

Creating a small slice of pedestrian haven

Pedestrians took centre stage during the weekends at Haji Lane, Club Street and Ann Siang Road when some roads were temporarily closed off to cars in a pilot initiative.

Singapore's urban planning approach places importance in making our city people-friendly by providing public spaces for social activities, recreation and respite. Promoting walkable, active streets and public spaces fall in this realm, and URA is always on the look-out for opportunities to do more.

Today, some streets in Singapore, such as the stretch of Boon Tat Street next to Lau Pat Sat are temporarily closed to traffic in the evenings. Haji Lane was also temporarily closed to vehicular traffic on one weekend in February 2013 for an event organised by the community. These have helped to create a more conducive environment for pedestrians and have injected more vibrancy into the city.

Walkable and active streets

Club Street and Ann Siang Road are two very popular streets for dining, boutique shops and community uses. Nestled in an enclave of beautiful conserved shophouses, the streets are flanked by shops, restaurants, pubs, associations and clubs. The area draws large crowds which sometimes spill onto the streets and pedestrians have to fight for the same space with vehicular traffic.

Having temporary weekend road closures would convert roads into public space, allowing people to enjoy themselves in a car-free environment.

URA took the lead to organise a series of dialogues with the business community and residents in Club



Street and Ann Siang Road. We sought their feedback and refined the proposal to ensure that the impact on business operations and residents was minimised.

The temporary road closure at Club Street and Ann Siang Road commenced on 26 April 2013 and will be on trial for three months. The area is closed to cars on Fridays and Saturdays from 7.00 pm to 1.00 am.


As for Haji Lane in Kampong Glam, it already enjoys a vibrant street life in a Historic District rich in heritage and culture, with many visitors walking along the lane.

The stakeholders of Haji Lane have also been very proactive in organising themselves and working with the government to temporarily close the street. Temporary road closures at Haji Lane began on 3 May 2013, with the street confined to just pedestrians from 8.30 pm to 2.00 am on Fridays and Saturdays. On Sundays, the street is closed to vehicles from 2.00 pm to 2.00 am.

All these were made possible with the hard work and cooperation from other government agencies such as the Land Transport Authority, Traffic Police, Singapore Civil Defence Force and the National Environment Agency.

Our community, our spaces

During the trial period, stakeholders and the public are encouraged to give their feedback on the project. If more see the benefits of such car-free locations, we will consider closing the roads on a regular basis or extending the pilot to other locations in the city. That will allow more to enjoy and take advantage of car-free or pedestrians-only environments.

Key to the success of such initiatives however, is the community. As with all new initiatives, we expect there will be concerns and implementation details to be sorted out. We will continue to work with the local community to work out these details. It is important that the community discuss and collectively shape the character of heritage areas because we believe the local community and those passionate about their precincts are best placed to determine what works best. 

By Serene Tan



The Telok Ayer (Chinatown) Conservation Area provides the perfect panacea if you are on the lookout for a new neighbourhood hangout. Bounded by South Bridge Road, Cross Street, Boon Tat Street, Stanley Street, McCallum Street, Amoy Street, Ann Siang Road and Erskine Road, this part of Chinatown invokes a charming old-meets-new feel.

A stroll around this part of the neighbourhood will see beautifully restored shophouses with a multitude of modern uses sitting cheek to jowl with many of Singapore's oldest landmarks. Enjoy a gourmet cuppa at one of many hip coffee joints or tuck into a mouth-watering meal at any of the up-and-coming restaurants before feasting your eyes on pre-war architecture at Thian Hock Keng Temple and the Al-Abrar mosque. Heritage buffs can also pop by clan houses such as the Ying Fo Kun Hakka Association Hall – the first Hakka clan association in Singapore – to learn more about its unique culture.

Pedestrians can also explore Club Street and Ann Siang Hill with greater ease thanks to a project that aims to make these streets more accessible during the weekends. Check out page 12 for more details.

