

ISSUE 01 • 2015

SKYLINE

URBAN PLANNING // CONSERVATION // ARCHITECTURE // PROPERTY

ON THE LEADING EDGE | MARINA BAY SINGAPORE COUNTDOWN

AN INSPIRED
COMMUNITY SPACE

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AN INSPIRED COMMUNITY SPACE

Community's input to form
cornerstone of Concept Master
Plan and Concept Proposals for
the Rail Corridor.







URA has launched the ‘Rail Corridor – An Inspired and Extraordinary Community Space’ Request for Proposal (RFP), inviting design professionals to develop a Concept Master Plan and Concept Proposals for Singapore’s Rail Corridor.

A public space like no other

The 24 kilometre-long Rail Corridor spans the north and south of Singapore. It threads through diverse landscapes such as housing, business, industrial and recreational areas, as well as key landmarks that are rich in nature and heritage. Today, it is bordered by wild grown trees and plants, and used for leisure activities such as walking, jogging and cycling. The two iconic former railway stations – Tanjong Pagar and Bukit Timah Railway Stations, are open to the public on public holidays, and are also used as venues for events. The “green corridor” experience – one that is closely linked to our history and heritage, has become a signature for the Corridor’s users.

A common space for shared experiences

The return of the former railway land in 2011 presented an unprecedented opportunity for URA to shape the future of this 24 kilometre-long stretch of land together with the community. Through careful planning, sensitive design and development, the Rail Corridor can potentially become an extraordinary and more inclusive community space that provides an exceptional and eclectic experience for Singaporeans from all walks of life.

In the past three-and-a-half years, URA has engaged the community widely on their aspirations for the Rail Corridor. This is done

through various platforms including workshops, seminars, exhibitions, and a ‘Journey of Possibilities’ Ideas Competition. Diverse ideas were received from the community. With the general consensus that the Rail Corridor should remain a “green corridor” for recreational activities, the community also provided differing views on what they would like the Rail Corridor to be. Many suggested for a continuous 24 km ‘bicycle highway’; while others proposed having innovative and sensitive developments around the Rail Corridor to complement its surrounding uses, and making the Corridor an events venue.

The value of the Rail Corridor lies in its continuous 24 km length. It can potentially accommodate the needs of people living and working nearby, provide differentiated experiences along its route for the general public, and yet serve as a platform to connect communities through shared experiences and a common identity. At the same time, the elements that give the Rail Corridor its unique sense of identity and place today can be retained and improved.

URA has thus taken on-board the community’s input and distilled them into a set of Planning and Design Goals that will guide participating teams’ proposals in the RFP exercise. The RFP will enable us to come up with the appropriate design strategies and tools to create the wonderful experiences and memories that distinguish the Rail Corridor as a unique community space.

Left:
The Green Corridor Run is an annual signature event held at the Rail Corridor

Request for proposal exercise

The RFP exercise will take place over 12 months. Participating teams will be required to develop an overall Concept Master Plan and Concept Proposals for the Rail Corridor. These include concept designs for four key activity nodes as well as smaller community nodes. There will also be Concept Designs for two special interest areas, namely Concept Designs for the adaptive reuse of the former Tanjong Pagar Railway Station, and Urban-Green-Blue Integration Concepts for a housing precinct at Choa Chu Kang.

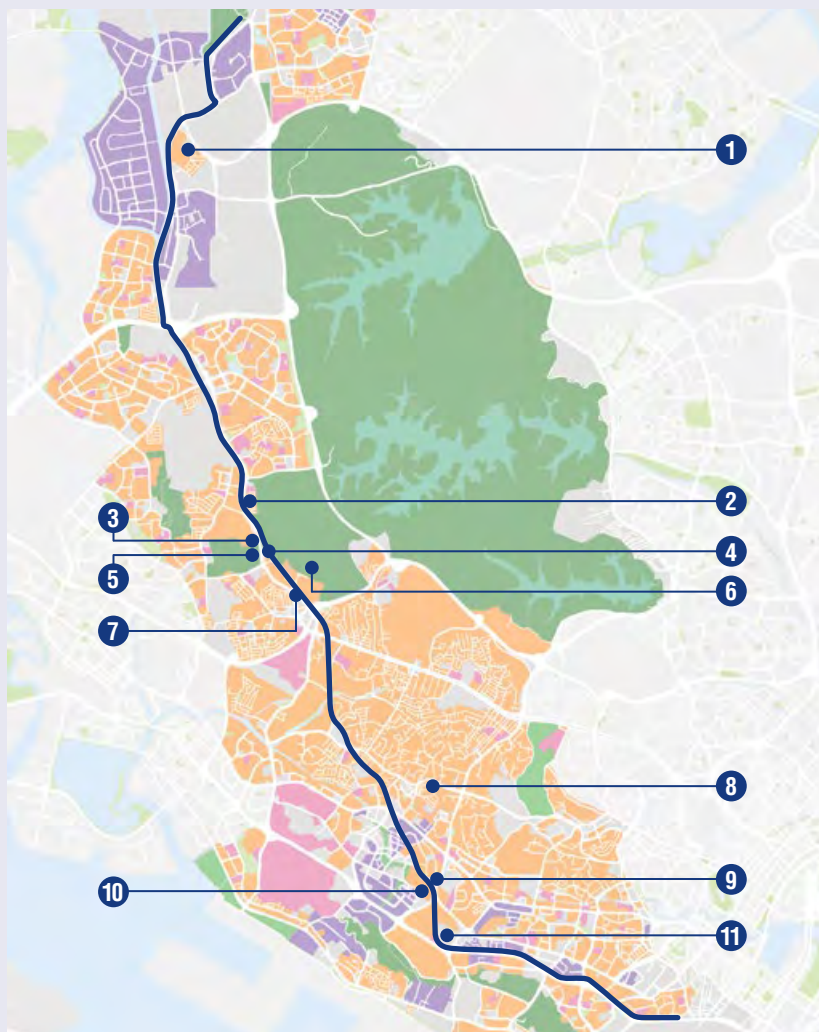
The successful team(s) of consultants will be announced in October 2015.

Continued community involvement in realising aspirations for rail corridor

There will be a public exhibition of all shortlisted submissions from October to December 2015, where the public will be invited to give feedback on all shortlisted proposals. Following that, URA will work closely with the consultant(s) to refine the awarded Concept Master Plan and Concept Proposals, taking into account input from agencies and the public.

The implementation of the Rail Corridor will be carefully and sensitively staged, and URA will continue to work closely with the community to realise its full potential.

Visit www.ura.gov.sg/ms/railcorridor to find out more about the RFP exercise and the Rail Corridor.



LIVE
7 constituencies,
1 million people
within 1 km radius

WORK
8 industrial estates
& the one-north
Business Park

PLAY
More than
6 major parks
& open spaces

STUDY
58 schools
within 1 km

The 24 kilometre-long Rail Corridor threads through places of interest from the north to the south of Singapore

- 1 Kranji War Memorial
- 2 The Rail Mall
- 3 Old Ford Factory
- 4 Former Bukit Timah Fire Station
- 5 Bukit Batok Memorial
- 6 Battle of Bukit Timah

- 7 Beauty World
- 8 Holland Village
- 9 Blessed Sacrament Church
- 10 Wessex Estate
- 11 Alexandra Hospital



ON THE LEADING EDGE

A new wave of research-led innovations has propelled Singapore to the forefront of the global quest for smart, sustainable cities.

How do we bring the principles of sustainability and liveability into living, breathing cities? Some of the most innovative answers were on display at Future Cities: Research in Action, the first in the Urban Lab series of exhibitions at The URA Centre.

The city reimagined

Urban Lab is a new exhibition space at Singapore City Gallery dedicated to showcasing innovative and exciting research and development ideas and solutions for a more sustainable and liveable

urban environment. Its first showcase, the Future Cities exhibition, was held from 23 January to 13 March 2015 and unveiled the works of over 120 researchers from the Future Cities Laboratory (FCL). It was a culmination of over four years of transdisciplinary research in the fields of architecture, engineering, and natural and social sciences.

Transporting ideas out of the labs and into local contexts is essential for mapping out and re-imagining our future urban environment. With the changing needs of our population,

Top:
Senior Minister of State
for National Development
Lee Yi Shyan at the launch
of Urban Lab



THE RESEARCH WAS CONDUCTED IN THREE PHASES: MAPPING, MEASURING BEHAVIOUR, AND ANALYSIS AND DEVELOPMENT



Urban Lab is well-timed in offering the opportunity for more collaboration on urban solutions and turning groundbreaking ideas into reality.

Among the most talked-about standouts are studies on walkability in Singapore's city centre, visualisation and simulation tools that enable planners to create more pleasant commuting experiences, urban design proposals for Rochor and Lavender areas, the use of robotics in the design and fabrication of high-rise buildings, efficient use of back lanes in shophouses, and so on.

Walk the line

What makes a walk enjoyable? Underground, air-conditioned walkways framed by trendy shops, or lush greenery that offers an intimate connection with nature? Will attractive spots and better sidewalk design persuade pedestrians to leave their car at home and make walking time pass faster?

The Walkability project, a highlight of the Future Cities exhibition, saw URA and Future Cities Laboratory's Mobility and Transportation Planning team joining forces to study the experience of walking in Singapore.

The research was conducted in three phases: mapping, measuring behaviour, and analysis and development. The research team first scoured the



downtown area to map physical characteristics such as the width of the sidewalk, exposure to the road, shelter from rain, noise levels and presence of shade. Also taken into consideration are urban design qualities catering to pedestrians' comfort level such as a comfortable surface to walk on, separation from traffic and the presence of interesting shops with transparent facades for pedestrians to view along a particular route.

In the next phase, the research team tracked over a thousand routes taken by consenting pedestrians, and took to the streets to survey pedestrians about their walking experience. A wider pool of users participated in an online survey that asked them to choose between hypothetical routes.



Source: Carlina Teteris for Future Cities Laboratory

A Walkability Analysis Tool and Walkability Index were subsequently developed from the collected data. The newly minted methodology and software are expected to play a critical role in Singapore's future city planning. Planners will be able to use this innovative tool to track how walkability can be improved for different paths in our city. This participatory approach will also give pedestrians in Singapore the chance to actively contribute to the design of their urban environments.

Meeting everyone's mobility needs

Amid the hustle and bustle of modern city life in Singapore, an integral part of making our city a liveable place is providing good accessibility

to our daily destinations. Convenient and manageable commutes from point to point and to amenities such as schools, shops and parks are all important considerations for city planners today, which is why a good grasp of the travel patterns and needs of different groups of commuters is crucial.

This is where research projects in innovative urban solutions such as the Multi-Agent Transport Simulation (MATSim) toolkit can come in. Spearheaded by FCL, the MATSim toolkit is one such means that will deepen our understanding of people's travel patterns and allow us to plan our land use and transport amenities to best address these needs.

For example, users will be able to envision a commuter's choice of travel modes and routes taken as well as a likely sequence of their daily activities. Urban phenomena such as bus bunching, vehicle overcrowding and traffic congestion can also be accounted for in the MATSim simulations; all of which allow it to paint a rich, sophisticated picture of the pulse and dynamics of the city.

Such state-of-the-art technology like MATSim is an important tool that can enhance the planning of our city. The MATSim toolkit holds the potential for capturing valuable data on how different land uses and transport facilities impact people's everyday lives. Planners would be able to better understand how different land uses and activities can generate travel demand, whether locating jobs and amenities in certain areas can reduce the distance of a person's commute, how different people would respond to changes in public transport fares and so on.

In line with URA and the Land Transport Authority's (LTA) efforts to utilise state-of-the-art technology to improve how we plan for Singapore, both URA and the LTA are jointly collaborating with FCL to tap on MATSim's potential and develop the MATSim technology into a practical planning tool for Singapore.

"The system does it [analysing impacts on travel behavior] by simulating these changes in a highly detailed agent-based system that captures the movement of all individuals and vehicles in the city," explains FCL researcher Sergio Ordonez. URA and LTA planners can then use this highly-detailed analysis to model the potential impact of various initiatives and improvements on travel times and congestion levels, and help people get from place to place better.

This new breed of exciting technologies are set to revolutionise the way cities are planned, designed, studied and reconfigured – with Singapore in the thick of the action.



Source: Carlina Teteris for Future Cities Laboratory

IMPROVING PUBLIC SPACES THROUGH PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP



While place management has been practised in various forms, a core criterion to its success and sustainability is community involvement.

Given that communities alone cannot always bring to fruition better place management, public-private partnerships are formed to counter the constraints and ensure a more holistic approach.

Singapore River One (SRO) is one such organisation that was borne out of a consultancy and started in 2010, led by stakeholders along the Singapore River and URA. Under a five-year business plan, the objective of SRO's various programmes and activities is to create a more

well-organised and user-friendly public realm that enhances and activates the spaces and places along the River – encouraging visitors to explore each of the distinctive quays.

The singular focus of SRO has been on leveraging public and private investments, increasing footfall, and enhancing property values within the historic Singapore River precinct, a three kilometre-long stretch of entertainment, food and beverage outlets, offices, hotels and residences in the Boat Quay, Clarke Quay and Robertson Quay areas.



SRO HELD REGULAR COMMUNITY MEETINGS TO INFORM, UPDATE AND GATHER FEEDBACK FROM THE STAKEHOLDERS ON THE ROAD CLOSURE



Beginnings for pedestrianisation: pilot road closure of circular road

The genesis of the initiative to open up the street to pedestrians came about with the success of the annual St. Patrick's Day Street Festival conducted by SRO along Circular Road in 2013. Stakeholders realised that the street could transform into an active urban corridor with activities for pedestrians and bring increased footfall to the area. SRO was then approached by stakeholders to head start the closure of Circular Road for weekends and make the road safer for pedestrians.

To realise this initiative, SRO held regular community meetings to inform, update and gather feedback from the stakeholders on the road closure. Furthermore, SRO presented the proposal to various agencies such as URA, SLA, LTA, SPF, SCDF and NEA and gathered support to achieve this project.

The pilot phase kicked off in November 2013 for a period of six months. The road was closed to vehicles after 6 pm on Fridays and Saturdays, till 1 am. Businesses along Circular Road had the benefit to operate the car park lots as outdoor dining spaces to complement the closed street. Moreover, being right next to the city's CBD, the location was ideal for pedestrians mainly comprising office crowds to partake of the good open space to relax after work. The other factors that helped the closure of Circular Road were that it was a relatively low capacity and one-way road and that the road catered to only a few car park lots. This could be easily replaced with the ample parking spaces in the nearby large office buildings that bordered the street.



BUSINESSES HAVE SEEN INCREASED FOOTFALLS AFTER THE ROAD CLOSURE



However, Circular Road has had its disadvantages as well. A few of the businesses on Circular Road have earned the image of being “girly bars” and, in the process, have been often seen “touting” along the five-foot ways. This has led to a decrease in footfall to the area especially during the weekends when the usual crowd of office goers move elsewhere. SRO is actively working with the stakeholders along the street to ensure these “bars” do not negatively impact the street.

Towards a more permanent pedestrian street

With the success of the pilot, SRO, with the support of the stakeholders, proceeded to propose a permanent closure of Circular Road on weekends. The success was evident from a separate study¹ commissioned by SRO to assess footfall into Singapore River precinct, wherein it was observed

that footfall to Circular Road had increased by 45 per cent during the weekends and a 100 per cent increase particularly on Saturdays.

The weekly closure of Circular Road has been effected on a permanent basis from July 2014. Businesses have seen increased footfalls after the road closure and increase in sales as well. The road closure has also given the impetus to change out a few of the “girly bars” with new concepts in F&B.

Between June and December 2014 (when the decision to go ahead with the weekly road closure on a permanent basis was made), eight new tenants had moved into Circular Road. Some of the new tenants include innovative concepts such as a French delicatessen and antique shop, an Italian cuisine restaurant specialising in Panini, Pasta and Pizzas, a Korean barbecue





TOWARDS A MORE LIVEABLE SINGAPORE



Making roads more pedestrian-friendly is a key part of URA's plans to make Singapore a more liveable city with public spaces for recreation and respite. With the support of local stakeholders, Circular Road is one of many roads that have become more enjoyable and safer for pedestrians. Elsewhere, the Club Street Association and One Kampong Gelam have similarly piloted car-free zones at Club Street, Haji Lane, Bali Lane and Bussorah Street. As the scheme has drawn positive feedback from stakeholders and visitors alike, URA sees a great potential for this movement to grow further and will facilitate more of such projects in our city.

restaurant and Tex-Mex live music and sports bar, among a few. Further efforts are ongoing to ensure that the street is completely rid of the said unsavoury bars and to revitalise the street again.

The road closure has sought to change this image of Circular Road. The objective has been to create a more welcoming atmosphere with outdoor dining spaces and safe movement of pedestrians.

The partnership has been further strengthened in the recently held St. Patrick's Day Street Festival 2015 wherein SRO had a working committee comprising several business owners and managers on Circular Road. The committee helped to coordinate with stakeholders on security, cleaning as well as insurance for the event. This is a breakthrough for SRO to have stakeholders take ownership of this street festival.

With the street closure being managed financially by SRO, it is critical that all businesses use the car park lots as dining spaces to allow SRO to meet its expenses as well as activate the street more. While the road closure started out with SRO's active involvement and support from the public agencies, stakeholders on the ground are now taking upon themselves to solicit their peers to participate in the road closure.

This public-private partnership (between SRO, government agencies and tenants/landlords) has helped in the gradual transformation of Circular Road from a slow-paced urban street to a more pedestrian-friendly and vibrant street. SRO hopes to leverage this partnership to create better public urban spaces for the precinct as a whole.

This article was contributed by Anitha Immanuel, place manager at SRO, a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to the place management of the Singapore River. As place manager, Anitha manages stakeholder relations and responds to emerging issues such as licenses and permits that affect stakeholders. She helps to ensure the SRO's business plan is effectively carried out and actively advocates urban projects that physically enhance the environment of the precinct.

¹Source: Research Plus. Singapore River Precinct Visitor Study 2013. 2014. Daily traffic count in 2013 (6 pm – 1 am) for Friday and Saturday was 1534 and 1004 respectively. In 2014, it was 1672 and 1013 resp. during the same time period.



A MORE WALKABLE AND CYCLIST-FRIENDLY TOWN

Ang Mo Kio will be the first model town for walking and cycling under the Sustainable Singapore Blueprint 2015.

To encourage more residents to walk and cycle for short trips in the neighbourhood, the Land Transport Authority (LTA) and Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) have announced preliminary plans to make Ang Mo Kio a more walkable and cyclist-friendly town by 2018.

Plans to pilot Ang Mo Kio as a walking and cycling town were first announced by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong in November 2014,

as part of the S\$1.5 billion Sustainable Singapore Blueprint 2015, which includes the vision to promote and develop other modes of transport for a “Car-Lite Singapore”.

How do we reduce our reliance on cars, adopt greener modes of transport and make walking and cycling a realistic option to get around? What kind of infrastructure should be built to help make a town walkable and cyclist-friendly?

Top:
The proposed elevated path will give pedestrians and cyclists a faster and safer journey





To make walking and cycling more attractive and convenient in Ang Mo Kio, we will implement a network of dedicated walking and cycling paths, pedestrian priority zones at bus stops, traffic calming measures, dedicated bicycle crossings, and bicycle parking facilities.

There are also plans for a 2.6 kilometre-long corridor along the MRT viaduct from Yio Chu Kang MRT station to Bishan-Ang Mo Kio Park. This corridor will provide a seamless path for pedestrians and cyclists to travel between their homes and the MRT stations.

We will also work with the Ang Mo Kio community to introduce a code of conduct for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists, so that all road users can contribute and play their part in building a culture of safety and mutual consideration.

These plans aim to ensure a safe and enjoyable walking and cycling experience for everyone, including more vulnerable road users such as seniors and young children.

“As we continue to expand our public transport infrastructure and move towards a vision of a sustainable and liveable Singapore, we will also complement these efforts by enhancing the travel experience for commuters in the first and final leg of their journeys, be it through walking or cycling. Ang Mo Kio Town provides a starting point for us to test out new initiatives as part of our efforts to make our living environment even more suitable for walking and cycling,” said Mr Chew Men Leong, Chief Executive, LTA.

Left:
Proposed walking and cycling track
underneath the MRT viaduct for a more
comfortable walking and cycling experience

Shaping the plans together with the community

The proposals were showcased in a roving exhibition that made its debut at the “Countdown 2015 cum Celebrate SG50 @ Ang Mo Kio GRC & Sengkang West SMC” event at Bishan-Ang Mo Kio Park on 31 December 2014. From January to February 2015, the roving exhibition also made its way round various places such as the Ang Mo Kio Central Stage, Ang Mo Kio CC, Teck Ghee CC, Yio Chu Kang CC, Cheng San CC and The URA Centre. To extend our reach to more people, URA and LTA also set up a website (www.walkandcycle.sg) to showcase the plans for Ang Mo Kio, including videos of the simulated cycling flythrough and of the proposals.



The exhibitions were well-attended with hundreds of residents and visitors giving feedback on the proposals. Most Ang Mo Kio residents expressed excitement at the proposals, and looked forward to the implementation of the ideas on ground. Those not living in Ang Mo Kio also requested that the plans be extended to their towns (e.g. Yishun, Toa Payoh and Serangoon).

“The purpose of this pilot is to build a good cycling and walking system to encourage residents to take up greener modes of active mobility. It is therefore important to involve the community to shape the plans. We hope to hear from the residents on how they feel about the draft plans, and what we can do to encourage cycling and walking in the town,” said Mr Ng Lang, Chief Executive Officer, URA.

If you are an Ang Mo Kio resident, why not give your take on the Ang Mo Kio walking and cycling plans by writing in to feedback@walkandcycle.sg?



**MOST ANG MO KIO RESIDENTS EXPRESSED
EXCITEMENT AT THE PROPOSALS, AND LOOKED FORWARD
TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE IDEAS ON GROUND**





THE FAMILY THAT PLANS TOGETHER

He takes his two-year old on bike rides while mapping out future cycling routes. We find out how family has inspired Eugene Lee's work.

Planning was always in the blood for urban planner Eugene Lee. His father, a shipping clerk, was interested in development issues, and shared his passion with his son.

"Till today, when I talk to him, he'll tell me, oh, there's this new road coming up, there's this new train line coming up," Eugene says, laughing.

Unlike his childhood days, however, Eugene, 36, now has an edge over his father. He is privy to such developments as part of his job as a planner at URA.

Over the course of his 10-year career with URA, he has also worked with other government

agencies to map out macro plans such as the Round Island Route for cyclists.

For the recent Master Plan 2014, he returned to cycling as part of the team that drew up the National Cycling Plan, a sprawling blueprint that incorporates all cycling networks, including the Round Island Route and Rail Corridor, inter and intra-town cycling paths, to allow cyclists to move across the island with ease and comfort.

Skyline chats with Eugene about what it was like to create a vision of cycling for Singapore, the role the public played in shaping the plans, and how his family continues to influence his work as an urban planner.



with Eugene Lee,
Urban Planner

Before the National Cycling Plan, Singapore never had such a comprehensive vision for our cycling infrastructure. What was it like working on it?

It was interesting because it was almost like drawing up cycling routes from scratch. But I think drawing up the routes was not the most difficult part; the most difficult part was trying to harmonise the way cycling infrastructure is created.

And we had to get buy-in from people, so we did a lot of public engagement, including cycling with people on weekends, to convince them why having a comprehensive cycling network could benefit people.

What were some of the things that you picked up interacting with the public?

There is really no need to fear the public and their views. In fact, what you should be doing is to interact with them, to better understand where they're coming from. It also helps them better understand where we are coming from.

When we cycled with them on weekends or even as part of the Master Plan review, they would tell us what's wrong or what's going well for them or what's not.

As government, we're trying to get so much feedback and one of the easier platforms, is to be part of these social media networks. The feedback is regular and I think there's a lot of room to ride on these platforms to engage the public on a more continuous basis. In fact, they're your eyes on the ground.

How did your personal interest in cycling get sparked?

I've always been quite an avid cyclist, in many forms. As a form of recreation, as a sport, and as a mode of commute.



WE DID A LOT OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT, INCLUDING CYCLING WITH PEOPLE ON WEEKENDS, TO CONVINCE THEM WHY HAVING A COMPREHENSIVE CYCLING NETWORK COULD BENEFIT PEOPLE



So when I was studying in MIT, I actually focused my [Masters] thesis on cycling. I realised how effective cycling can be as an alternative mode of transport, especially in the US where it's very car-centric and there are these people who fought hard to convince people there is a future for cycling – they inspired me.

I thought, wow, this is something that can surely work in Singapore, given that Singapore is such a compact city. But what's more important is how we do up a comprehensive cycling infrastructure system to make it safe for everyone.

The beauty of being on a bicycle is that you move at a very human pace. Unlike when you move in a car, it's so fast, all you see are trees rushing by you. When you're on a bicycle, you get to pass through local neighbourhood centres, you can stop, you can hear the sounds and activities of the buzz, and people going around.

One of the concerns people have is that it's just not safe to ride on the roads yet. How do you navigate some of these challenges when you cycle?

I do acknowledge that it's dangerous to cycle along the roads unless you're more confident of being on the road and co-existing with the cars.

But I think the challenge for planners is to think about how we can create a comprehensive cycling network with supporting amenities that will provide people who are afraid of using the road a safe environment to cycle in and convince them to embrace cycling in future.

That's where I think the safe infrastructure may not be fully in place yet. But I think we're definitely well on our way there. In time to come, we should have a more comprehensive and safe cycling network.

What do you see as the future of cycling in Singapore?

I envisage that more people will see cycling beyond a recreational activity. Cycling is not just about going to East Coast Park or going to Pulau Ubin and renting a bike. Cycling is more an everyday part of your life. When you leave your house, when you send your kid to school and put them at the back of your bicycle, it'll be very much a part of our lives.

You take your two-year-old daughter with you when you go cycling. What are some of the routes that you both have enjoyed?

One of the longer routes that we've taken is from where we live in Ang Mo Kio, we went all the way to Punggol Point, where the Punggol settlement is. I cycled there to meet some friends, we had brunch, then we cycled back home to Ang Mo Kio. She enjoys it because all she has to do is sit there, let the wind blow.

How about the rest of your family (wife and three-month-old daughter)? How do you involve them in your planning work?

I involve them in the course of our day-to-day lives. Instead of driving, we try to take the public transport instead. We try not to drive to work most of the time on the weekdays. That's how I try to share some of these things with my family, to help them see the benefits of public transport.

What kind of Singapore do you hope your daughters will grow up in?

A Singapore that is less car-reliant and more dependent on alternative modes of transport, like public transport and cycling. Definitely a greener Singapore.



Eugene has most recently taken on the role of Acting Director overseeing planning for the North region. He says the Sembawang Community Hub will be a new community gathering place to look out for.

PLANNING FOR GREENERY

Greenery has always been an important part of our plans to create a good living environment for our people.

Even though we are a small country, we have an array of accessible green spaces for different social and recreational needs. We do this by integrating greenery into our urban environment and planning parks and greenery alongside developments.

We are also adding greenery skywards by encouraging building owners and developers to provide communal green spaces at the upper levels of their buildings.

Besides creating a lush green environment, we have transformed some of our waterways and reservoirs into beautifully landscaped riverine and lake spaces for everyone to enjoy.



Targets for 2030

We will continue to provide a diverse range of green spaces through practical and innovative means.

 **9%** of land for nature reserves and parks

 9 in 10 homes within **400m** of a park

 **2,000** Community in Bloom Gardens

 Enhanced ecological connectivity with **180km** of nature ways

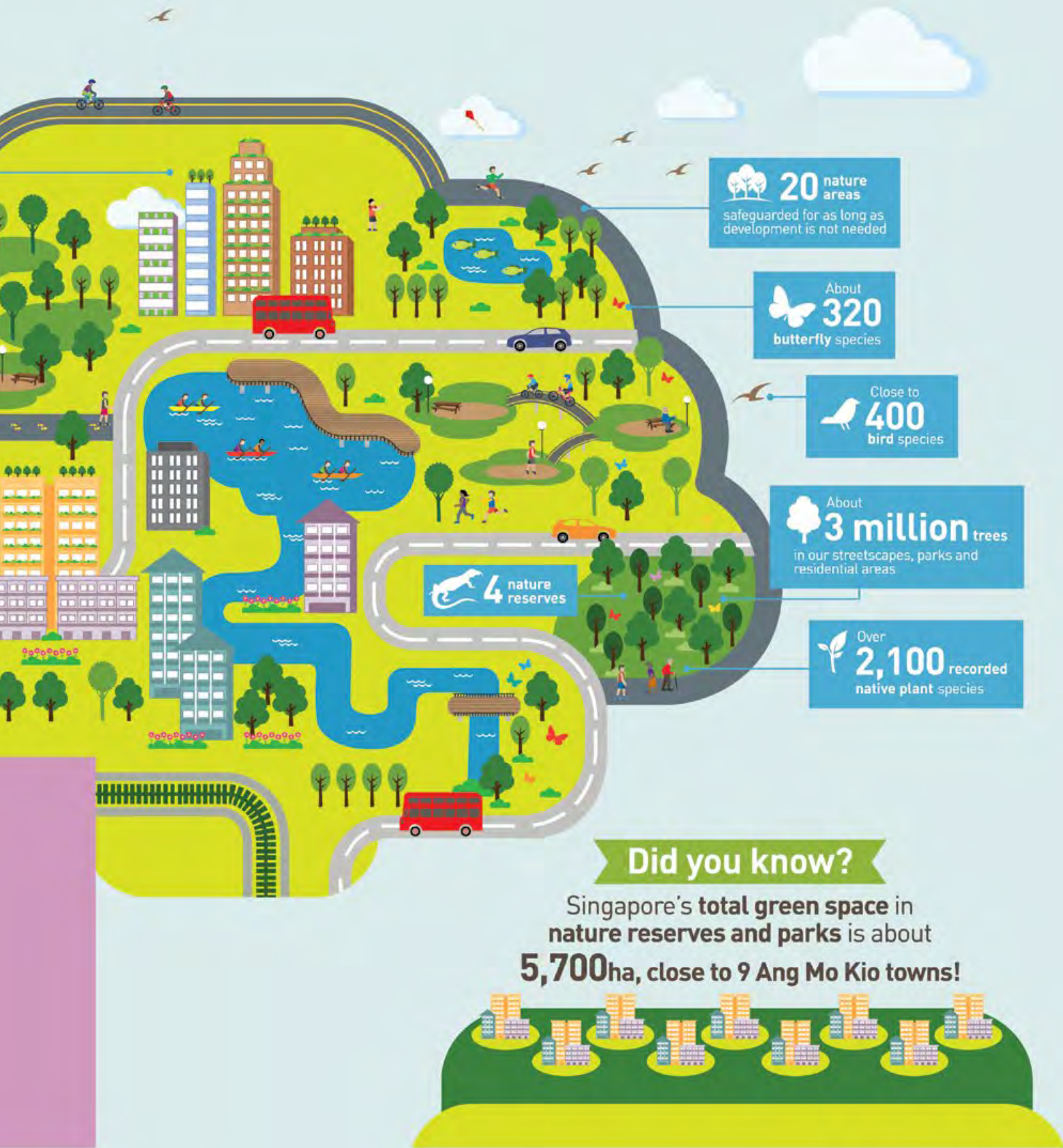
 **400km** of park connectors

 **200ha** of skyrise greenery, equivalent to 650 school fields

 Over **100** ABC waters projects

 **24km** Rail Corridor

 **150km** round island route





MBSC 2015 Photo Competition
Merit Prize Winner © Justin Seah

MARINA BAY

SINGAPORE COUNTDOWN:

A TIME TO REFLECT,

A PLACE TO CELEBRATE

Marina Bay Singapore Countdown 2015 was its 10th edition and also kicked off the nation's 50th birthday celebrations. *Skyline* speaks to Jason Chen to find out what the event meant for Singapore and himself.

Organised by Esplanade and URA, Marina Bay Singapore Countdown (MBSC) has been held since 2005. The signature event was conceived to create a New Year's Eve tradition, unique to Singapore, and offer an opportunity for the community to bond in a meaningful way.

"Over the last 10 years, MBSC has gained a strong following from diverse backgrounds, including families and visitors from overseas. We are heartened to see the community connecting with the precinct through the event," said Jason Chen, URA's Director of Place Management, who has been part of the organising team since 2008.

The event has gone from strength to strength since its inception and has seen much greater community involvement and variety of activities than when it first started. Even as the team



WE ARE HEARTENED TO SEE THE COMMUNITY CONNECTING WITH THE PRECINCT THROUGH THE EVENT



works on injecting something new each year, Jason understands the importance of ensuring that the event remains true to its vision and spirit, which is to build a tradition where the community comes together to contemplate and reflect on the past year as we usher in the new one.

Hence, it is no surprise that the wishing spheres project is his favourite element of the event.

“It not only serves as an effective platform to reach out to the community, the tens of thousands of wishing spheres capturing their wishes that we place in Marina Bay is the perfect manifestation of a ‘People’s Bay’. This is what makes it truly special and different from the countdown events held in many other cities,” said Jason.

Bringing the community and stakeholders together

It was one of the first assignments for Jason when he joined URA seven years ago. He was thrilled at the prospect of being part of the team to organise an event of such scale and significance.

“As the event was still in its early phase back then, I saw a lot of potential for us to grow the event and I wanted very much to be able to contribute to the effort. Of course, it was also clear to me that organising such an event would be a very challenging one, but I was more motivated than deterred,” he said.

The best countdown yet

On the night of 31 December 2014, Marina Bay was adorned with elements of red and white. The SG50 logo prominently displayed at Marina Bay Sands and Esplanade, key buildings lit in red and white, and the wishing spheres afloat in the Bay – traditionally white in colour but this time with 5,000 red spheres added to form a giant number ‘50’ amidst 20,000 white spheres – formed a stunning scene to commemorate our nation’s 50th birthday.

Three concerts were staged around the Bay – *Celebrate SG50* at The Float, *Celebrate with the World 2015* at The Promontory and *Celebrate December* at Esplanade – together pumping up the atmosphere and bringing the event to its climax at midnight.

The event also saw some 400 community drummers from two to 68 years old performing ‘live’ to the specially-commissioned fireworks music as a kaleidoscope of colours illuminated the Bay.

In the nights leading up to the event, the façade of Fullerton Hotel was illuminated with a projection telling the story of Singapore’s growth over the past 50 years – another first for MBSC.

To Jason, it was the best edition ever. “It was special not only because it was the 10th anniversary of the event but also the curtain raiser for the SG50 festivities. There were many new elements and activities to mark the





MARINA BAY SINGAPORE COUNTDOWN 2015

NO. OF
WISHING
SPHERES **25,000** 
WHITE 20,000
+ RED 5,000

NO. OF
WISHES
COLLECTED **> 600,000**

NO. OF
VISITORS/
SPECTATORS **> 350,000**

NO. OF
WISHING
STATIONS
TO COLLECT
WISHES FROM
31

NO. OF
PARTICIPATING
VWOS &
SCHOOLS
86

important milestone – and we were grateful that we could integrate everything together nicely to put up a good show for all who were there,” he said.

Planning began as soon as the year began and involved not just Esplanade and URA but also many partners, stakeholders and sponsors. The biggest challenge was in seeing the big picture – ensuring that the many elements and programmes were meaningfully strung together – as well as taking care of finer details like coordinating the timing of the projection and when buildings were lit so that the Bay had something for everyone throughout the night. Together with his “very dynamic and passionate team”, Jason rallied the community and stakeholders to participate and support the event, turning Marina Bay into a ‘Bay of Celebrations’ and kicking off the nation’s year-long celebrations with a bang.

He said, “The support from Marina Bay stakeholders and our partners has been key to the successful execution of this signature event. I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our appreciation for the tremendous support and participation from our sponsors and partners.”

Bringing Marina Bay to greater heights

As place manager, the Place Management Department in URA also organises and oversees the programming of other events and activities in Marina Bay to let the community enjoy the waterfront area, thereby injecting greater vibrancy into our public spaces.

While the precinct is already a popular waterfront destination among locals and visitors today, Jason has bigger aspirations.

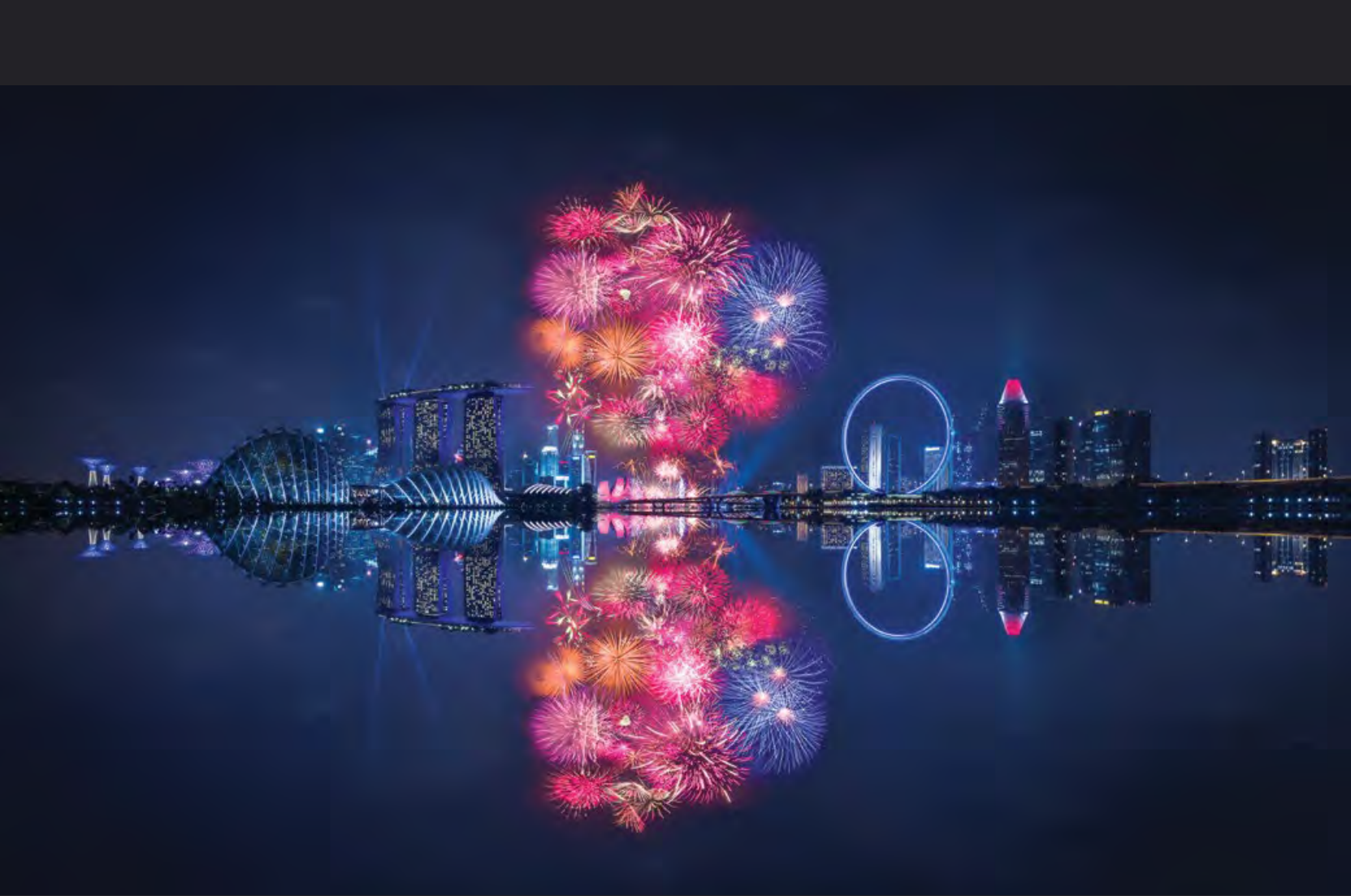
“I look forward to the day when all Singaporeans speak about Marina Bay with great pride and that Marina Bay features as one of the premier waterfront destinations in the minds of people from all over the world.”

MARINA BAY SINGAPORE COUNTDOWN 2015

PHOTO COMPETITION WINNERS



FIRST:
Goh Hak Liang
Welcoming Singapore's Golden Jubilee





OPPOSITE, FROM TOP:

SECOND:
Lim Yang Chin
Jubilance

THIRD:
Marklin Ang
Beckoning SG50

THIS PAGE FROM TOP:

MERIT:
Ong Yi Chao
To a smooth sailing Jubilee year

Ahmad Iskandar Abdullah
A vibrant celebration

Elizabeth Yeo
Happy 50th Singapore





FROM TOP:

MERIT:

Lin Yihan

Ushering in 2015 in style

PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD:

Terryl Eugenio

Golden Jubilee



Data sharing across agencies

URA and the Singapore Land Authority (SLA) launched a groundbreaking information technology (IT) project for both agencies to share development plans and data more seamlessly. While development proposals had to be shared via email between the agencies in the past, the new MaX (Multi-agencies eXchange) IT system will allow both agencies to share feedback and take action on new development proposals. Close collaboration like this enables more efficient work processes across agencies, bringing faster service to the public.



Parts of Geylang proposed for 'Commercial/Institution' use

URA proposed rezoning parts of Geylang from 'Residential/Institution' to a new 'Commercial/Institution' zoning in January. This is to minimise friction on the ground between residents and the diverse uses in the area and avoid eroding the character of the area.

Inventive landed home designs

Home owners, developers and architects can now propose more creative designs and layouts for landed homes under a new set of envelope control guidelines. The building envelope guides the size and shape of the house while allowing more creative layering of internal spaces.

Short-term stays: Boon or bane?

Should we allow short-term stays in private residences in Singapore? Is the current six-month requirement for short-term stays sufficient or too strict? There has been much debate on this. As part of its review, URA is gathering public feedback on short-term stays in private residential properties through various avenues such as discussions with stakeholders and an online questionnaire. All feedback will be considered carefully and more details will be announced by the third quarter of 2015.

Jubilee Bridge tribute to Singapore's founding PM

In tribute to the first Prime Minister of Singapore, URA opened the Jubilee Bridge at Marina Bay for public access on 29 March 2015, one month ahead of schedule. This was to help facilitate pedestrian movement along the Esplanade Drive for crowds waiting to bid farewell to the late Mr Lee Kuan Yew during his funeral procession on the same day. The 220-metre long pedestrian bridge was Mr Lee's suggestion as he believed that we needed a friendlier connection between Merlion Park and the waterfront promenade in front of Esplanade.



URA REMEMBERS

MR LEE KUAN YEW (1923–2015)

Founding Prime Minister | Chief Architect | Visionary Leader



Mr Lee Kuan Yew viewing the housing models on display during the laying of foundation stone ceremony of Cantonment Road HDB flats

Source: Ministry of Information and the Arts Collection,
Courtesy of National Archives of Singapore