

## Top 10 Housing Hotspots In Focus

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Choosing a neighbourhood for housing destination is one of the most important decisions a home buyer has to make. The variables influencing this decision vary from availability of infrastructure for commute, communication, lifestyle, accessibility and amenities for day to day living. A young couple prefers to settle in neighbourhoods which provide quality education, banking services and an elaborate commodity market. Senior citizens on the other hand prefer to be located in neighbourhoods providing quality health care services. Either ways, these decisions are need driven rather than choice. As per a recent internet survey, more and more people are choosing neighbourhoods based on choice variables rather than need. This trend is yet to influence apnu Amdavad. Choice based decisions for housing commonly includes the future appreciation of property value, potentiality for developing into a posh locality (i.e. a status area to be in), availability of affordable and better housing, and most importantly a bigger house than they need. This has led to several neighbourhoods sprawling in and around Ahmedabad which lack the balance of need Vs Choice when it comes to satisfying the residents.

Market analysts are of the belief that if you provide home buyers with choice then the need will follow. Planners counter this belief and reiterate that if you provide them with needs then choices can be accommodated. Both this conflicting opinions have their own idols. Take case of Prahladnagar township (planned by AUDA) where basic needs are provided and now choice is being accommodated by the real estate developers. Bopal on the other hand has provided bigger and affordable housing choices to several homebuyers since early 1990s, but has proved to be a disaster in providing basic infrastructure. Conversely, housing in Prahladnagar is expensive and does not fit the pockets of many home-buyers. Due to this reason they prefer to settle in distant areas where the housing is cheaper, better and safer from city pollution (another choice variable). Many believe the property appreciation is also likely to be highest in coming years due to its non-prime tag and in anticipation of needs to follow, such as town planning schemes (by AUDA).

This makes it very clear that when it comes to housing preferences, home buyers preferences in Ahmedabad are a mixed bag. Based on data collected we (RESMA Research) have made an attempt to rate different neighbourhoods of Ahmedabad, focussing on consumer (home-buyers) preferences giving equal weightage to both, need and choice based variables. The following rating is on a scale of 1 to 12 where the higher points justify a higher rank. The rating also includes number of housing units built & sold, speed with which developments have occurred and level of support by means of infrastructure by AMC and AUDA. The rating is based on analysis of 197 respondents (consumers, prospective home buyers) in the month of March, 2006. The data collected from GIHED Property Show 2005 and 2006 has also been incorporated to analyze buying trends of Amdavadi residents. Finally, data compiled as collected from AMC, AUDA and housing finance lenders have been also given due consideration.

Scoring used for ranking neighbourhoods:

**Housing Needs (Total 5 points)**

- 1) **Basic infrastructure** (Water, street-light, drainage, Roads, footpaths, etc.)
- 2) **Social Infrastructure** (Hospitals, Schools, Parks, Open spaces, religious places, Commodity markets such as nearest vegetable and fruit market, groceries)
- 3) **Housing Quality** (Type of housing, price, size, quality of construction, etc.)
- 4) **Parking & Transportation Connectivity** (Parking within housing colonies as well as in the areas around, on and off road, Connectivity: road, airport, railway, etc.)
- 5) **Environmental quality** (Air and noise pollution, toxic dump, garbage disposal, etc.)

**Housing Choices (Total 5 points)**

- 1) **Perceived Status of the area.** (Present and Future)
- 2) **Future price appreciation in the area.** (Respect for capital invested)
- 3) **Demography** (Class of people living, community preferences, Communal Harmony, etc.)
- 4) **Recreational facilities.** (Quality of lifestyle, shopping malls, hotels, clubs, etc.)
- 5) **Special features.** (If any; Clubs/resorts, Lakes/River, or other landmarks.)

**Housing Market: (Total 2 points)**

- 1) **Volume of Space Supplied** ( Number of Residential Projects)
- 2) **Volume of Property Purchased** ( Number of houses sold/booked)

## # 10 Bopal-Ghuma-( Ahmedabad west fringe)

### Score 5.5/12

Bopal been one of the fastest developing peri-urban areas of Ahmedabad and has received a lot of stick for poor infrastructure. Both, Bopal and Ghuma are excluded from the AUDA jurisdiction due to which the basic infrastructure is poor. While this fact degrades the quality of life in these areas it also gives a great upper hand by offering competitive housing prices. The affordability factor is what is driving housing boom in Bopal and Ghuma. Land prices are lower. Relaxed regulations and absence of AUDA charges make housing in these areas highly competitive. For year 2005 and 2006, the numbers of new houses sold were highest among all other areas of Ahmedabad.

**Strengths:** The cost factor is the biggest strength of Bopal and Ghuma. Exclusion from AUDA jurisdiction and low stamp duty rates (as per old Jantri) has facilitated high land transaction, housing construction and has supplied housing at very affordable rates. Social infrastructure facilities such as banks, schools, markets and hospitals have worked as catalyst in the growth of this neighborhood.

**Weaknesses:** Lack of planning body (such as AUDA) has lead to haphazard construction with extremely poor drainage and sewerage disposal system. There is an alarming potential for widespread of waterborne diseases. The quality of construction of the built product is also not at par with rest of the areas of Ahmedabad. With new High Court order which bars giving new NA ( Non-agricultural use) permission to land in Bopal is likely to put pressure on existing NA land, making the situation even worse.

**Housing types:** All types from Bungalows, tenements, farm houses, Apartments, etc. You can afford a house from 4 Lakhs to 30 Lakhs depending on the housing type.

**Major roads:** Bopal-Ambli Road, SP Ring Road

**Demography:** LIG and MIG population, Monthly paycheck dependents, population settled from other towns of Gujarat and other states of India, and home for many workers in the unorganized sectors.

## # 9 Vastral & Nikol (Ahmedabad East)

### Score 6.2 /12

Located in eastern Ahmedabad, Vastral & Nikol has been one of the hotspots for residential and commercial development. The development in Nikol has been slow. TP Schemes have improved the infrastructure such as road, streetlight and drainage. Land prices have appreciated more than 150% in last three years but have stabilized in recent year. Vastral has seen some rampant development since last year, especially in TP Schemes no.113 and 114.

**Strengths:** Cheaper housing options. Good connectivity and linkages. Ideal for people working in Industrial areas of Odhav, Vatwa and for those who have businesses in Old city areas. Nearness to Bapunagar diamond business area has helped this cause.

**Weaknesses:** The vicinity to industrial areas is a big downer for this locality. Possibilities for value added services such as retail and recreational areas for the residents are ruled out in immediate future. Pollution and environment is another concern. Definitely not the most preferred neighbourhoods to be in.

**Housing Types:** Low rise- low density housing ranging from tenements, row houses and twin bungalows. Prices range from 6 lakhs to 12 lakhs for such type of housing units.

**Major Roads:** SP Ring Road.

**Demography:** Mostly LIG and MIG population resides here. LIG residents are working class employees serving the industrial areas. MIG population consists of small retail and business owners, especially in the old city areas.

## **#8 Shela & Racharda** (Ahmedabad west, outskirts, beyond SP Ring Road)

### **Score: 6.5/12**

Both Shela and Racharda are located quite far away from each other. However, the distinct qualities of future potential with respect to residential and commercial development exist in both of these areas. The property prices have shot up by nearly 175% in last two years and these locations have been some of the most preferred housing destinations for families willing to acquire a weekend home or a peaceful villa, away from city pollution, traffic and noise.

**Strengths:** Located on major connecting grids from Thaltej and Satellite, linking to S.G. Road. These linkages have made these neighbourhoods accessible and very lucrative long term investments. Both these locations are not included in the Development Plan of AUDA. Hence, basic infrastructure is primarily provided by the real estate developers who have several housing proposals in these areas. Ample open land available assures healthy lungs to residents. Land is cheaper compared to other areas and the quality of construction of built property is admirable. Connectivity to developed parts of western Ahmedabad, Gandhinagar and other smaller town in the vicinity makes these areas highly accessible.

**Weaknesses:** Lack of social infrastructure and distance to developed areas is a downer. It takes about 30 minutes to drive to developed parts of western Ahmedabad. Medical facilities are not quickly available.

**Housing types:** Luxury bungalows, farm houses, weekend homes and green villas. You can get a great luxury home away from the congested neighbourhoods of Ahmedabad from 15 Lakhs to 50 Lakhs, depending on housing type. This locality is for the lifestyle conscious.

**Major roads:** No major roads developed only existing MDR (Major district

road)

**Demography:** HIG population, seeking quiet home to relax on weekends and vacations. Many host several private parties in their premises catering to high end urban population.

## #7 New High Court Neighbourhood

(Ahmedabad west)

**Score: 7.5/12**

A neighborhood overlooked by many has developed into sprawling residencies. Just opposite new High Court, Town Planning Scheme (TPS) 28 and 29 have gathered housing momentum since last two years. This area has a great surprise to offer if you haven't visited it lately. Like many other areas this neighborhood is thriving on its amazing connectivity, especially due to its proximity to SG Road. The area is seen as an extension to already developed areas of Ghatlodia and Sola road.

**Strengths:** Located very near to the new educational hub of Ahmedabad (Nirma University and many other schools) this neighborhood has churned out some of the best housing options. Infrastructure is in place and the neighborhood has great potential as it is centrally located to many strategic landmarks and services. Compared to other western pockets, this neighborhood offers affordable prices.

**Weaknesses:** The neighborhood is yet to be perceived as one higher in status to be in. This negates the advantages it has over some other neighbourhoods. The settlement in this area is not cosmopolitan nor a typical Amdavadi community. This restricts future growth potential. The Chanakyapuri railway crossing is a great hurdle for direct connectivity. AUDA has recently floated rail over-bridge tender for the same to remove this weakness.

**Major Roads:** S.G. Highway, Ghatlodia road, Sola road, Gota road.

**Housing Types:** You can buy all kinds of housing from Apartments, Bungalows, and Row-houses to tenements. The prices are very competitive. You can get a row house from 12 Lakhs to 15 Lakhs, a twin bungalow from 35 Lakhs to 45 Lakhs and even a decent apartment from as low as 8 Lakhs to 15 Lakhs. This locality bears the fee good tag "Housing for all".

**Demography:** Mostly MIG and HIG population. More than 70% of the population comprises of families which have migrated or are connected to northern parts of Gujarat such as Palanpur, Himmatnagar and Mehsana. Amdavadi population too has now seen some in-roads into this neighbourhood. Spill-over from joint families to nuclear families from Ghatlodia have settled in this neighbourhood.

## #6 Science city Neighbourhood (Ahmedabad west) Score 8.0/12

New landmarks always trigger healthy development. This is exactly the case with Science City. Its physical facilities on a very beautiful stretch of land at village Hebatpur and Bhadaj, just off SG Road. The neighborhood is lush green agricultural land with typical rural landscape. The land acquired to develop science city is about 190 sq. Kms. Just on the opposite of Science city, housing development in on a spree, especially in TPS 40 and 41. The neighborhood has attracted great linkages and the industrial area of Kharaj is not far. More than 39 Bungalows projects are underway in this neighbourhood.

**Strengths:** The neighbourhood provides excellent housing quality coupled with great connectivity and accessibility to key medical, recreational and commercial services. It is blessed with high environmental quality where developments have prospered taking full advantage of this physical attribute. Infrastructure developments have preceded housing developments which is a very healthy sign for urban settlement.

**Weaknesses:** The development area is classified as an R2 zone which will have a huge bearing on the development type. The economics of the area only allows development of low dense, low rise bungalows. As land is expensive, all the houses are for the elite and not affordable by many. Land appreciation trend in this areas suggests that the housing here will get more expensive in coming years.

**Major Roads:** Science City road.

**Housing types:** Luxury high-end Bungalows and villas. Prices range from 35 Lakhs to 65 Lakhs.

**Demography:** HIG population seeking status and quality lifestyle. The population is a good mix of all communities reflecting typical Amdavadi flavour and choice.

(To Be Continued..... top 5 neighbourhoods)

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