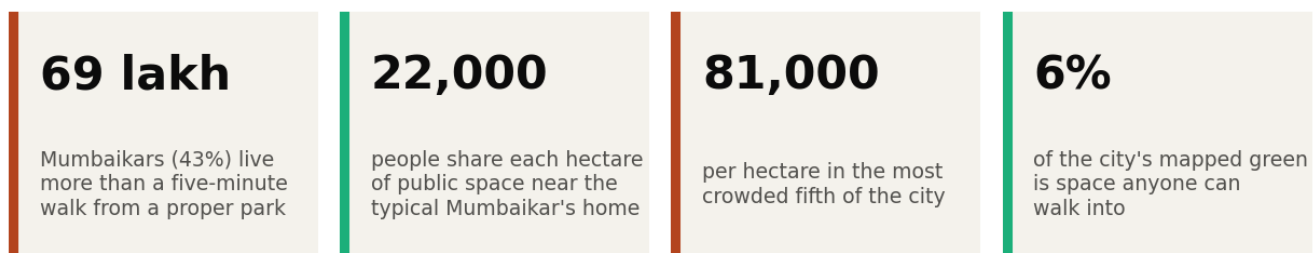


Every hectare of park near the typical Mumbaikar's home is shared by 22,000 people

In the most crowded fifth of the city, it is about 81,000. About 69 lakh Mumbaikars (43%) live more than a five-minute walk from a proper park.



Four numbers that sum up how little public ground Mumbai's 1.6 crore residents share.

A crowded city, and more crowded parks

Ask whether a Mumbaikar has a park nearby and the answer is usually yes: 57% of residents live within a five-minute walk of a proper park, meaning a public space of at least half a hectare. Ask how many people are already on that park and the picture changes.

Take everyone living within 1 km of a home and divide by the hectares of public open space within that same kilometre. For the typical (median) resident, each hectare is shared by about 22,000 people. That is about 0.45 m² each, smaller than a bath towel, if everyone turned up at once.

For informal settlements, the problem is not distance, it is crowding. Just over half (52%) of their residents are within a five-minute walk of a proper park, against 60% of everyone else: a modest gap. But each hectare near an informal home is shared by about 31,000 people (median), against about 18,000 for everyone else.

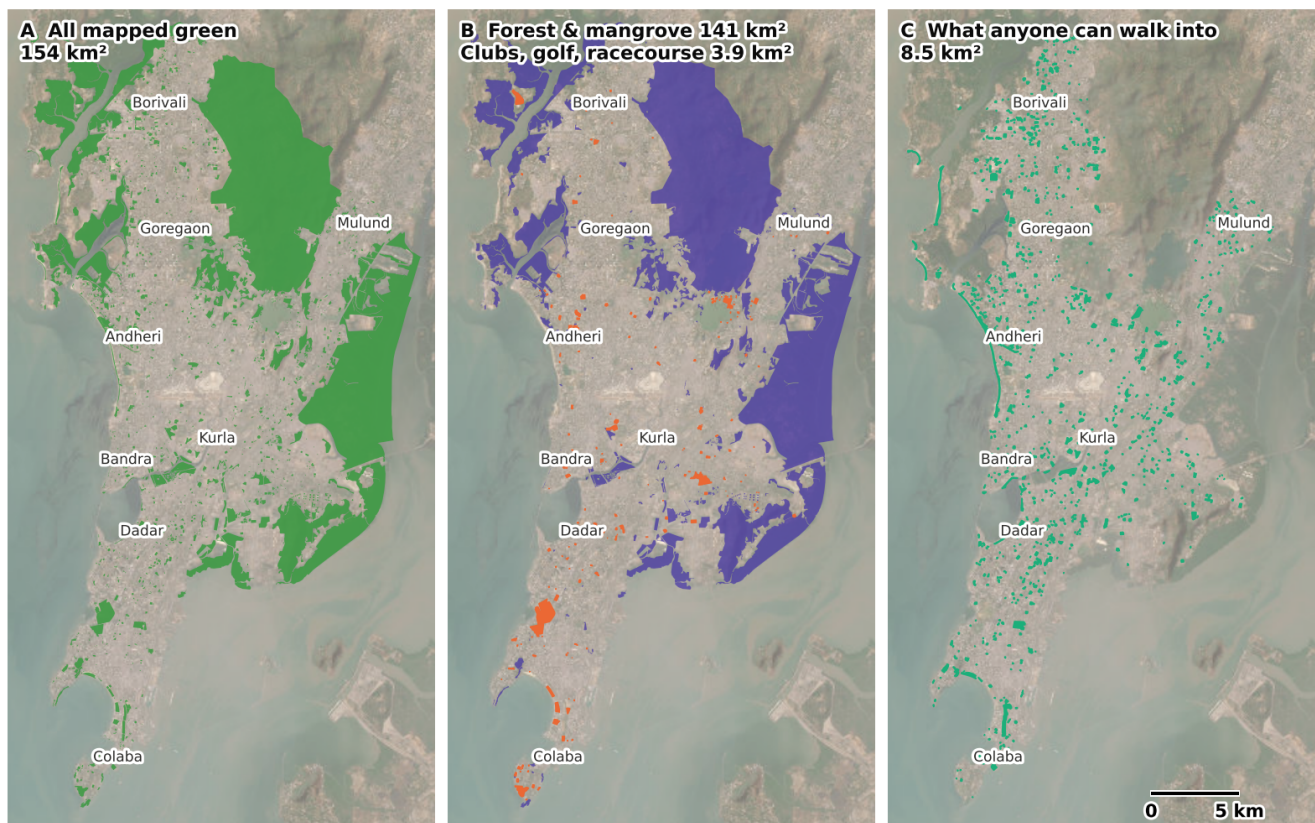
That distinction runs through everything that follows. Distance asks whether a park exists. Crowding asks whether there is any room left in it.

Green isn't open

From above, Mumbai looks green. Mapped green covers about 154 km², but only about 6% of it is public open space: parks, gardens, playgrounds, maidans, recreation grounds and beaches that anyone can walk into, 8.5 km² in all. Most of the rest is the national park, mangroves and wetlands. Another 3.9 km² is private or fee-charging ground.

Green on the map is not the same as a park

Of 154 km² of mapped green, 6% is space the public can actually use



Imagery © Esri. Open space © OpenStreetMap contributors + land-use map (verified). Basemap © Esri.

Most of what looks green on the map is forest, mangrove or fenced turf; the public share is a thin scatter.

Many of the largest open-looking spaces are fenced: Mahalaxmi Racecourse covers 85.5 hectares; Bombay Presidency Golf Club 31; Willingdon Sports Club 27; the United Services Club golf course 21. The largest public spaces are all far smaller: Juhu Beach (21 ha), Aksa Beach (19), Maharashtra Nature Park (16), Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Udyan (13), Oval Maidan (9.6) and Shivaji Park (9.3).

Beaches make up about a tenth of public open space, and for much of the monsoon they are hardly usable: the civic body urges people to stay away from the sea at high tide and in 2022 limited beach hours to 6–10 am on orange- and red-alert days ([Free Press Journal, 2026](#); [Free Press Journal, 2022](#)).

Official figures

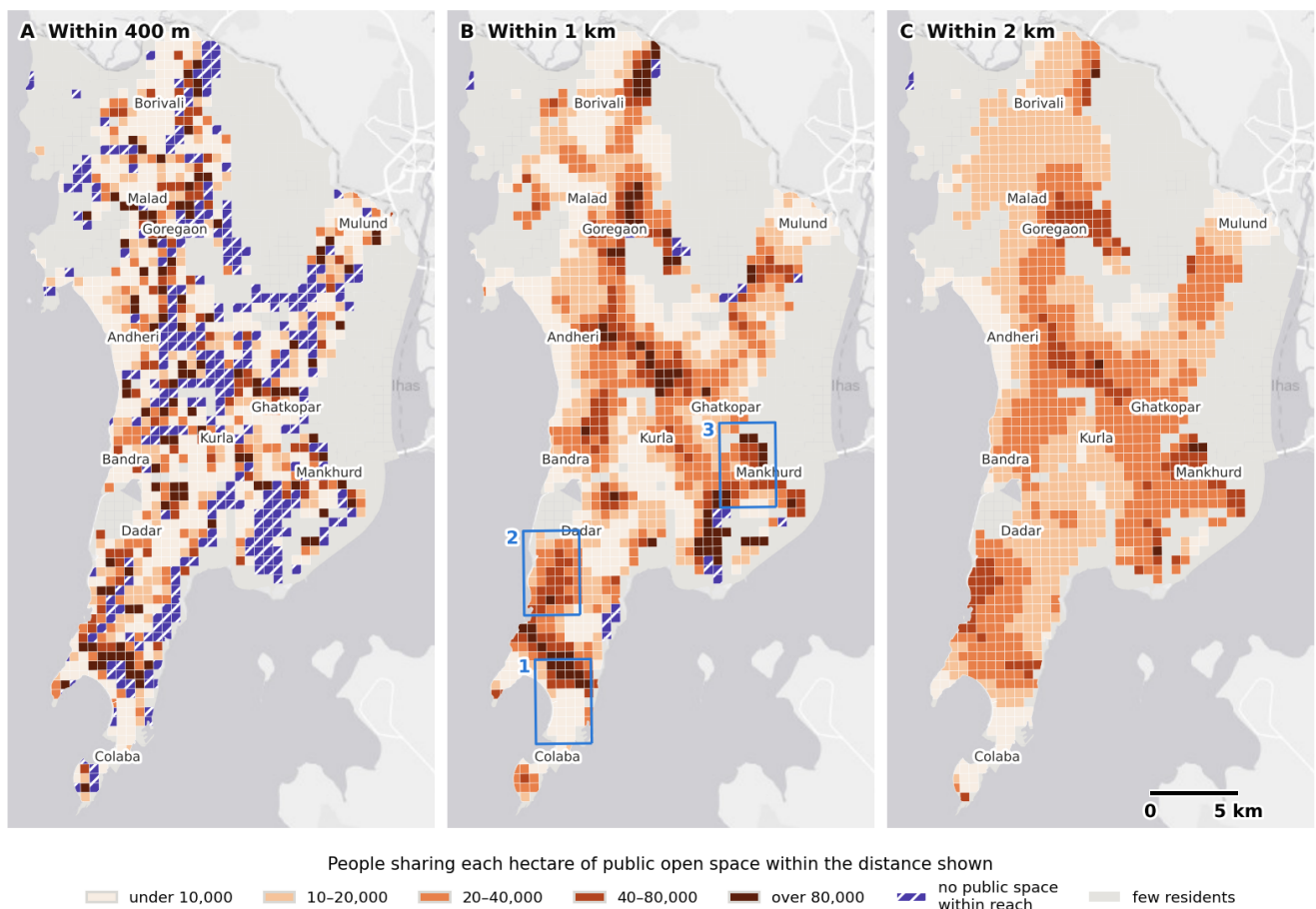
BMC's Development Plan 2034 puts the city's current public open space at 1.28 m² per person ([Free Press Journal](#)); the Observer Research Foundation put accessible open space at 1.24 m² in 2020 ([ORE](#)). The equivalent figure in this analysis is about 0.53 m² per resident on today's modelled population, or 0.68 on the 2011 Census count. The gap is mostly definitional. Official figures count designated land, including plots reserved for open space but not yet open, and divide by older population counts. This analysis counts only mapped space that is open to the public today, shared among today's residents. It is a floor.

Consistent across distances

How to read the maps: darker means more people share each hectare; hatched violet squares have no public space within reach at all; grey squares have few residents.

The same pockets are crowded at every distance

Each 500 m square: everyone living within reach ÷ the public open space within reach. Blue boxes 1–3 are the close-ups.



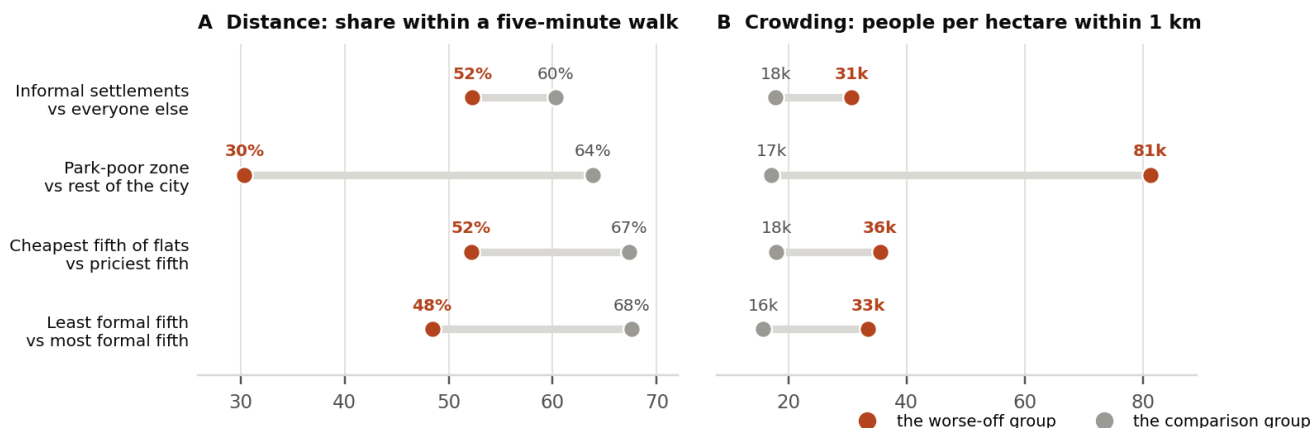
Whether you look 400 m, 1 km or 2 km from home, the same constituencies come out most crowded.

Constituency rankings agree closely across distances: a rank correlation of 0.87 between 400 m and 1 km, and 0.83 between 1 km and 2 km. Square by square the picture is patchier, but about 6.4 lakh people sit in the most crowded fifth at all three distances.

Two problems: distance and crowding

Two different problems: distance and crowding

Informal settlements are nearly as close to a park as everyone else, but each park is shared by far more people



In the park-poor zone both distance and crowding are bad; in informal settlements the problem is mainly crowding.

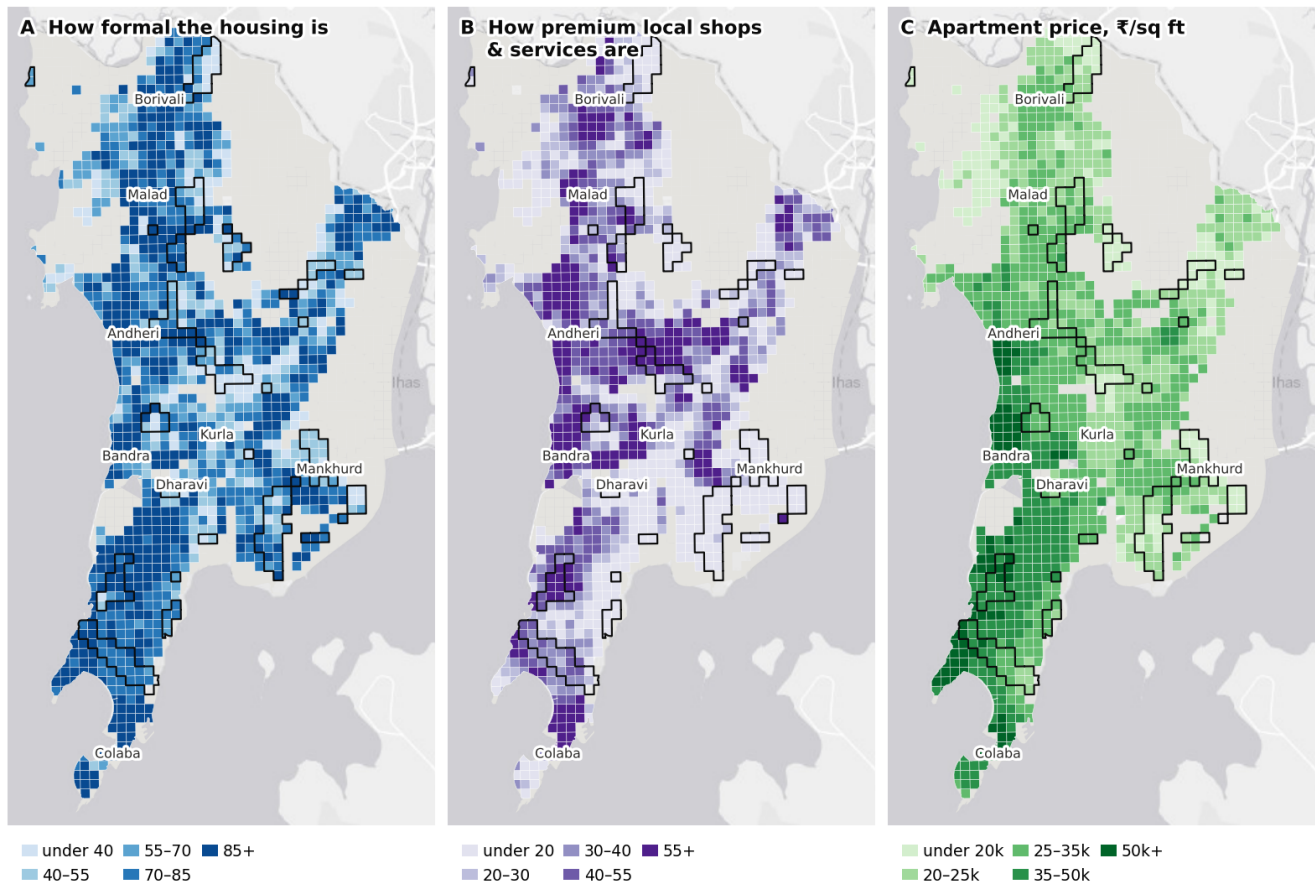
The park-poor zone, the fifth of Mumbaikars whose nearby public space is the most crowded, has both problems. Only 30% of its 32 lakh residents are within a five-minute walk of a proper park, against 64% in the rest of the city. And each hectare nearby is shared by about 81,000 people (median), against 17,000.

Informal settlements are different. Distance is only slightly worse; crowding is much worse. A half-hectare ground at the end of a lane counts as nearby, but tens of thousands of neighbours share it.

Who lives where the parks are most crowded

Who lives where the parks are most crowded

Inside the outline, housing is less formal (59 vs 69) and 55% live in informal settlements (vs 36% elsewhere). The exceptions are the Island City's bazaars and business districts.

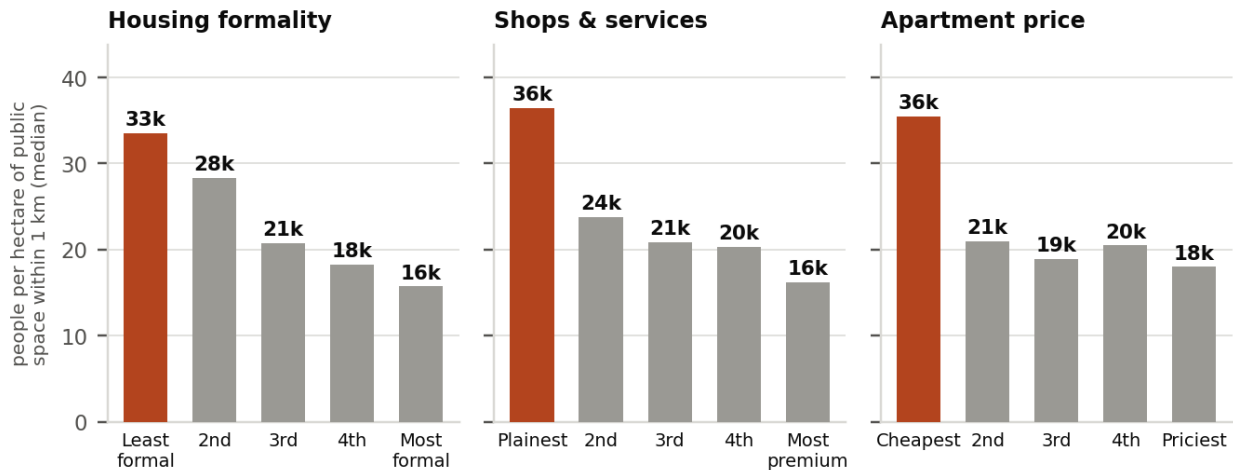


— Park-poor zone: the fifth of Mumbaikars whose nearby parks are the most crowded

The park-poor zone is less formally built and more often informal, except in the Island City's bazaars and business districts.

The plainer the neighbourhood, the more crowded its parks

Each bar is a fifth of Mumbai's residents; taller means more people share each hectare



The plainer the neighbourhood, the more people share each hectare of public space.

The gradients are steep. Split Mumbaikars into fifths by housing formality and the typical crowding falls from about 33,000 people per hectare in the least formal fifth to 16,000 in the most formal; the share within a five-minute walk rises from 48% to 68%. By shops & services, crowding falls from about 36,000 in the plainest fifth to 16,000 in the most premium. By apartment price the break is at the bottom: the cheapest fifth of neighbourhoods (below about ₹21,000 per sq ft) faces about 36,000 people per hectare (median); above that it levels off at roughly 18,000–21,000.

Then come the exceptions. Mumbadevi and Worli are pricey and highly commercial, yet among the most crowded constituencies: Worli has the second-highest flat prices of the city's 36 constituencies and ranks 31st for crowding; Mumbadevi ranks last. In business districts land goes to shops and offices, and the parks serve residents plus a daytime crowd these numbers do not even include. Malabar Hill, the priciest constituency of all, sits 23rd.

That produces a U-shape. Sorted by how commercial the surroundings are, the least commercial fifth (mostly informal) faces about 28,000 people per hectare and the most commercial fifth about 26,000, while the middle fifth faces about 19,000. Only half of both end groups live within a five-minute walk.

The reverse exception is the cheaper but well-served suburb. Mulund, Dahisar and Charkop have below-average flat prices yet rank among the ten least crowded constituencies. A good park does not have to come with an expensive postcode.

The largest informal clusters show how uneven this is. Shivaji Nagar–Mankhurd–Cheeta Camp, home to about 11 lakh people, is the extreme (its figures differ slightly from the Mankhurd Shivaji Nagar constituency and the close-up window later on, because each is drawn with a different boundary): 60% are within a five-minute walk, but each hectare nearby is shared by about 76,000. In Dharavi (4.0 lakh residents) it is about 46,000, with only 37% within a five-minute walk; in Asalpha (7.4 lakh) about 35,000 and 41%. The Charkop cluster, by contrast, has about 15,000 per hectare and 88% within a walk: informal housing does not have to mean crowded parks.

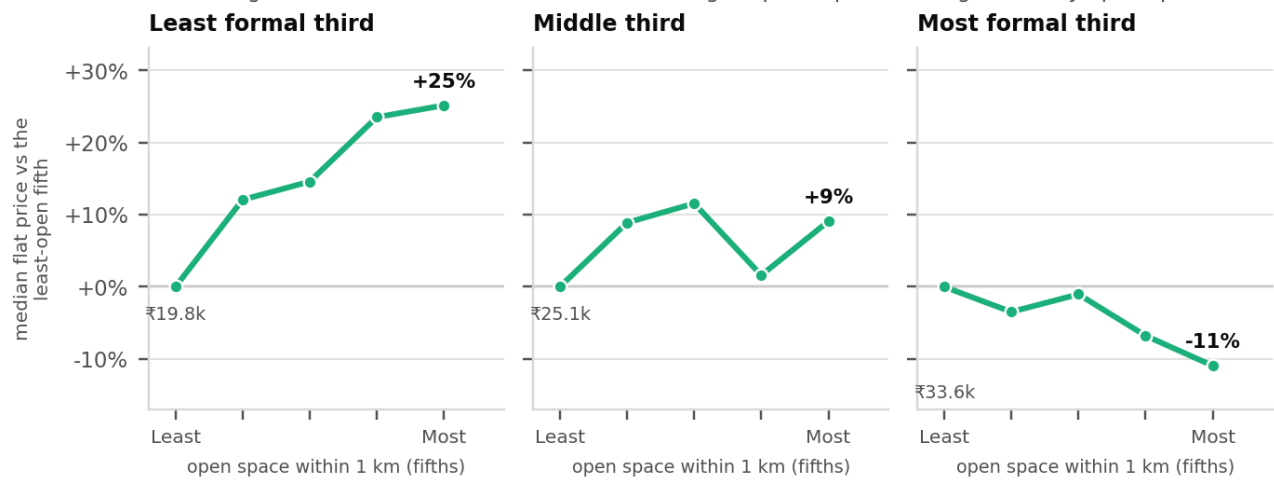
Beaches

Sand flatters some rankings. Count the beaches and Andheri West is the 4th least crowded constituency; take them away and it drops to 12th. Malabar Hill falls from 23rd to 30th. Colaba stays 1st either way. Places whose rank rests on sand deserve an asterisk, especially in the monsoon.

What it's worth

Where housing is least formal, open space shows up in the price of a flat

Unadjusted medians, beaches excluded. The city-wide estimate that allows for housing type, shops, density and distance from Churchgate and the sea is smaller: about 1.5% higher prices per doubling of nearby open space



Where housing is least formal, flats near more open space cost more; in the most formal neighbourhoods there is no premium.

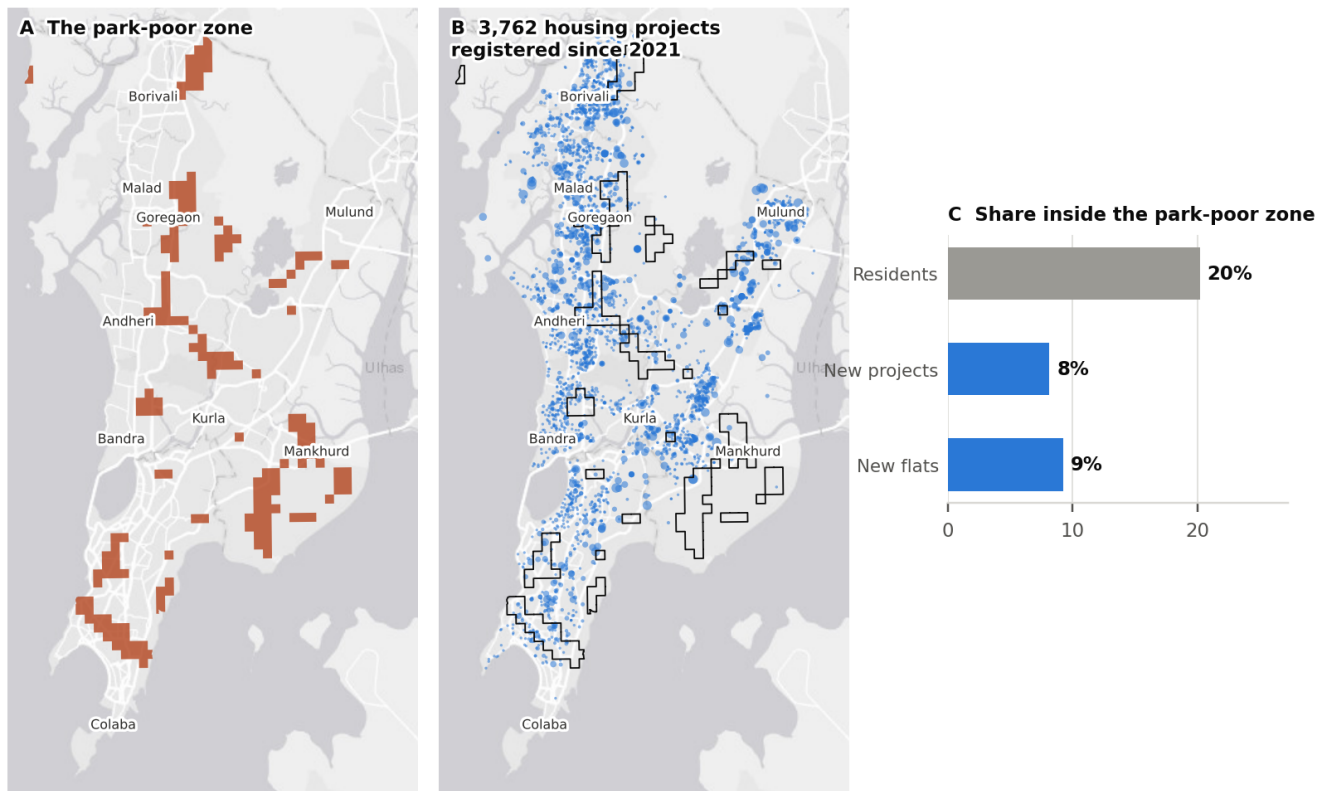
For this price comparison, open space means parks and grounds only, without beaches. The price test compares flats while allowing for housing formality, shops & services, informal housing, density, distance from Churchgate and distance from the western seafront. On that basis, doubling the public open space within 1 km goes with about 1.5% higher flat prices city-wide, and about 1.4% counting only homes more than 1.5 km from the western seafront.

The simple comparisons in the chart are unadjusted medians, so they mix in everything else that differs between neighbourhoods. With that said, the pattern is suggestive. Among the least formal third of neighbourhoods, flats in the most open fifth cost about 25% more than in the least open fifth. Among the most formal third there is no clear premium: the most open formal neighbourhoods tend to sit on the suburban fringe near the national park, far from the city's priciest addresses, and many residents there have gated lawns of their own. It is an association, not proof, but it suggests that a public park matters most to the people who have no private substitute.

Where new homes are going

New homes are mostly going where parks already are

A fifth of Mumbaikars live in the park-poor zone, but only 8% of new housing projects are being built there



Projects: MahaRERA registrations; dot size = flats where known. Open space © OpenStreetMap contributors + land-use map (verified). Basemap © Esri.

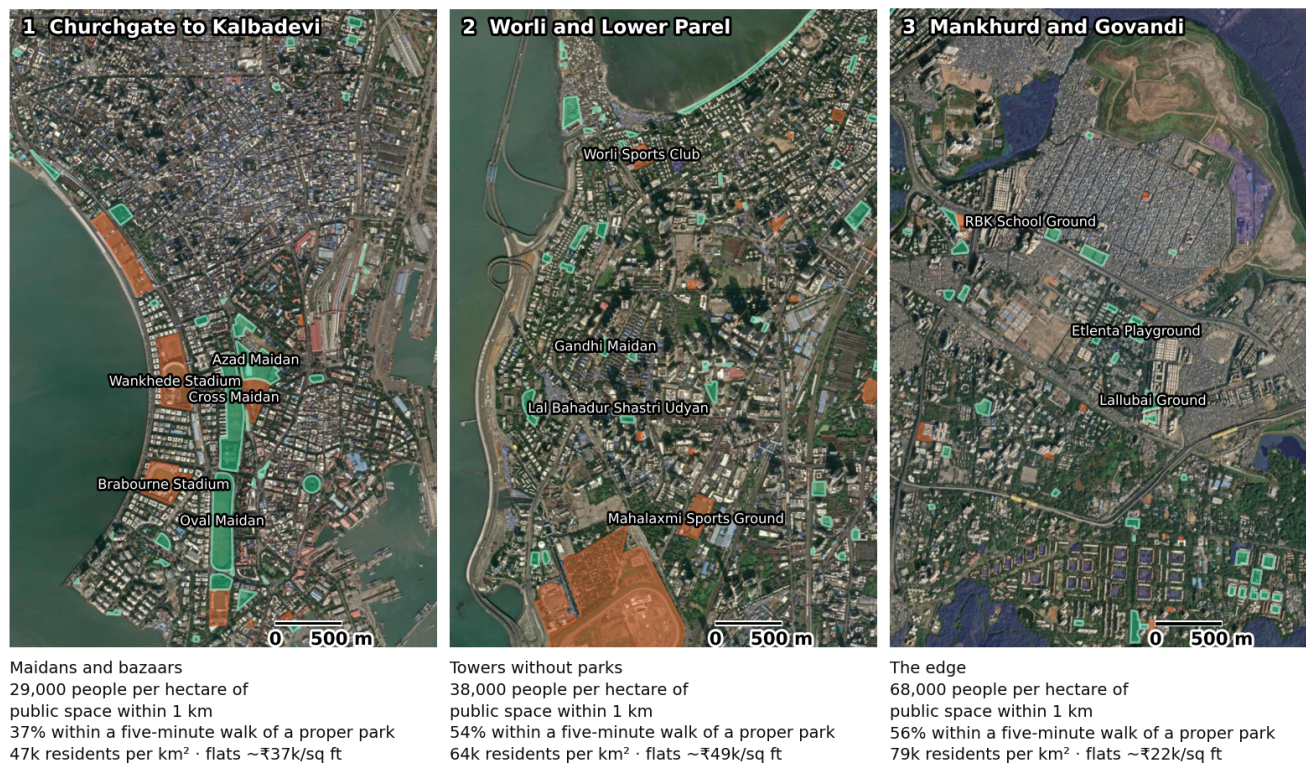
A fifth of Mumbaikars live in the park-poor zone, but only 8% of new housing projects are being built there.

Of 3,762 housing projects registered since 2021, only 8% are in the park-poor zone, which holds 20% of residents; by flats, the figure is 9%. New construction is mostly going where parks already are. The crowded fifth is not being rebuilt, and the new towers elsewhere will add residents to parks that are today comparatively roomy.

Three places, up close

Three places, up close

Each window is 3 × 4.5 km on satellite imagery; public space in green, club and campus grounds in orange



Imagery © Esri. Open space © OpenStreetMap contributors + land-use map (verified). Basemap © Esri.

Public Restricted Mangrove / forest

Three windows of the same size: maidans and bazaars, towers without parks, and the eastern edge.

Churchgate to Kalbadevi. On paper the south has Mumbai's grandest grounds: Oval Maidan (9.6 ha), Cross Maidan, Azad Maidan and Girgaum Chowpatty. But the window's 6.3 lakh residents live mostly in the bazaar lanes around Kalbadevi and Mumbadevi, among the most commercial streets in the city, where shops and businesses take almost every plot. The maidans sit at the western edge. Only 37% of residents are within a five-minute walk of a proper park, and each hectare within 1 km is shared by about 29,000 people (median); without Chowpatty's sand, about 41,000. Gated grounds (Brabourne and Wankhede stadiums, the Bombay Gymkhana, the university grounds and others) cover about 30 hectares behind gates, nearly as much as the 37 hectares of public space.

Worli and Lower Parel. The window holds about 8.6 lakh people and flat prices in the city's top fifth, yet each hectare of public space within 1 km is shared by about 38,000 people (median), and 54% are within a five-minute walk. The public spaces are small: Kamgar Stadium, Lal Bahadur Shastri Udyan and Dadar Beach are under 2 ha each. The big green is the 85.5-hectare Mahalaxmi Racecourse. In July 2024 about 120 acres of it were agreed for a public park ([Knocksense](#)), and BMC unveiled the design in February 2026 ([Free Press Journal](#)). It is not yet open.

Mankhurd and Govandi. At the city's eastern edge, about 10.7 lakh people live in a window of the same size, three-quarters of them in informal settlements. More than half (56%) are within a five-minute walk of a proper park, yet each hectare within 1 km is shared by about 68,000

people (median). The largest public spaces are Etlenta Playground and Homi Bhabha Park, at barely more than a hectare each. Here the parks are close; there is simply no room in them.

The league table

Constituency	Residents (lakh)	People per hectare within 1 km (median)	% within a five-minute walk	Average flat price, ₹/sq ft
Least crowded				
Colaba	4.4	5,000	62%	41,600
Dahisar	4.2	9,000	61%	24,200
Wadala	3.4	10,000	84%	41,700
Andheri West	5.0	11,000	80%	43,900
Borivali	5.0	12,000	78%	22,400
Most crowded				
Dindoshi	4.6	60,000	36%	24,300
Ghatkopar East	3.9	68,000	50%	19,700
Anushakti Nagar	4.2	79,000	45%	22,000
Mankhurd Shivaji Nagar	5.0	82,000	75%	19,800
Mumbadevi	4.0	97,000	4%	33,200

The gap, sized

For most Mumbaikars a park is not far away. The trouble is that too many people share too little ground, and the new homes are going elsewhere. The racecourse will help Worli once it opens; the eastern edge and the bazaars need ground of their own. To bring the park-poor zone up to the city's typical level would take roughly 105 more hectares of public space within it, about 11 Shivaji Parks. The racecourse park, about 49 hectares, would cover nearly half of that on paper, but all in one place: only about 2 lakh of the zone's 32 lakh residents live within 1 km of it, and none on the eastern edge, where the crowding is worst.

How we measured

Open space: OpenStreetMap, cross-checked against the government land-use map. Of 40 extra "parks" on that map inspected on satellite imagery, only 16 were public; those were added. Figures are a floor.

Residents: estimated building by building from footprints and heights, with each constituency's total matched to its 2019 electoral roll. The rolls are seven years old and count adults only. They tend to miss migrants and people in informal settlements, and children, who need parks most, are only estimated. So crowding in informal areas is, if anything, understated.

Distances are straight-line. Rail lines, creeks and walls make real walks longer, so the walk shares are generous. A "proper park" is a public space of at least half a hectare; a five-minute walk is 400 m.

Crowding is everyone living within 1 km of a home divided by the hectares of public open space within 1 km; we report the median resident.

Housing formality and **shops & services** are 0–100 scores per street block. Formality comes from building size, height and how regular the layout is. Shops & services reflects how premium nearby shops, bank branches, schools and hospitals are.

Apartment prices are an estimated sale rate at the centre of where people live in each 500 m square, from a valuation model trained on about 500 housing-society prices (listings and professional valuations) plus location features. They do not use parks as an input.

Commercialness is how dense shops, offices and businesses are around a block.

Research, analysis and maps by the Terrastack team.