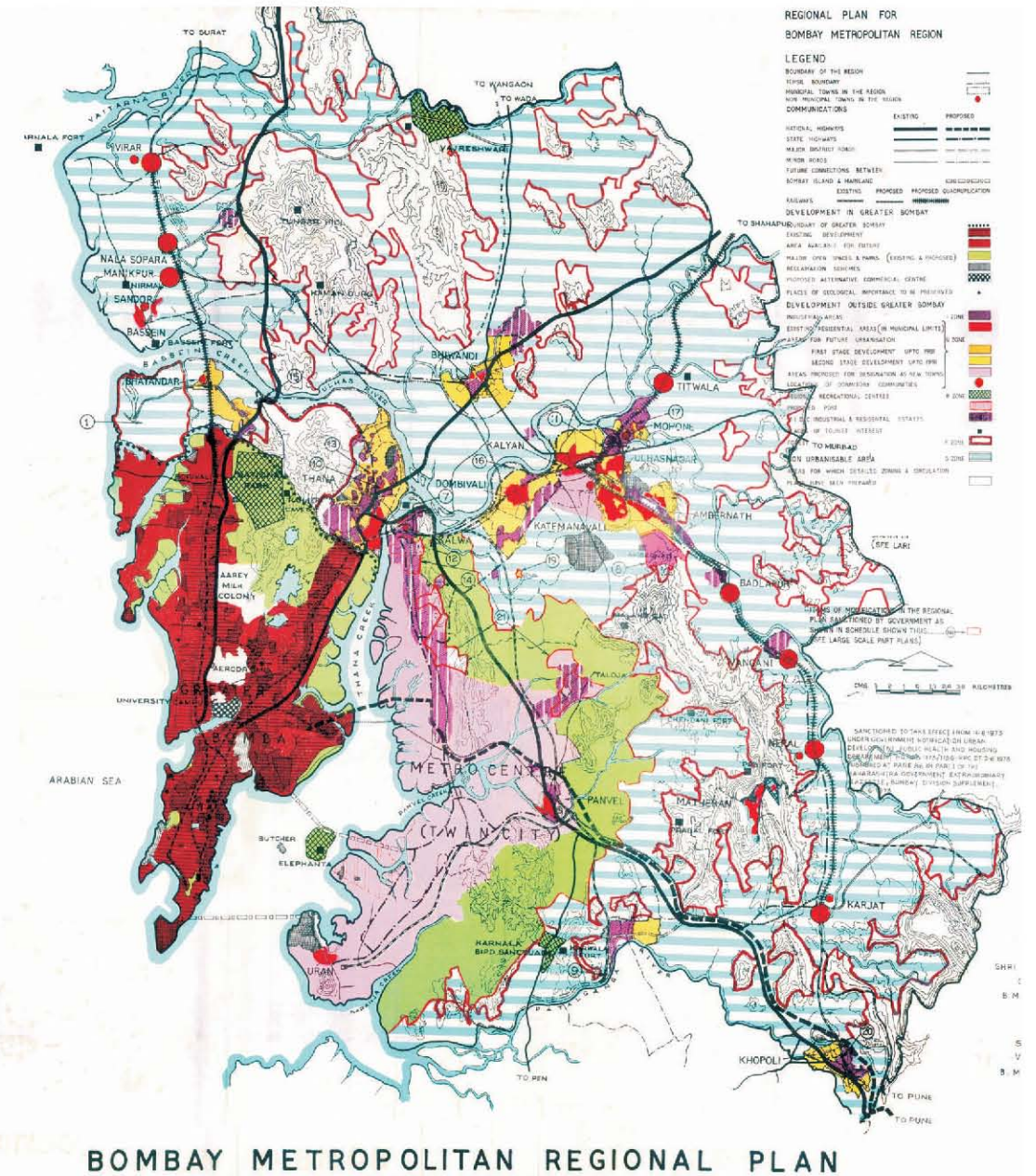


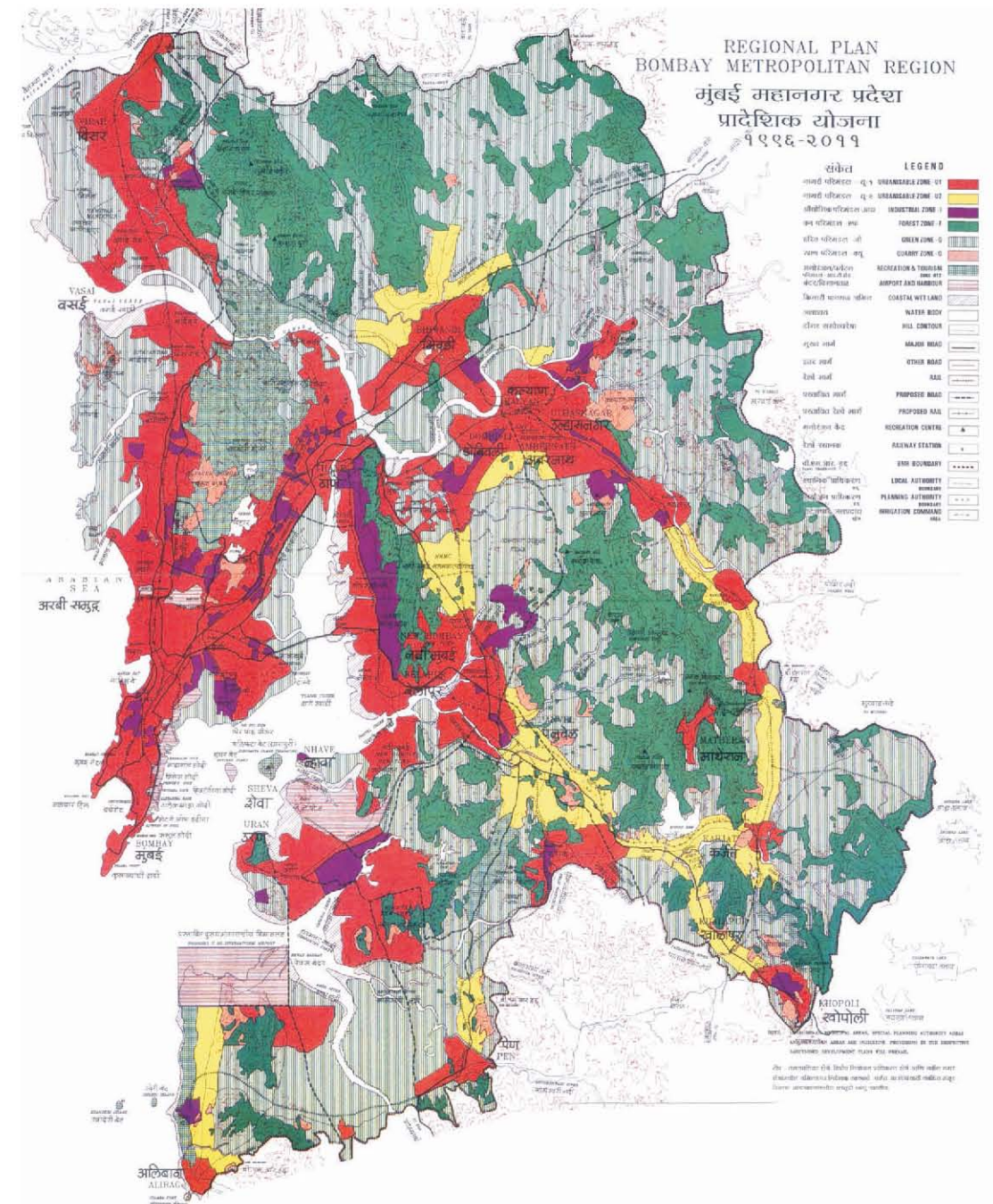
Source : Regional Plan for Mumbai Metropolitan Region (1966-67)



Source : Regional Plan for Mumbai Metropolitan Region (1966-67)



Source : Regional Plan for Mumbai Metropolitan Region (1996-2011)



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The Urban Design Research Institute (UDRI) is a public charitable trust set up in 1984 dedicated to the protection of the built environment and improving urban communities. It aims at establishing a forum to promote interaction between architects, urban designers and professionals from related fields such as urban economics, sociology, planning, conservation, and history, with the understanding that an inter-disciplinary and enriched holistic view of our urban environment will lead to practical solutions for its improvement. UDRI strives to achieve this through studies in conservation and development of historic precincts, by sponsoring publications, public lectures, exhibitions and seminars, research fellowship programme, conducting a Bombay studio and by running a research and resource centre focused on the study of Mumbai.



MUMBAI READER is a project intended to be a research collective focusing on Urbanism and is aimed at addressing the lack publications on Urbanism. The current literature on urbanism in India is predominantly characterised by gross generalisations that are supported by elite nostalgia and interest. While paradigms of research are set through the mainstream writings, they also create stereotypes in architectural and urban development practice as both depend on each other and on the market.

We increasingly find ourselves trapped between the technocratic metropolis and its critique both formulated by perspectives emerging from the west. Moreover the city is changing so rapidly and in such unprecedented ways that in many ways western examples of development remain absurd and irrelevant to our context. Thus it is critical that we understand our context much more closely and in a much more nuanced as well as diverse way in order to intervene in it relevantly.

With this in mind, the Mumbai Reader aims at compiling the city from its 'here and now'. Hence writings that are specific at enabling a contemporary understanding of the present context are a focus of this Reader. At the core of the Reader would be writings that enable alternative histories and new conceptualisations of the city that not only challenge the problematic mainstream histories and conceptualisations, but also provide an alternative theorisation of the existing complex contemporary contexts. Fresh readings of the city's geographies, actors, projects, practices and policies are encouraged here through multiple lenses, points of views and boundaries of research.

The phenomenon of Mumbai today is ungraspable by a singular imagination. This city of 17 million people is home to multiple groups of people, all staking their claims in various ways on the city. This context gets played out through various mediated forms in the space of the metropolis. Historically from the colonial city as a hub of cotton manufacture and trade to a post independence industrial and financial centre to the present day site, both of fierce competition for foreign direct investment and back end labour delivery, the city's economy has changed in unimaginable ways. These changes get registered in the city's landscape as simultaneously existing malls and multiplexes, slums, informal markets, luxury housing estates, resettlement homes, transit camps, public toilets and large scale infrastructure projects. While statistics show that Mumbai is growing at a rate of less than 1.5 % as compared to the national average of about 2.4%, the experiences of travelling in Mumbai's trains have become even more intense. The sheer scale of the experience of this conflict in the city has never been as pronounced as it is today, simply because of the pace at which the city is changing. While economies and geographies change rapidly, city actors get torn between the dreams of the future and the nostalgia of the past and real fears of surviving the changes without getting erased from the city's memories. The aim of the reader is to closely archive these changes in order to be able to reflect on them both in the present and in the future.