



MEDIA FACTSHEET B – Community involvement at Rail Corridor

Since the return of the former railway land to Singapore in 2011, the National Parks Board (NParks) and Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) have extensively consulted and engaged the public and stakeholders on plans for the Rail Corridor. Over several years, URA engaged the general public, residents and stakeholder groups such as the Rail Corridor Partnership, comprising nature and heritage enthusiasts, to understand their aspirations for the Rail Corridor, and conceptualise plans for the space based on the feedback and ideas received.

For more information on the Rail Corridor's engagement journey since 2011, please refer to the [Annex](#).

Sustained engagement with Friends of Rail Corridor

In 2017, when NParks took over the management of the Rail Corridor, the Rail Corridor Partnership was renamed as the Friends of Rail Corridor (FRC) to cultivate active community stewardship towards the Rail Corridor as a shared community space, and spearhead ground-up initiatives and community-organised activities to activate spaces along the Rail Corridor. NParks organises bi-annual meetings with FRC to work closely on the development of the Rail Corridor. FRC also works closely with agencies to contribute to the development of community infrastructure and landscaping works.

The FRC community currently comprises members from diverse backgrounds such as nature, heritage and recreational groups, as well as academics, students and residents who live near the Rail Corridor. A number of FRC members also conduct monthly guided walks at the Bukit Timah Railway Station community node for members of the public.



Free monthly guided tours at Bukit Timah Railway Station
(Credit: NParks)

Enhancement efforts with the community

NParks has been actively working with the community on rewilding efforts along the Rail Corridor as part of its Forest Reforestation Action Plan (FRAP)¹. With the support of volunteers, NParks conducts regular sessions to remove invasive species and plant native trees along the Rail Corridor. These volunteers come from different backgrounds, ranging from United World College of South East Asia (UWCSEA), Creative O Pre-school and WWF-Singapore (World Wide Fund for Nature Singapore), as well as nearby residents of Mayfair Estate, Hillview and Hindhede.

Over 1,300 native trees have been planted by the community along the Rail Corridor as of January 2023. NParks will continue working with partners such as residents living along Rail Corridor, UWCSEA and WWF-Singapore to involve their students and volunteers in these rewilding efforts.

¹ The Forest Restoration Action Plan was formulated in 2019 to chart the restoration that will be undertaken over the next 10 years to regenerate the secondary forests surrounding Bukit Timah and Central Catchment Nature Reserve. It aims to plant more than 250,000 native trees and shrubs.



Invasive species management efforts are regularly carried out with volunteers
(Credit: NParks)



Residents of Hindhede, along with Member of Parliament Shawn Huang, planted 100 native trees along Rail Corridor in October 2022 (Credit: NParks)

These rewilding efforts will support species recovery, increase the biodiversity of native flora, and enhance the natural landscape. In the long run, they contribute towards ecological connectivity between our natural habitats and strengthening Singapore's ecological resilience.

Members of the public who are interested to learn more about the Rail Corridor can also register for free monthly guided walks at the Bukit Timah Railway Station. Through the guided walks, participants will learn about common flora and fauna found in the area.

In addition, the Nature Society (Singapore) (NSS), in partnership with NParks, will be undertaking a rewilding project, which involves the propagation of native species found at the Rail Corridor at the community nursery at Pasir Panjang Nursery. These saplings will be planted along Rail Corridor (North) between Sungei Kadut Avenue and Kranji War Memorial. The trees planted will strengthen ecological connectivity, while contributing to NParks' efforts under FRAP to expand Singapore's natural capital and provide more opportunities for the community to be involved.

The community nursery is part of NParks' growing network of community nurseries across Singapore, which seeks to involve the community in the propagation and nurturing of plants that will be planted in nature reserves, gardens, parks and along streetscapes, as part of NParks' OneMillionTrees movement².

² The OneMillionTrees movement aims to plant a million more trees across Singapore together with the community by 2030. To date, over 460,000 trees have been planted.

The Rail Corridor's extensive engagement journey

The Rail Corridor journey has been more than 12 years in the making, starting in 2011 following the announcement of the return of KTM land to Singapore.

Calling for ideas and feedback

The return of the railway land to Singapore on 1 July 2011 saw the start of a comprehensive review by URA on the future uses and possible development of the railway land and the surrounding areas. This was met with widespread public interest and suggestions from people of all walks of life on what could be done with this 24 km-long strip of land, that runs from the north to the south of the island. It was clear from many of those who sent in feedback that they wanted to make a tangible contribution towards the Rail Corridor's future.

In November 2011, URA launched the "Journey of Possibilities" ideas competition for the Rail Corridor, to draw innovative and fresh ideas from the public in addressing some of the key challenges and issues in planning for the future use of the Rail Corridor. Over 200 submissions were received, and the winning ideas were unveiled at a public exhibition and awards presentation in March 2012.

The next few years saw URA carry out extensive engagements with different segments of the community via different platforms to gather feedback on their aspirations for the Rail Corridor. The feedback from these sessions and previous engagements was distilled into a set of Planning and Design Goals for the Rail Corridor Request for Proposals in 2015, inviting design professionals to develop a Concept Master Plan and Concept Proposals for the Rail Corridor.

The winning proposals for the Concept Master Plan of the Rail Corridor and design concepts for Tanjong Pagar Railway Station and an integrated housing precinct at Choa Chu Kang were exhibited in The URA Centre in end-2015. These proposals offered potential ideas on how the Rail Corridor could be designed and sensitively integrated with adjacent developments. A series of community exhibitions and workshops were organised in 2016 to seek the views of residents and stakeholders in neighbourhoods near the Rail Corridor on how the proposals could best meet their needs. The Rail Corridor was envisioned to be transformed into a green, connected, inclusive and endearing community space that celebrates Singapore's railway heritage and greenery.

Their views were taken on board to refine the concept ideas for Rail Corridor (Central), a 4km stretch between Hillview Road and Bukit Timah Railway Station, and develop the preliminary

design for the stretch with the three key themes of Heritage and Culture, Biodiversity and Greenery, and Recreation.

From ideas to reality

Since 2018, URA and NParks have been implementing enhancement works along the Rail Corridor (Central) to improve accessibility to the area and allow visitors of all ages and abilities to enjoy this unique green space, while conserving its built heritage for future generations to enjoy. Efforts to rewild and restore native forest were carried out to return the landscape to its original rainforest structure, re-introduce native plant species and strengthen the ecological connectivity along the Rail Corridor. In 2021, about 13 km of improved trail along the southern and central stretches of the Rail Corridor was opened to the public. At Rail Corridor (Central), eight access points were added, four bridges were refurbished and an underpass was constructed. Together with enhanced greenery, the trail has become a popular recreational and ecological corridor.

In 2022, the feedback and aspirations shared by different stakeholder groups and the wider community culminated in the opening of the Bukit Timah Railway Station community node, which welcomed visitors with restored railway heritage features and lush gardens.

The opening of Rail Corridor (North) today, with the Kranji node, close to 6 km of trail enhancements, a total of 12 new access paths, a reinstated bridge and new amenities including an events field, nature trail and lookout deck, brings nature, recreation and heritage even closer to the public.