







**SUBJECT GROUP REPORT ON  
URBAN VILLAGES AND  
SOUTHERN RIDGES  
& HILLSIDE VILLAGES**

**November 2002**



20 November 2002

Mr Mah Bow Tan  
Minister for National Development

## **PARKS AND WATER BODIES & IDENTITY PLAN**

### **FINAL REPORT SUBMITTED BY SUBJECT GROUP ON URBAN VILLAGES AND SOUTHERN RIDGES AND HILLSIDE VILLAGES**

1 In July this year, you appointed me to chair the Subject Group on Urban Villages and Southern Ridges and Hillside Villages. The Subject Group was tasked to discuss URA's proposals to enhance the Urban Villages and Hillside Villages as well as to link up the Southern Ridges from West Coast Park to Sentosa.

2 In arriving at our recommendations, we have taken into consideration feedback from the public and the stakeholders of each of the nodes. We are heartened by the tremendous support for the Identity Plans from the public and stakeholders.

3 Our final report is attached for your consideration. This report captures the views of the public, the stakeholders and Subject Group members. It is clear from the report that there is a shared common interest in keeping these special places in Singapore.

4 We are honoured to have been part of this process, and to understand first hand how much Singaporeans care about their places. We hope the report will be helpful in Singapore's quest to develop a sense of place and identity among Singaporeans. Thank you for the opportunity to participate in a meaningful process.

Yours sincerely,



**A/P Lily Kong**  
**Chairperson, Subject Group on**  
**Urban Villages and Southern Ridges and Hillside Villages**



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# 1 INTRODUCTION

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The Parks & Waterbodies Plan and the Identity Plan present ideas and possibilities on how we can enhance our living environment by making the most of our natural assets like the greenery and waterbodies and by retaining places with local identity and history. The two plans were put to public consultation from 23 July 2002 to 22 October 2002. More than 35,000 visited the exhibition, and feedback was received from about 4,200 individuals.

Three Subject Groups (SGs) were appointed by Minister of National Development, Mr Mah Bow Tan as part of the public consultation exercise to study proposals under the following areas:

- a. **Subject Group 1:** Parks and Waterbodies Plan and the Rustic Coast
- b. **Subject Group 2:** Urban Villages and Southern Ridges & Hillside Villages
- c. **Subject Group 3:** Old World Charm.

The SG members, comprising professionals, representatives from interest groups and lay people were tasked to study the various proposals for the two plans, conduct dialogue sessions with stakeholders and consider public feedback, before making their recommendations to URA on the proposals. Following from the public consultation exercise, URA will finalise the proposals and incorporate the major land use changes and ideas into the Master Plan 2003.

SG 2 was tasked to look into the proposals for these clusters: "Urban Villages" and "Southern Ridges & Hillside Villages".

Urban Villages comprise those along Upper Thomson Road and Bukit Timah Road, namely, Springleaf area, Jalan Leban & Casuarina Road area, Thomson Village, Coronation area, and Anak Bukit area.

Southern Ridges & Hillside Villages comprise a group of several ridges stretching from Mount Faber, to Telok Blangah Hill and Kent Ridge. This cluster also includes the lesser known villages at Gillman Road, Morse Road and Alexandra Park at the foothills of these ridges.

These are either popular places that people go to and which they consider as part of their communal and social life, or are lesser known but have evolved an identity with a smaller group, with potential for becoming meaningful places for more.

The SG met for six discussions, conducted two site visits and had five dialogue sessions with stakeholders (*see Appendix 1 for schedule of meetings and site visits; Appendix 2 for schedule of stakeholders' dialogues and number/range of participants*). This has been completed, and the following chapters present the SG's recommendations.

The Urban Villages.



The Southern Ridges and Hillside Villages.



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## 2 URBAN VILLAGES

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### 2.1 SPRINGLEAF

URA put forth four main proposals:

#### 2.1.1 Convert area into a public park.

The public strongly supported the idea, but called for sensitivity and care in the development of such a park, in order not to destroy the habitats of animals and birds. The Nature Society suggested that the wooded park should incorporate the area from Lentor Avenue to the edge of Springleaf Housing Estate and the green corridor along both sides of Sungei Seletar.

Residents in the area were united in their support of the conversion to the public park, provided the area did not become polluted as a consequence. A letter was submitted by 140 residents to show their case, urging that the 42 species of birdlife observed by the Nature Society in just one morning should not be disturbed. Residents proposed that trails should be introduced and made friendly for children to walk through. Rubbish bins should also be provided to discourage littering.

The SG supports the idea that the area should be converted into a public nature park that should attract not just residents in the vicinity, but those outside the area. However, it noted that residents should not be inconvenienced by additional visitors and a "buffer" should be provided to shield adjacent residential areas from potential additional visitors.

Thus, visitors arriving by car should be drawn away from parking near/ outside the residences, and this could be done by consciously constructing small areas for car parks, taking advantage of the current "lay of the land".

Three locations were suggested:

- a. Across Upper Thomson Road next to the former Mandai Post Office
- b. Next to Hong Heng Mansion
- c. Next to Thong Soon Green

The three locations were suggested because they hug existing structures, and are least likely to cause disturbance to residents.

#### **Recommendations:**

- *Convert to public nature park.*
- *Conduct feasibility study of up to three car park locations as identified.*

URA's key proposals for Springleaf.



Suggested car parking areas.



2.1.2 **Realign Nee Soon Road so that it follows the contours of the residential estate edge, and functions as a scenic drive.**

The idea received the least support from the public. Neither was it supported by the stakeholders and the SG.

The reasons for stakeholders' lack of support were again expressed in a letter from 140 residents, and via a representative at the stakeholders' dialogue session. They would like the area to retain its tranquility, and were concerned about bringing vehicular traffic into the area, with its attendant noise and air pollution. They requested that parking along the road be strictly prohibited. They further proposed that the wooden bridge along Nee Soon Road be retained as it holds sentimental value for many, and is an integral part of the identity of the area. If any other bridges were to be constructed, the same look should be replicated.

The SG is of the view that the construction of the road would damage the environment, and like the stakeholders, were concerned about pollution. Additionally, the group shared the view that the realigned road would be too short to make a meaningful scenic drive.

***Recommendations:***

- *Keep Nee Soon Road as it is. Do not realign.*
- *Keep the wooden bridge and ensure that it is safe.*

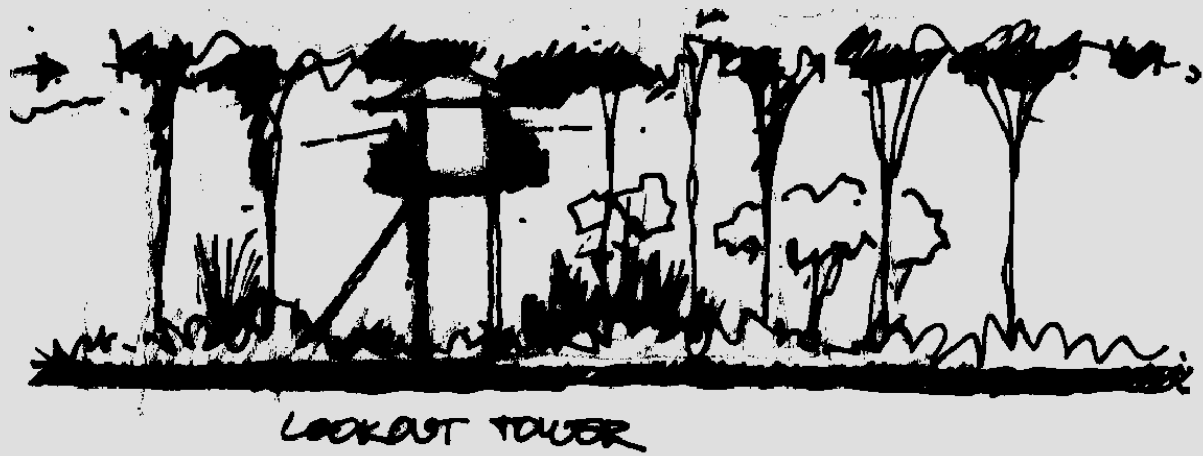
2.1.3 **Introduce new activities, particularly lifestyle businesses such as aromatherapy joints, spas, etc.**

Public response was mixed on this score. The proposal received low ranking although there were others who suggested yet other uses. This contrasted with stakeholders' response, which were uniformly unsupportive. These stakeholders (residents in the area) viewed that the proposed activities were more appropriate elsewhere, and their introduction would spoil the natural setting of the area. They were also not desirous of cycling paths in the park for the same reasons, and because they were concerned about the nuisance that cyclists could cause. In this, their views resonated with those of the Nature Society, which submitted an appeal for "minimal development" as a guiding principle, and the promotion of the area and the green corridor along Sungei Seletar as a recreational-cum-ecological corridor.

The SG does not support the proposal because of the likelihood of failure - the dangers of not having a large enough clientele to support the activities were high, and the desire to have only a few in order not to spoil the ambience of the area meant that there would not be critical mass to attract clients.

In turn, the SG proposes that safe paths for walking should be introduced along the river banks; that non-pollutive uses of the river could be encouraged, such as punting (although avoiding motorized transport modes); and that shelters/ look-out towers and appropriate lighting should be provided.

Proposed boardwalk along waters' edge (top) and lookout tower (bottom).



Site visit to Springleaf area.



The group envisages that the area would offer a serene spot for families to take walks and enjoy the natural surroundings safely and unobtrusively.

In addition, the SG proposes that the nature park should be linked to Upper Seletar Reservoir and Lower Seletar Reservoir by an overhead pedestrian bridge or underpass across the major roads in the area, such as Upper Thomson Road and Lentor Avenue.

***Recommendations:***

- *Introduce safe paths for walking.*
- *Introduce safe, non-pollutive uses of the river.*
- *Study feasibility of providing pedestrian link between nature park and Upper and Lower Seletar Reservoir.*
- *Do not introduce small businesses or buildings within nature park (see however 2.1.4 below).*

**2.1.4 Retain former Mandai Post Office.**

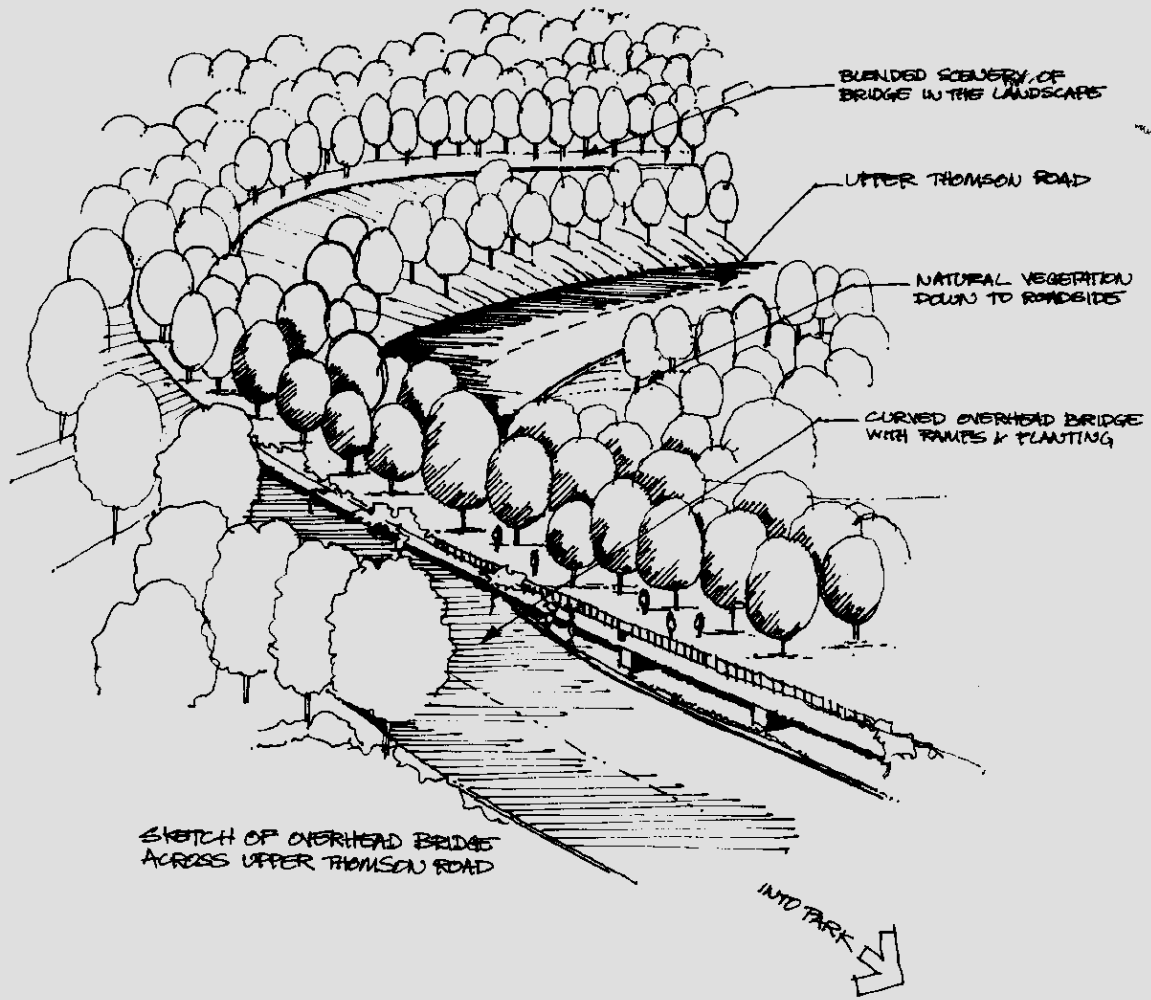
The public supported this idea. It was suggested that it could be developed into a café as well as a retail centre that would be attractive to visitors. The stakeholders were also supportive of the idea of retaining the Post Office building, but were uncertain that the area should be injected with a commercial nature. They also underscored the view that any new buildings should blend in with the environment, and made to look similar to the old post office. They should be single storey high. The SG supports strongly the idea of retaining the former Mandai Post Office and proposes that a Visitor Centre could be housed there. The Visitor Centre should be a repository of knowledge about the rich social and natural history of the area. The collection of the area's social heritage could constitute a community project in conjunction with the Oral History and National Archives Units of the National Heritage Board. The study of the area's natural history could involve the Nature Society and the National Parks Board (NParks).

The SG is agreeable that if lifestyle activities were to be introduced, it should be in or around the Post Office in sensitively designed buildings, as pointed out by the stakeholders.

***Recommendations:***

- *Retain former Mandai Post Office.*
- *Develop it as a Visitor Centre, involving community efforts, the National Heritage Board, Nature Society and NParks.*
- *Introduce lifestyle activities only in new sensitively designed buildings near the Post Office, if desired.*

Sketch of overhead bridge across Upper Thomson Road.



Sketch of SG's suggestions for Springleaf area.



## 2.2 CASUARINA ROAD

URA proposed two ideas:

### 2.2.1 **Allow outdoor dining by the road, recognising current practices.**

All three groups concerned - the general public, stakeholders and SG - agreed that current practices should be legalised. It would help the businesses to stay, and recognise present demand. There was slight expression of concern for hygiene, with eating occurring next to a busy road and by a bus-stop, as well as danger posed by the gas cylinders at the rear of the shops. However, this is already currently the practice, and there are clearly willing customers.

***Recommendation:***

- *Permit outdoor dining.*

### 2.2.2 **Improve access and add new car park lots. The idea is to improve access to the Lower Peirce Reservoir Park.**

The ideas were well-supported. Additionally, a resident suggested promoting cycling paths and building sheds along the paths. This dovetailed with a SG suggestion to provide a place to rent out bicycles such that the area around Casuarina Road could act as a potential 'gateway' to the parks with people cycling along proper paths or walking along trails to the Reservoir Park.

As for car parks, there is support from the SG and the public to move the car park lots closer to the shophouses at Casuarina Road and to create kerbside parking at Jalan Kuras and Jalan Gelenggang. This is understood to already constitute part of the Estate Upgrading Programme (EUP). The existing parallel parking lots along the edge of the forested areas could be replaced with perpendicular parking lots to increase the parking capacity. There was also a suggestion from stakeholders to increase the parking charges to regulate the usage of the parking lots.

***Recommendations:***

- *Support improved access and new car park lots.*
- *Explore the feasibility of improving cycling routes and introducing bicycle rental.*

URA's proposal to allow outdoor dining for shophouses along Casuarina Road.



Site visit to Casuarina Road area.



URA's key proposals for Jalan Leban area.



## 2.3 JALAN LEBAN

URA's proposals for Jalan Leban are fourfold:

### 2.3.1 **Improve pedestrian access to Lower Pierce Reservoir and improve pedestrian connection between Bishan Park and Lower Peirce Reservoir. The aim is to make the reservoirs more accessible as recreational space to residents, given the proximity of these nature areas to the estates.**

Public feedback indicated that the proposal was well-received, resonating with stakeholders' and the SG's views. The SG, in addition, proposed that the parks in the Jalan Leban area should be linked up so that residents would have the benefit of connected parks to enjoy. The SG proposes that URA should conduct a feasibility study. It was however pointed out that this would be difficult to implement as the additional land is privately owned.

One stakeholder requested that an overhead bridge should be installed next to the Sembawang Hill Food Centre to facilitate crossing the busy Upper Thomson Road. The SG expresses some doubt as to whether the overhead bridge would be used, given the proximity of another and the preference for traffic light crossings. The Group proposes that a feasibility study be conducted on installing a traffic crossing instead.

#### ***Recommendations:***

- *Improve pedestrian access as suggested.*
- *Conduct feasibility study for installing a traffic crossing.*

### 2.3.2 **Develop interim parks at the open space next to Sembawang Hill Food Centre for community activities. Introduce an amphitheatre as part of the EUP. Extend the eating areas of the Food Centre to part of the open space.**

Public feedback on the use of the space as community space was highly positive and respondents to URA's survey picked this as one of the top four choices. Likewise, stakeholders were supportive of the idea.

Given the tranquility of the shady grassed open space and the unlikely event that more seats are needed in the Food Centre, the SG opines that the open space could indeed be left as it is for community activities. The SG, however, understands that the Kebun Bahru EUP will proceed with the amphitheatre and accepts that it is consistent with the desire to let the area be used for community activities. Such activities could be more spontaneous and *ad-hoc*, including using the area for Sunday markets where people from the area could be drawn out.

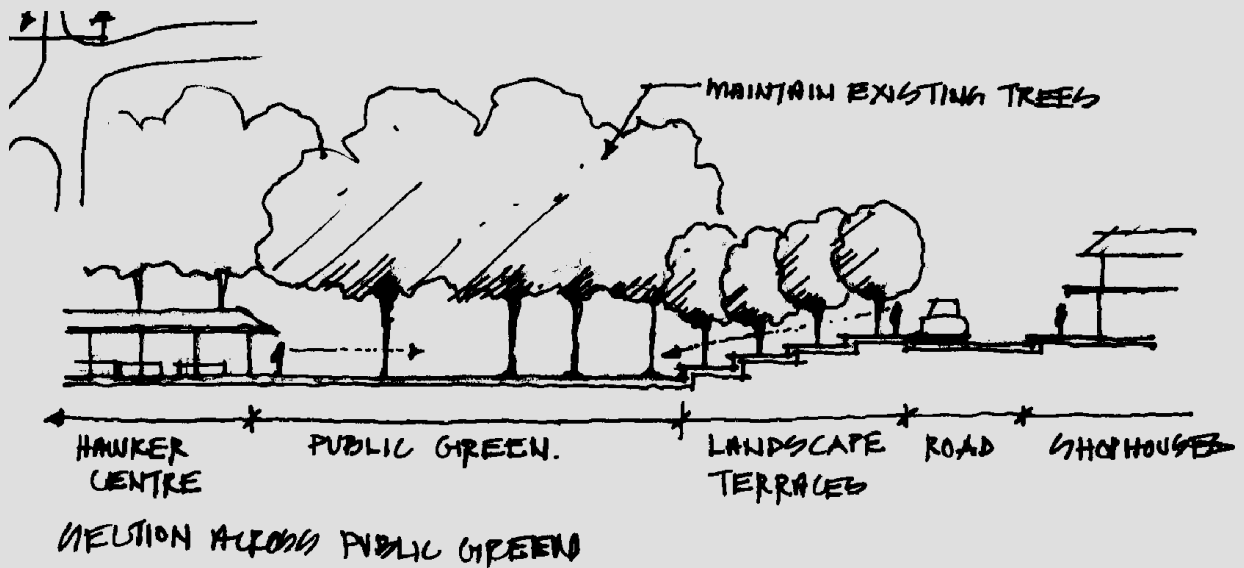
#### ***Recommendation:***

- *Use the open space for community activities.*

The open space next to Sembawang Hill Food Centre.



Section across proposed interim park on the open space next to Sembawang Hill Food Centre.



### 2.3.3 **URA proposes new shophouse developments to create a critical mass, such that the area might develop an identity not unlike Holland Village.**

The stakeholders expressed mixed feelings about the injection of new shophouses. While some saw the potential of increasing the critical mass of shops as a way of enhancing life in the area, others expressed concern that more shophouses would cause ever more parking problems in the area.

A member of the public and a few stakeholders suggested a different approach, which is to allow upper floors of the existing shophouses to be used for commercial purposes. However, some SG members are concerned that rezoning the area to full commercial use would have an impact on the predominantly residential area. In order to maintain the residential character of the area, the SG thinks that it should only be embarked with caution.

Several SG members point out that shophouse-type development face little demand in contemporary times, and there would be few end users. It was also pointed out that the glut in retail space should send cautionary signals to those who advocate the construction of more such space.

The SG suggests that URA reviews the feasibility of introducing more shophouses in the area given the concern that such developments may not be sustainable.

#### ***Recommendation:***

- *Review the plan for the new shophouses and to undertake feasibility study to assess if such developments in the area are sustainable.*

### 2.3.4 **Improve access and add new car park lots.**

This met with support from the stakeholders, who only feared that there would not be sufficient lots, even with the proposals. The SG notes that the Kebun Bahru EUP has also included the proposed additional car parks.

#### ***Recommendation:***

- *SG endorses the EUP plans for new car park lots.*

## 2.4 **THOMSON VILLAGE**

URA put forth six main proposals:

### 2.4.1 **Review whether to allow en-bloc redevelopment or retain the two-storey type shophouse character.**

The public and stakeholders strongly supported the idea to retain the two-storey shophouses so that the unique character of Thomson Village remained unchanged. Most of the stakeholders, as long-time residents in the area, are strongly attached to the history and image of the place.

Sketch of SG's suggestions for Jalan Leban area.



URA's key proposals for Thomson Village.

Stakeholders dialogue session at Kebun Bahru CC.



- 1 Allow commercial uses for shophouses and retain two-storey built character
- 2 Introduce ORAs
- 3 Draw up paid-parking lots
- 4 Develop a new community park
- 5 Create pedestrian access to MacRitchie Reservoir
- 6 Provide additional car parks



First, it was difficult to get everyone to agree due to the fragmented ownership of the developments. Second, the redevelopment efforts were set back by the high cost of providing basement car parks. The earlier guidelines to allow en-bloc development could not be realised.

Most property owners were contented to have both storeys for commercial use.

The SG agrees with the public and stakeholders to retain the two-storey character and allow full commercial use. This reflects the realities on the ground: the four-storey buildings with upper floor residences and first storey commercial above will not be attractive and will not be sustainable.

***Recommendations:***

- *Retain the two-storey shophouse character.*
- *Allow second-storey commercial usage.*

**2.4.2 Enhance commercial vibrancy by allowing outdoor refreshment areas (ORAs).**

Public feedback to ORAs was highly positive and respondents to the URA's survey picked this as one of the top three choices. The stakeholders supported the idea but were concerned about the narrow space for outdoor dining and pedestrian movement. One suggestion arising from the stakeholders' dialogue was to switch the location of the service road with the roadside walkway. In this way, more space can be created on the side of the shophouses for ORAs.

The SG also suggests studying the feasibility of covering the drain behind the shophouses near Jalan Todak as pedestrian walkway and for ORAs on the covered drain.

***Recommendations:***

- *Introduce ORAs.*
- *Conduct feasibility study of switching service road and walkway.*
- *Conduct feasibility study of covering drain behind the shophouses near Jalan Todak.*

**2.4.3 Draw up paid-parking lots along service road fronting the shops to encourage higher or faster turnover.**

Public feedback indicated that the proposal was the least well-received, resonating with the stakeholders' view. The stakeholders did not support the idea because it would encourage drivers to park in the residential areas. The SG accepts the feedback to maintain status quo on the parking situation for the area as the proposal will likely worsen the parking situation in the adjacent housing estates. The SG also supports one stakeholder's suggestion to allow parking on one side of the road carriageway along Shunfu Road but views that safety is a major concern.

***Recommendations:***

- *Do not introduce paid-parking for cars along the service roads fronting the shophouses.*
- *Conduct feasibility study of road-side parking along Shunfu Road outside Shunfu Market.*

*Thomson Road streetscape.*



*Site visit to Thomson Village.*



#### 2.4.4 **Build a community park south of Yew Lian Park Estate.**

The public, stakeholders and the SG agreed that the introduction of a community park south of Yew Lian Park Estate would be good for the area. The respondents of the public survey picked this as one of the top three choices.

***Recommendation:***

- *Introduce the community park.*

#### 2.4.5 **Provide public access to MacRitchie Reservoir through Lakeview Estate.**

The public, stakeholders and the SG were all in agreement that public access to MacRitchie Reservoir would benefit the area. Residents would have better access to the reservoir which is located behind the estate. The Lakeview Estate representative agreed to discuss the matter at the residents' management meetings.

***Recommendation:***

- *Pursue the possibility of having an access path to MacRitchie Reservoir through Lakeview Estate.*

#### 2.4.6 **Future developments of the land next to Thomson Community Club (CC) and Yew Lian Park Estate should have additional car park lots which are linked by a second storey bridge.**

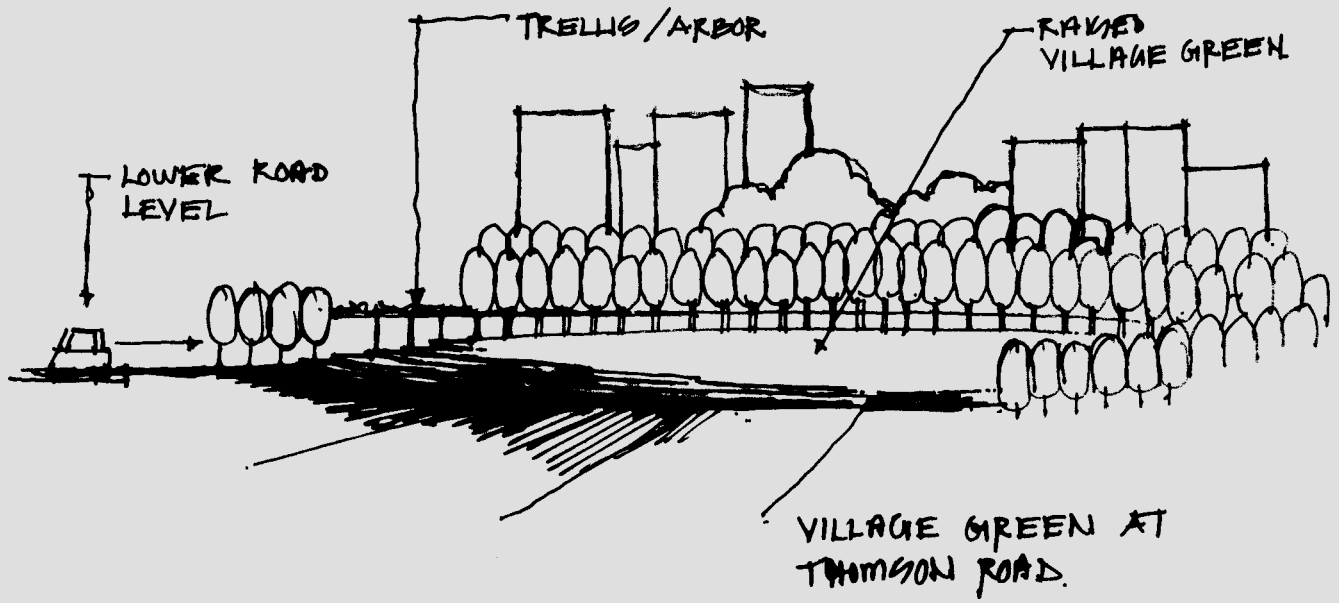
The public and stakeholders did not object to the proposal. The SG supports the proposal too.

A suggestion was made that the future development next to the Thomson CC and Yew Lian Park Estate could take the form of a Village Centre or Village Square to add vibrancy and community spirit in Thomson Village. One stakeholder suggested developing the area around Thomson CC to form the Village Centre. This would help to integrate Shunfu Mart so that it becomes part of the village. Other stakeholders from the Pai Hai Sheng Mu Fa Miao committee were of the view that the temple, built in 1950s, is a focal point for Thomson Village.

***Recommendations:***

- *Future development of the land next to Thomson CC and Yew Lian Park to provide additional car parks and a second storey bridge.*
- *Establish a "Village Centre" or "Village Square" to enhance the sense of community.*

Open space to be used as Village Centre or Village Square.



Stakeholders dialogue session at Thomson CC.



## 2.5 CORONATION

URA proposed four ideas:

### 2.5.1 **Provide better walkways and landscaping.**

This was the most popular proposal. The provision of better-shaded walkways and pedestrian linkages were welcomed by all parties concerned. There was a call for better safety conditions for pedestrians crossing Farrer Road underneath the viaduct. The stakeholders suggested providing pedestrian crossings for all side roads such as Duke Road, Queens Road, Kings Road, Coronation Road and Coronation Walk.

A suggestion was also made to plant a variety of trees. The SG supports the proposal, especially to carry out environmental improvement works, such as introducing better pedestrian walkways and roadside planting, pedestrian crossings for the side roads, and providing a bus-bay in front of Coronation Plaza.

Some stakeholders suggested that the canal next to Coronation Walk be decked over to provide car parking space. The SG however notes that URA has assessed that such a proposal is not only costly but may be undesirable from the point of view of the nearby residents. More vehicular traffic will be introduced into Coronation Walk, which is a no-through road, and residents are therefore likely to object to the proposal. The Group agrees not to pursue this idea further.

#### ***Recommendations:***

- *Provide a safe, pleasant and convenient pedestrian access from Coronation Plaza to the Botanic Gardens.*
- *Provide a bus-bay in front of Coronation Plaza.*

### 2.5.2 **Introduce ORAs and enhance vibrancy.**

All three groups concerned - the general public, stakeholders and SG - overwhelmingly supported this proposal. The stakeholders were of the opinion that the proposal would make the area more vibrant and help to draw more students to the area.

The SG also supports the ORAs proposal as it would liven up the area particularly in the evenings for residents in the area.

Some owners of the two-storey shophouses between Duchess Road and Prince of Wales Road have requested that the upper floors be allowed for commercial use. The SG supports the proposal as it would enhance the commercial vibrancy of the area.

#### ***Recommendation:***

- *Introduce ORAs as proposed by URA.*

URA's proposal to provide better walkways and landscaping and introduce ORAs.



URA's key proposals for Coronation area.



URA's proposal to provide better walkways and landscaping and introduce ORAs.



### 2.5.3 **Provide second storey link from Coronation Plaza to overhead bridge.**

The proposal was supported. Additionally, there was public feedback to provide a shelter for the overhead bridge from Coronation Plaza across to Dunearn Road. The SG supports the proposal, which would enable the large number of residents along Dunearn Road access to a local shopping precinct.

#### ***Recommendations:***

- *Provide a second storey link from Coronation Plaza to overhead bridge.*
- *Provide a shelter for the overhead bridge.*

### 2.5.4 **Introduce new community space at the junction of Bukit Timah Road and Farrer Road.**

Various suggestions were proposed for the use of vacant land from the public, stakeholders and the SG, as follows:

- a. Performances
- b. Car parking
- c. Children's playground
- d. Sculpture park
- e. Kiosk

The SG supports the open space for community use and suggests that the design should make the community space attractive, conducive and safe for children.

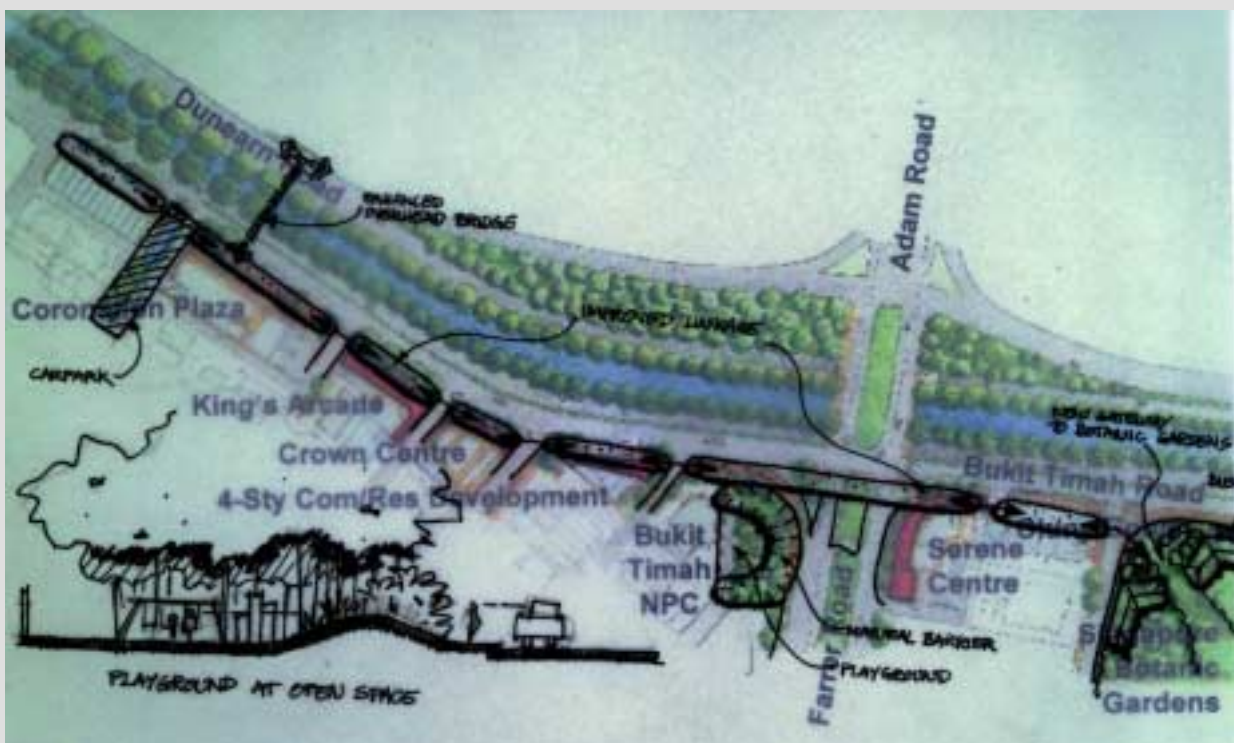
#### ***Recommendation:***

- *Introduce an attractive, conducive and safe community space for children.*

Proposed playground at open space at the junction of Bukit Timah Road and Farrer Road.



Sketch of SG's suggestions for Coronation area.



Stakeholders dialogue session at Ulu Pandan CC.



## 2.6 ANAK BUKIT<sup>1</sup>

URA came up with four sets of proposals for the locality:

### 2.6.1 **Retain the two-storey shophouse character along Cheong Chin Nam Road by allowing:**

- **Two-storey extension at the rear for full commercial use**
- **ORAs on the forecourt**
- **New walkway in front of the shophouses**

Although there was not much support from the general public, the stakeholders and SG were very positive. The feedback from the general public indicated that there was little value in retaining the shophouses which seemed rundown, needing a facelift. The lack of effort to improve the conditions of the shophouses was perhaps due to the lack of incentives for stakeholders to invest in renovating their properties. URA's proposal to retain the shophouses and to allow full commercial use and two-storey extension at the rear would serve as incentive for the stakeholders.

The SG sees merit in URA's proposal in that it would consolidate the retail character of this popular retail parade. The SG, however, expresses the view that some activities may be less appropriate for the area, for example, used car showrooms, but recognised that usage should be guided by market forces.

#### ***Recommendation:***

- *Retain the shophouses and allow extension and full commercial use.*

### 2.6.2 **Conservation of shophouses along Jalan Jurong Kechil.**

All three groups concerned - the general public, stakeholders and SG - overwhelmingly supported the conservation of the shophouses, as these pre-war houses are the last remaining ones in the locality. The link to the past would be lost if the sites are allowed to be redeveloped. This effort by URA is applauded by the grandson of the pioneer in the area, Mr Cheong Chin Nam. URA's innovative approach to conserve without stifling property values by allowing a four-storey extension to the rear of each shophouse is commendable. The SG supports URA's proposal to allow only the first storey of the rear extension for commercial use, despite the call by stakeholders to allow all four storeys for commercial use. This would prevent any drastic increase in commercial floor space that may have an adverse effect on the existing businesses in Anak Bukit as a whole.

<sup>1</sup> Stakeholders proposed that the node be named Beauty World as this was widely recognised and associated with the area. The SG is supportive.

URA's proposal to retain the two-storey shophouse character along Cheong Chin Nam.



URA's key proposals for Anak Bukit area.



URA's proposal to conserve the last remaining row of shophouses at Jalan Jurong Kechil.



What it is today...



What it can be if conserved



What it can be if allowed en-bloc redevelopment

There was a suggestion by stakeholders in the area to provide a pedestrian overhead bridge across Jalan Jurong Kechil connecting the shophouses to Toh Yi Estate. The SG supports the proposal as it would provide a safe and convenient access for the residents in the area.

***Recommendations:***

- *Conserve the shophouses along Jalan Jurong Kechil and allow four-storey extension to the rear with only first-storey commercial use.*
- *Provide a pedestrian overhead bridge across Jalan Jurong Kechil connecting the shophouses to Toh Yi Estate.*

**2.6.3 Rejuvenate shopping strip by covering up existing canal and closing part of the service road in front of Beauty World and Bukit Timah shopping centres.**

All three groups - the general public, stakeholders and SG - welcomed the covering of the existing canal. Closing part of the service road, however, was not supported by the stakeholders represented by the management committee of the developments, Management Committee Strata Titles (MCST), as it would limit the vehicular access to the premises and was perceived to have an adverse impact on business and property values of the developments. To achieve URA's objective of providing ORAs and yet allay the fears of the MCSTs, the SG suggests placing the service road above the covered up canal instead and moving the outdoor dining activities immediately adjacent to the three shopping centres. This way, the service road, although re-aligned, can be retained. If this is not feasible, URA could consider just slabbing over the canal for pedestrian connectivity and ORAs while not affecting the service road.

There was a call to extend the covering of the canal as a pedestrian mall all the way to Bukit Timah Plaza by the MCST of the shopping centre. The SG however agrees with URA that extension of the covered canal could be considered in the longer term when the large tracts of vacant State Land between Beauty World Plaza and Bukit Timah Plaza are developed.

The covered canal would then provide a continuous and convenient pedestrian link from Bukit Timah Shopping Centre in the north to Bukit Timah Plaza in the south.

***Recommendations:***

- *Study the feasibility of covering over the existing canal for service road and allow ORAs to take up space next to the shopping centres. If that is not feasible, URA could consider just slabbing over the canal for pedestrian connectivity and ORAs.*
- *Study the feasibility of extending the covering of canal to Bukit Timah Plaza in the longer term.*

*The wide canal and service road in front of the shopping centres at Anak Bukit area.*



*URA's proposal to cover up canal and part of service road for ORAs and pedestrian malls.*



#### 2.6.4 **New Village Centre on State Land:**

- **Develop a new village square to form a focal point for the community**
- **Relocate Bukit Timah Market cum Food Centre**
- **Introduce car park station that is integrated with this development**

The proposal of a new Village Centre was supported for various reasons. Respondents from the public survey saw the development as an opportunity to locate future commercial activities away from residential areas. Stakeholders saw the development as means to strengthen the shopping identity of the area and draw in the crowd.

The SG sees the development as providing a focal point for Anak Bukit, which is currently lacking. All the groups agreed that the proposed car parking provision would not only ease the existing parking problem for Cheong Chin Nam Road but also meet future demand.

There was a suggestion to integrate a two-storey car park station with limited shops on the first storey on a short-term lease, similar to the temporary Capitol car parks/ shopping centre. This will not prejudice future development of the site, while easing significantly parking problems in the area.

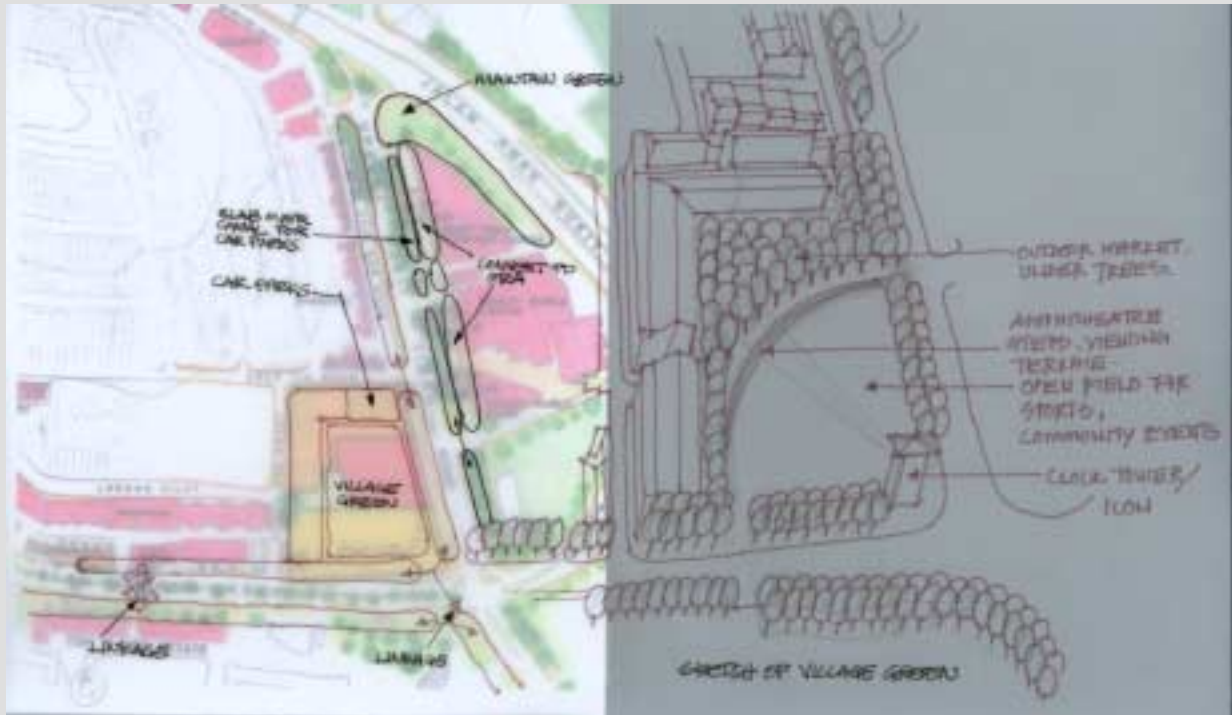
The Bukit Timah Shopping Centre MCST has requested that the empty plot of land at the junction of Jalan Anak Bukit and Upper Bukit Timah Road be turned into an open car park for the convenience of shoppers.

The SG however thinks that this is not necessary as there are sufficient car parks within the shopping centre that are not fully utilized. The SG suggests instead that the corner site be landscaped and integrated with the rest of the proposed ORAs fronting the shopping centre.

#### ***Recommendations:***

- *Develop a new Village Centre that will enhance the Anak Bukit area.*
- *Study the feasibility of a two-storey car park station with shops on the first-storey, similar to the temporary Capitol car parks/ shopping centre.*

SG suggestion's for Anak Bukit.



Stakeholders dialogue session at Bukit Batok East CC.



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## 3 SOUTHERN RIDGES & HILLSIDE VILLAGES

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URA put up six proposals under two main headings: “Connecting the Southern Ridges to create a network of interconnected parks” and “Introducing new activities at Hillside Villages”.

### 3.1 **Connect the ridges via a high-level timber walk across Alexandra Road, a mid-level timber bridge across Henderson Road and park connectors.**

There was substantial support from the public who supported the idea of connecting the ridges from Mount Faber to West Coast Park. The three most supported connections were for a park connector through National University of Singapore (NUS), a mid-level bridge across Henderson Road and a high-level boardwalk across Alexandra Road. There were also many suggestions on the kind of connections. This included a suggestion for each of the park connectors to be unique and different from neighbourhood park connectors. Several respondents suggested bicycle tracks along the connectors. There were also suggestions for more amenities such as toilets and shelters, as well as look-out points along the trails. One respondent suggested the need for ample parking lots at staging points along the park connectors.

There were a couple of suggestions that went beyond the Southern Ridges, such as linking West Coast Park to Pandan Reservoir via Pandan River and providing a coastal link from West Coast Park to Labrador Park, connecting to Haw Par Villa in the middle.

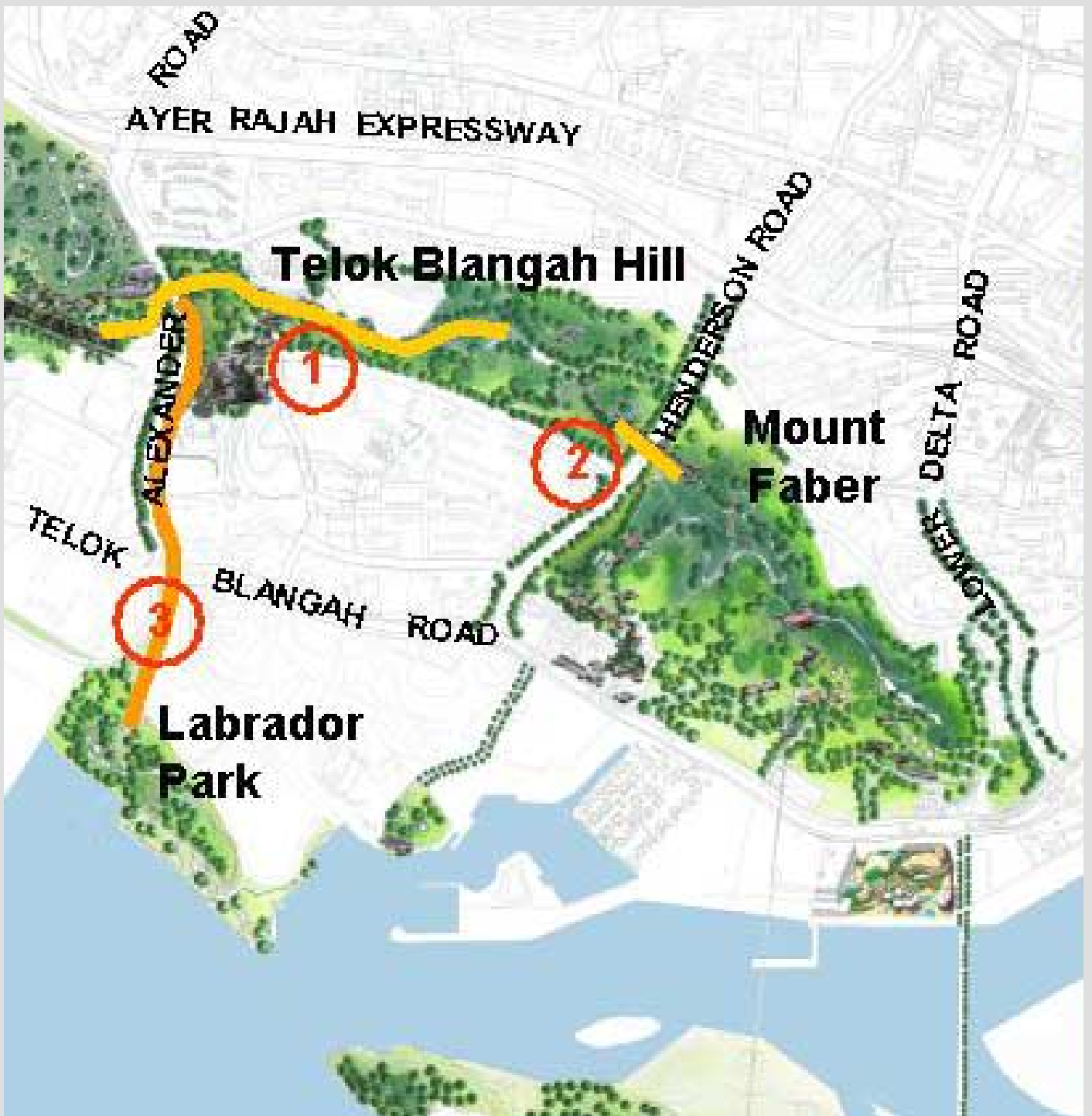
There was very strong support for the proposal from the stakeholders. During the dialogue, several pointed out the need to allow provision for the handicapped and elderly. However, there was an alternative view that there should be other areas that also cater to the more adventurous to provide a variety of experiences. The stakeholders also emphasised the need to ensure safety and maintenance of trails during and after construction as well as the provision of amenities along the trails.

The SG unanimously supports the proposals to connect the Southern Ridges, which will provide a continuous connection over 9km. Given the generally flat landscape on the island, the ridges provide an unique opportunity for Singaporeans to experience a different terrain.

In developing the connectors, the group suggests the following:

- a. Capitalise on the historic and natural heritage by promoting historic and nature walks, locating information plaques at look-out points and promoting public education through research and publication.

URA's proposal of high-level bridge across Alexandra Road and mid-level bridge across Henderson Road .



- b. Minimise the impact on nature by locating lighting in such that wildlife will not be disturbed. Design the bridges and use material finishes that relate to the natural character of the place.
- c. Minimise the intrusion to residents by ensuring that new infrastructure, e.g. bridges, trails do not intrude the privacy of nearby residents.
- d. Allow provision for the handicapped and elderly, wherever possible. However, there should be other areas that also cater to the more adventurous to provide a variety of experiences.

**Recommendations:**

- *Connect the Southern Ridges by way of a high-level timber walk across Alexandra Road, a mid-level timber bridge across Henderson Road and park connectors to Kent Ridge and Clementi Woods.*
- *Provide look-out points, mark nodes of historic significance and highlight other interesting features along the connecting trails.*
- *The trails should cater to a variety of users, from the adventurous to the handicapped and elderly as well as blend with the environment and serviced with amenities where necessary.*

**3.2 Provide a new access up Mount Faber in the form of adventure trails and footpaths or paved walkways, steps, escalators or chair lifts.**

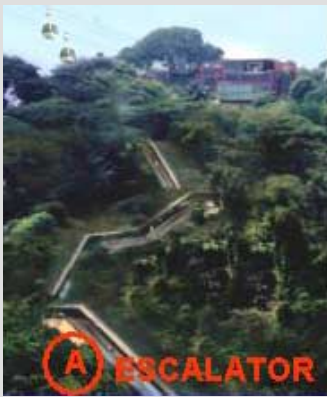
Feedback from the public showed preference for adventure trails and footpaths as a new access to Mount Faber. The majority of stakeholders expressed the same view. There was minimal support for the idea of chairlifts even though there was recognition of its value for the less mobile and the prospect of different scenic views. There was no support for escalators as most felt that these would be too costly.

The SG agrees that a more rugged and adventurous approach should be developed, since vehicular access is already available for the less mobile. The group is also prepared to consider chair lifts, if they could help reduce vehicular traffic up the hill. Chair lifts are preferred over escalators as they offer a more interesting experience and vantage point.

**Recommendations:**

- *Develop adventure trails and footpaths as alternative access to Mount Faber and link these to the connector for the entire stretch of the Southern Ridges.*
- *Study the economic feasibility of chairlifts and include if possible.*

Ideas for easier access to Mount Faber.



**3.3 Expand park areas available to the public by opening up Pasir Panjang Nursery and developing it into a horticulture hub, expanding the park areas in Clementi Woods and introducing interim parks at the foothill of Mount Faber.**

A large majority of the public respondents supported the proposed horticultural hub. Others suggested complementary uses such as specialist horticultural shops, nature centre, museums, and weekend camps for school children.

In addition, one stakeholder suggested that the nursery should cultivate more 'useful' plants such as herbs while another suggested the construction of a climatically controlled garden.

The SG strongly supports the proposal, and felt that the horticulture hub could be developed to showcase and archive local/ regional plant species. The group has no objection to the proposal to expand the park areas. It will also provide an interesting node along the connecting trail of the Southern Ridges at Alexandra Park.

***Recommendations:***

- *Convert the Pasir Panjang Nursery into a horticultural hub with attendant activities such as nature classes and specialist shops.*
- *Expand the park areas.*

**3.4 Introduce new activities at Mount Faber and Morse Road: an observation tower on Mount Faber; allow full commercial uses to shophouses at Morse Road while keeping the existing storey height; use vacant State Land for new village square with commercial activities; and introduce new car/ coach park**

There was support from the public for the proposed observation tower on Mount Faber, and a Visitor Centre, restaurants and arts housing at the foot of Mount Faber. Other suggestions include developing health care establishments amidst the lush greenery, quality educational institutions and 'ghost adventure' trails/ tours.

One respondent hoped that the attractions would not be gimmicky while another felt that the emphasis for the area should be on cultural, rather than commercial activities. There were calls for each location to have its own identity with distinctive qualities and to ensure that they would not be turned into commercial hubs.

During the dialogue with stakeholders, there was a suggestion to build kampung style houses at the foot of Mount Faber as an effort to build up the cultural life in the area. There was also a comment on the need to introduce the new commercial activities in tandem with the construction of the ridge connections.

The SG has no objection to the proposal to build an observation tower on Mount Faber as well as suggestions for the various commercial and cultural activities at the foot of Mount Faber. However, these proposals should be subsumed into the proposals for the village at Morse Road and they should only be introduced if there is economic demand.



URA's proposal to convert Pasir Panjang Nursery to National Horticultural Centre.



Examples of observation tower.

URA's proposal to convert some of the Black & White bungalows at Mount Faber and Alexandra Park for Bed & Breakfast establishments, restaurants or arts housing.



On the proposals for the Morse Road Village, a large majority of the respondents supported the idea to introduce an interim village square lined with shops at Morse Road. Many of the respondents would like to see more restaurants and cafes, bakeries and arts-related activities.

Other suggested uses include:

- a. Museum for arts and musical activities
- b. Haunted houses
- c. Pet shops and souvenir shops
- d. Garden with water features and a clock tower
- e. Natural history museum for children
- f. Teenagers' study corner
- g. Fitness park

There was one suggestion to include the Wishart Road area in the proposal, to encourage market forces to determine what is most viable. However, there were a few respondents who felt that more shops and commercial activities should not be encouraged as the area is quiet with few attractions. There was also concern that there may not be enough demand for commercial uses in both Gillman and Morse Road Villages in the immediate term. There was strong support for the proposals to allow full commercial use for the shophouses from the representative of the owners of 30 shophouses at Morse Road. However, there was concern that the proposed coach park might disrupt the existing serenity of the area, even though it would help alleviate the current coach parking problem.

The SG thinks that the proposals should capitalise on the enroute location from Mount Faber to develop Morse Road Village as a staging point with amenities for overnight stays. The group supports the proposal to allow full commercial use for the shophouses and suggests that the upper floors could be used for hostels/ budget hotels/ Bed & Breakfast (B&Bs). Besides food & beverage and retail use, arts related uses can also be explored, e.g. sculpture and metal work classes. The vacant State Land can also be developed for chalets instead of the typical commercial uses. However, the group notes that additional commercial uses may not be viable without critical mass. The group supports the proposal for a coach and car park.

**Recommendations:**

- *Build an observation tower on Mount Faber as a landmark.*
- *Develop the Morse Road Village as a staging point for entry into Mount Faber and the Southern Ridges connectors with amenities for overnight stays.*
- *Allow full commercial use for existing shophouses at Morse Road and develop the vacant State Land as a village square.*
- *Promote cultural and arts activities besides commercial uses; the introduction of any new commercial activities must be sensitive to economic demand.*
- *Provide a coach and car park to facilitate visitors to Mount Faber as well as Morse Road Village.*

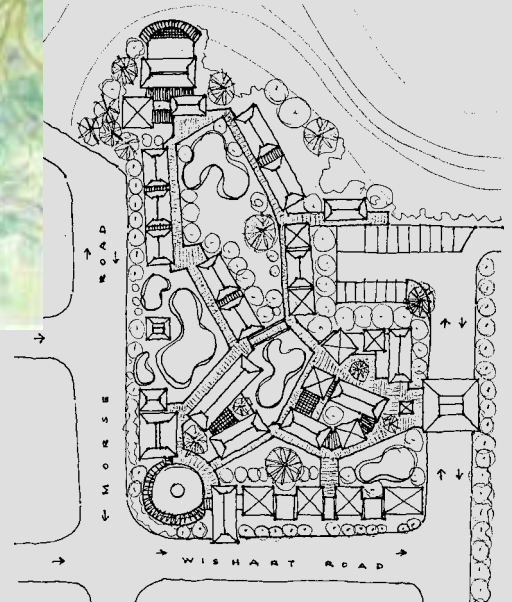
URA's proposal for Village Square at Morse Road.



URA's key proposals for Morse Road.



Plan of SG's suggestion for Visitor Centre at Morse Road.



Sketch of SG's suggestions for vacant State Land at Morse Road.



### 3.5 **Introduce new commercial uses on State Land to create village streets and squares at Gillman Village and reconfigure existing car parks and introduce new ones.**

Public feedback was largely supportive of the idea of introducing new buildings and bringing more activities to Gillman Village. Many of the respondents would like to see more restaurants and cafes, as there was a lack of eating and drinking places in the Telok Blangah area. They would also like to see more arts-related activities. Other suggested uses include:

- a. Specialised leisure activity centre e.g. hobby centre, archery, rock climbing, etc
- b. Ice skating rink
- c. Theme parks
- d. Interactive galleries for students
- e. Arcades including Local Area Network (LAN) gaming and cinemas
- f. Health/ Image studio

However, there were some views that shops and commercial activities should not be encouraged as it would disturb the peaceful and quiet environment. This sentiment was shared by a representative at the stakeholders' meeting. He was concerned that the proposed new uses would disrupt the existing character of Gillman Village.

The SG feels that the existing mishmash of uses does not give Gillman Village a distinct identity, but it can be developed as a staging point with activities that could help contribute to the attractiveness of the whole ridge experience.

New uses should help draw more visitors to the hill parks. These should be sensitive in scale and economically sustainable. Any new buildings should take the character and look of existing ones. Undesirable uses such as office, storage use or Turf City type development should also be disallowed.

#### **Recommendations:**

- *Introduce new commercial uses on vacant State Land to create village streets and squares, which will enhance the existing shops and restaurants.*
- *Reconfigure existing car parks and introduce new ones so as to provide visitors to the Southern Ridges connectors an entry point.*

URA's proposed village street at Gillman Village.



URA's key proposal for Gillman Village.



Gillman Village.



3.6 **Allow commercial uses for the Black & White bungalows. The suggested uses for the different locations are:**

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <b>a. Morse Road</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• B&amp;B</li><li>• Hotel</li><li>• Restaurants</li><li>• Spa</li><li>• Culinary school</li><li>• Museum</li></ul> | <b>b. Alexandra Park</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• B&amp;B</li><li>• Hotel</li><li>• Restaurant</li><li>• Spa</li><li>• Gardening school</li><li>• Museum</li></ul> | <b>c. Mount Faber</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Visitor centre</li><li>• Restaurants</li><li>• Arts-related uses</li></ul> |
|---|---|--|

**d. Bukit Chermin - use Cliffe House as a restaurant**

Public feedback was very supportive of alternative commercial uses for the Black & White bungalows at Morse Road, Alexandra Park and Mount Faber. However, a couple felt that these bungalows should be kept true to their original intention for residential use.

One respondent also felt that B&Bs may not appeal to tourists as the bungalows were not designed for air conditioning and could let in insects. Another suggested that the bungalows must keep their existing look. There was also a suggestion for rent control to ensure the viability for the alternative commercial uses, and to ensure that that the place does not only cater to the well off.

The top three preferred uses for the bungalows at Morse Road were B&B/ boutique hotels, restaurants and museums.

The top three preferred uses for the bungalows at Alexandra Road were B&B/ boutique hotels, restaurants and a gardening school. Other suggestions include exercise centres, e.g. yoga and a library with information about Kent Ridge.

For the bungalows at Mount Faber, there was a suggestion to include pottery and other local craft fairs, as well as art gallery units.

For the conversion of Cliffe House into a restaurant, one supporter felt that the rental had to be moderate in order to cater to the general public. There was also a suggestion to preserve the interesting architectural features of the house.

The SG strongly supports the proposal to allow alternative commercial uses for the Black & White bungalows at Morse Road, Alexandra Park and Mount Faber. The group feels that the Black & White bungalows were the only distinctive identity feature in this area and therefore should be opened up for public use. The group also supports the proposal to convert Cliffe House into a restaurant to take advantage of its location next to the sea.

**Recommendations:**

- *Allow new commercial uses for the Black & White bungalows at Morse Road, Alexandra Park and Mount Faber. The uses could include Bed & Breakfast establishments, boutique hotels, restaurants, spas, museums and special schools.*
- *Convert Cliffe House at Bukit Chermin into a restaurant by the sea.*

*Black & White bungalows at Morse Road, Alexandra Park and Mount Faber.*



*Cliffe House at Bukit Chermin.*



*The stakeholders' dialogue session at Radin Mas CC.*



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## 4 ADDITIONAL NODES

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The nodes identified by URA were principally along two major North-South roads, Thomson and Bukit Timah. The SG proposes other nodes in different parts of the island that potentially evokes a sense of identity. These are not exhaustive, but indicative, and the group proposes that URA studies the following nodes in more detail.

### 4.1 **Holland Village**

The area has evolved on its own, and is perhaps the finest example of how identities develop best spontaneously. One step that the URA can take is to allow full commercial zoning in the area to reflect the current land use better. URA could also consider disallowing en bloc redevelopment since part of the identity of the place is the *ad-hoc* development. One way in which enjoyment of the area can be enhanced is improving the car parking, for example, through the construction of a multi-storey car park.

### 4.2 **Mount Sophia/ Mount Emily**

The area is part of a series of hills, including River Valley and Fort Canning. Retaining the environmental quality of the hills and terrain through landscape conservation would help to ensure that the identity of the area is preserved. Further, the buildings in the area, including Sophia Flats, deserved consideration for conservation. Overall, the existing scale should be retained.

### 4.3 **Jalan Kayu**

Given the strong identification of the area with roti prata, the URA may want to consider retaining the area with its various shops. However, the group acknowledges that the area may lose some of its current meaning once it is surrounded by future HDB developments.

### 4.4 **Pasir Panjang Road/ Clementi Road**

The area has significant meaning for university students who routinely congregate there. Even though the buildings do not appear to have any historical or architectural significance, the current usage of the area should be retained, even if some upgrading of the premises is effected. However, one historically significant building deserves to be preserved. This is a 1929 building at the corner of Pasir Panjang Road and Clementi Road.

### 4.5 **Pasir Panjang Village/ South Buona Vista Road**

This area is at the foot of Kent Ridge Park, at the end of the winding and attractive South Buona Vista Road. There are not many shops serving the mainly private residents there, but those that are still present are the last remaining from the past, and are still popular. Particularly well known is the 'duck rice' row of shophouses. To provide some mix of activities in the hillside village and neighbourhood, these shops and their current commercial land-use should be kept. It is recommended that any proposed widening of the road there should be sensitive to the surroundings and existing character.



*Holland Village.*



*Mount Sophia/ Mount Emily area.*



*Jalan Kayu area.*

*Pasir Panjang Road & Clementi Road area.*



*Pasir Panjang Road & South Buona Vista area.*



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## 5 CONCLUSION

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The SG strongly endorses the URA's efforts to maintain or enhance place identities in Singapore, and view that such place identities are best evolved over time rather than artificially created or imposed. The principles adopted by the SG in its deliberations and recommendations revolve around:

- Respect for the existing character of places.
- Acknowledgement of existing uses and demand.
- Acknowledgement of the abundant availability of residential and commercial properties elsewhere in Singapore.
- Improve access so that places with distinctive identities might be enjoyed by Singaporeans more broadly.

The SG's recommendations for each of the nodes are made based on the above principles.

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## **6 APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX 1**

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS AND SITE VISITS

### **APPENDIX 2**

SCHEDULE OF STAKEHOLDERS' DIALOGUE SESSIONS

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# APPENDIX 1

## SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS AND SITE VISITS

EVENTS	ITEMS
<b>1st SG2 Meeting</b>	
Date : 23 Jul 02 Time : 6:30 - 7:30pm Venue : 4th Storey, The URA Centre	Introduction Overview of SG Consultation Briefing on Urban Village and Southern Ridges & Hillside Villages proposals Discussion of site visits and meetings
<b>Site Visit 1</b>	
Date : 30 Jul 02 Time : 4:30 - 8:00pm Started and ended at URA	Site visits and briefing on key proposals for Springleaf, Casuarina, Jalan Leban and Thomson Village
<b>2nd SG2 Meeting</b>	
Date : 6 Aug 02 Time : 5:30 - 7:30pm Venue : 4th Storey, The URA Centre	Discussions on Urban Villages I - Springleaf, Casuarina, Jalan Leban and Thomson Village
<b>Site Visit 2</b>	
Date : 13 Aug 02 Time : 3:30 - 8:00pm Started and ended at URA	Site visits and briefing on key proposals for Morse Road, Gillman Villages, Alexandra Park, Coronation and Anak Bukit
<b>3rd SG2 Meeting</b>	
Date : 27 Aug 02 Time : 5:30 - 7:30pm Venue : 5th Storey Function Room, The URA Centre	Discussions on Urban Villages II and Southern Ridges & Hillside Villages - Coronation, Anak Bukit and Southern Ridges & Hillside Villages
<b>4th SG2 Meeting</b>	
Date : 3 Sep 02 Time : 5:30 - 7:30pm Venue : 5th Storey Function Room, The URA Centre	Review of issues based on public feedback Planning the stakeholders' dialogue sessions
<b>5th SG2 Meeting</b>	
Date : 10 Sep 02 Time : 5:30 - 7:30pm Venue : 5th Storey Function Room, The URA Centre	Confirming stakeholders' dialogue sessions Discussion on other Nodes - Holland Village, Mount Sophia/ Mount Emily, Jalan Kayu, Pasir Panjang Road & Clementi Road, Pasir Panjang Village/ South Buona Vista Road
<b>6th SG2 Meeting</b>	
Date : 8 Oct 02 Time : 5:30 - 7:30pm Venue : 5th Storey Function Room, The URA Centre	Matters arising from stakeholder's dialogue session Structure for SG2 Report

## APPENDIX 2

### SCHEDULE OF STAKEHOLDERS' DIALOGUE SESSIONS

DIALOGUE SESSIONS	REPRESENTATIONS
<b>JALAN LEBAN, CASUARINA ROAD &amp; SPRINGLEAF</b>	
Date : 24 September 02 Time : 8:00 - 9:30pm Venue : Kebun Bahru CC	About 60 persons Co-chair - Assoc Prof Tan Boon Wan (Advisor, Nee Soon South) Co-chair - Assoc Prof Lily Kong (SG2 Chairperson) Mr Jack Soh, Nee Soon South CCC Chairman Mr Khua Hock Leong, Kebun Bahru CCC Chairman Mr Lim Tee Kit, Kebun Bahru CCC Secretary  Shop owners, tenants, residents and neighbourhood committees.
<b>ANAK BUKIT</b>	
Date : 24 September 02 Time : 8:00 - 9:30pm Venue : Bukit Batok East CC	About 60 persons Co-chair - Mdm Halimah Yacob (Advisor, Bkt Batok East) Co-chair - Mr James Chew (SG2 Representative) Mr Sherman Stave, SG2 Representative Mr Chua Lew Kee, Bkt Batok East CCC Chairman  Members of management committees, shopowners, tenants, residents and neighbourhood committees.
<b>CORONATION</b>	
Date : 25 September 02 Time : 8:00 - 9:45pm Venue : Ulu Pandan CC	About 30 persons Co-chair - Dr Vivian Balakrishnan (Advisor, Ulu Pandan) Co-chair - Mr James Chew (SG2 Representative) Mr Sherman Stave, SG2 Representative Mr Peter Tan, Ulu Pandan CCC Chairman  Members of management committees, managing agents, owners and neighbourhood committees.
<b>THOMSON VILLAGE</b>	
Date : 30 September 02 Time : 8:00 - 10:15pm Venue : Thomson CC	About 80 persons Co-chair - Mr Leong Horn Kee (Advisor, Thomson) Co-chair - Mr Mark Chin (SG2 Representative) Dr Lily Kong, SG2 Chairperson Mr Foo See Lian, Thomson CCC Chairman  Shop owners, tenants, residents and neighbourhood committees.
<b>SOUTHERN RIDGES &amp; HILLSIDE VILLAGES</b>	
Date : 3 October 02 Time : 8:00 - 9:30pm Venue : Radin Mas CC	About 50 persons Co-chair - Dr Chong Weng Chiew (Advisor, Radin Mas) Co-chair - Assoc Prof Yu Shi Ming (SG2 Representative) Mr Tan Chiew Koon, SG2 Representative Dr Allan Hong, Radin Mas CCC Chairman  Shop owners, tenants, residents and neighbourhood committees.