



URBAN PLANNING

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The Long-Term Plan Review—Working with Partners to Shape a Space for Our Dreams



URA organised guided tours of the LTPR exhibition at the URA Centre.
Image: Urban Redevelopment Authority

In Singapore, we have adopted a multi-stakeholder approach in our urban planning process, which broadly includes the Government, the Private sector and the People sector. The Government sets the rules and the framework, while the Private sector comes in with investment and implementation and together with the People sector contribute their ideas and feedback.



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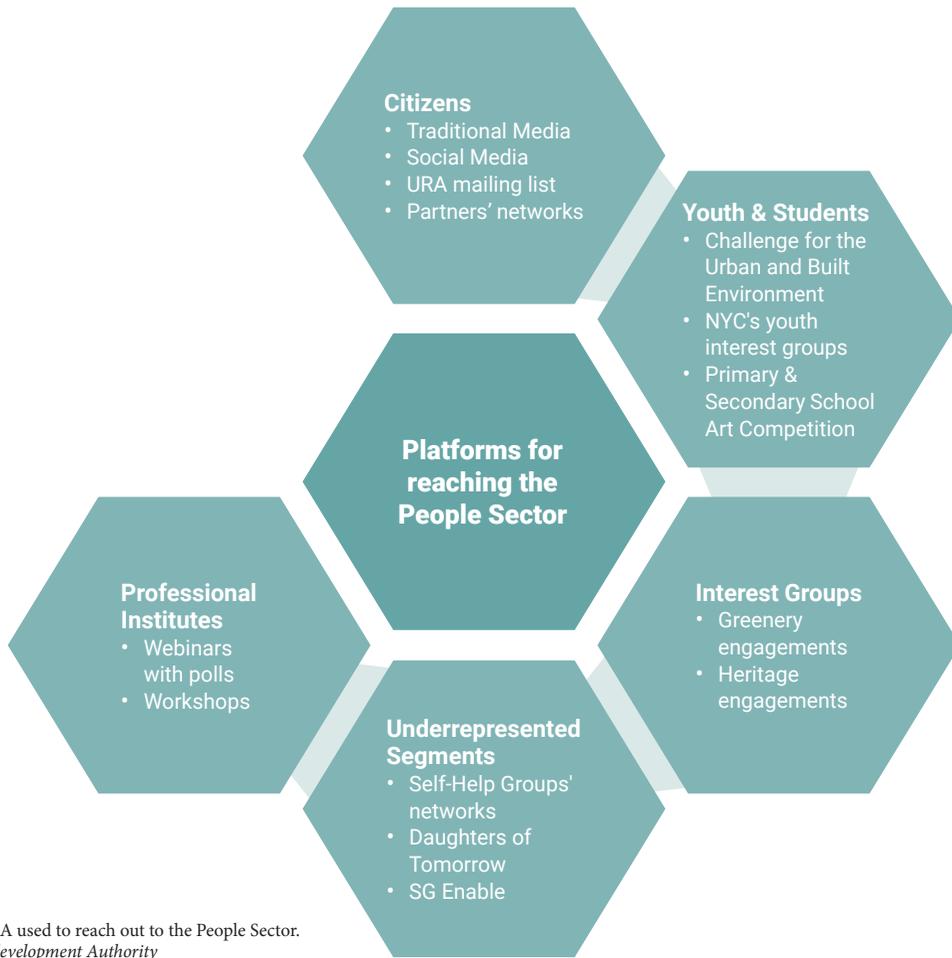
Over the years, the balance of the Government, Private and People sectors' involvement on the urban planning process has evolved. Increasingly, the government has emphasised the importance of co-creating with the People sector as exemplified by public engagement efforts such as Singapore Together (2019), the Emerging Stronger Conversations (2020) and the ongoing Forward Singapore.

In the urban planning and land development realm, actively engaging the People sector allows us to incorporate perspectives that we may not be aware of, encourage citizens to have a stake and say in their futures, and talk about policy considerations and constraints.

The Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) is Singapore's land use planning and conservation agency. We recently concluded the Long-Term Plan Review (LTPR), which

sees us reviewing long-term plans for the development of Singapore every 10 years. Such plans include mapping out strategic land uses and infrastructure needs over the next 50 years and beyond. The LTPR public engagement exercise was the most extensive that the URA has ever undertaken, involving more than 15,000 people from all walks of life from July 2021 to April 2022. The engagement culminated in an LTPR public exhibition to showcase the ideas and strategies for the future, and reached a total of 200,000 people.

The LTPR engagement embodied the principle of multi-stakeholder engagement, as we worked together within the Government sector to better partner the People sector—Citizens, Youth and Students, Interest Groups, Underrepresented Segments and Professional Institutes.



Platforms that URA used to reach out to the People Sector.
 Source: Urban Redevelopment Authority

60

Citizens—Reaching Out to The General Public

In previous reviews of our long-term land use plans, citizen engagement centred on consultation of advisory panels, made up of subject matter experts in their respective fields and representatives from different sectors, and on a selected number of focus group discussions. We tended to engage the wider public only nearer the end of the process—during the exhibition period, when the plans had largely been finalised. While the public was invited to give their comments on the plans during the exhibition period, it mainly served to inform them, rather than consult them.

For our recent LTPR public engagement exercise, we consulted the broader public much earlier on,

in tandem with the development of the long-term plans. We conducted the engagement in phases over a one-year period. This phasing allowed us to conceptualise the engagement process as a “journey” that we could invite citizens to join us on—starting with establishing a shared vision and values for the future, moving on to idea and strategy generation, and discussing trade-offs and issues along the way, before finally factoring these as vital inputs to our plans.

We leveraged both traditional and social media to reach more people. In addition to garnering media coverage in all the broadsheets, we also spread word of our engagements through

URA’s mailing list and social media outlets. Our partner government agencies, interest groups, grassroots organisations and professional bodies also helped to publicise our initial visioning and values poll through their own networks. As a result, 5,600 people took the poll, and we were able to tap on this initial pool of interested respondents to sustain interest in engagement opportunities at subsequent phases of the LTPR engagement, such as facilitated discussions and webinars. We encouraged those who were interested in the LTPR to subscribe to our monthly emailer, follow us on social media and volunteer with us, so that our relationship could extend beyond the LTPR and into

Youth and Students—Inspiring the Next Generation

other planning and community engagement efforts.

To further amplify the LTPR’s outreach to the general public, we conducted a dialogue with grassroots leaders from the People’s Association (PA) Communications Workgroup, which drives the sharing of policy information with residents. With a better understanding of the LTPR, grassroots leaders were better equipped to respond to residents’ queries or concerns about their current and future living environment. At the end of the LTPR engagement period, we partnered the PA again, to organise guided tours of the LTPR exhibition for Advisers and grassroots leaders.

Given that the LTPR’s planning horizon is 50 years and beyond, it is particularly important to engage our youth as they will be the ones who will live through the fruits of it. In this respect, we tapped on existing relationships with youth and school groups, sought out government agencies and organisations who shared similar goals with us, and partnered them to make our joint outreach more effective across the spectrum of youth.

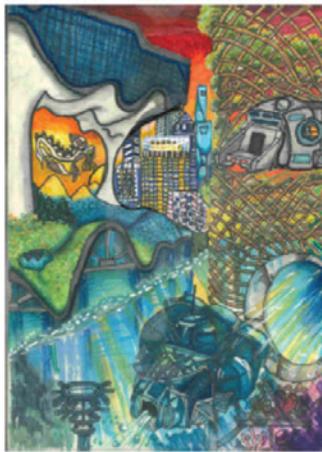
In the “tertiary level to young adult” segment, the Ministry of Community, Culture and Youth (MCCY) and the National Youth Council (NYC) polled 1,000 youths on LTPR considerations, conducted a youth dialogue and mobilised members of NYC’s youth interest groups to organise engagements within their own groups and schools, such as the Singapore University of Technology and Design.

In the “pre-tertiary” segment, URA tapped on the Challenge for the Urban and Built Environment (CUBE) programme, an annual competition for students to dive into the intricacies of planning and urban design for Singapore, and experience what it’s like to be an urban planner. As part of the 2021 edition of CUBE, more than 80 youths from junior colleges, institutes and polytechnics discussed how to achieve the LTPR outcomes that public engagement participants had envisioned for Singapore—inclusive, adaptable and resilient, distinctive and endearing, and sustainable. The Ministry of Education (MOE) also put us in touch with Geography Educators and Humanities Scholar students.

In the “primary and secondary” segment, we invited students to submit their ideas for Singapore in a “Space For Our Dreams” art



The LTPR Youth Conversation was held in partnership with the National Youth Council and the URA.
Image: National Youth Council



Original pieces submitted by primary and secondary school students for the “Space For Our Dreams” art competition.
Image: Urban Redevelopment Authority

competition. MOE disseminated news of the art competition through their school network, just before the year-end school holidays. We received a total of 215 original artworks as entries, and awarded 18 participants for their creative and

visually-attractive interpretations of our future city. We will sustain the connections formed with students by inviting them to participate in our regular programmes and visit our Singapore City Gallery.

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Interest Groups—Working with NGOs to Create Better Outcomes

In tandem with the facilitated discussions and workshops that we conducted with the general public and youth, we also sought topical inputs from a variety of interest groups.

URA and land development agencies regularly engage with non-governmental organisations such as the Nature Society of Singapore on development plans. For example, through engagement with industry experts, academics, and nature and heritage expert groups, we were able to adopt an ecologically sensitive approach for the Springleaf Precinct, including:

- Keeping significant conservation areas and buffer zones within the proposed future Nee Soon Nature Park;
- Concentrating developments on the existing brownfield sites and less sensitive areas to protect core biodiversity areas; and
- Targeted tree planting to enhance habitats and ecological connectivity within core areas of the existing freshwater swamp forest.

The LTPR presented an opportunity to engage the many biodiversity and environment interest groups further upstream in the planning process, to discuss the different types of greenery we should cater for, and how to plan for it. Between June and December 2021, we held a series of focus group discussions and worked with 70 stakeholders from academia, industry and interest groups to shape our long-term strategies for Singapore's green and blue spaces.

As a follow-up from the LTPR greenery engagements, we are currently reviewing the Landscaping for Urban Spaces and High-Rises (LUSH) scheme together with stakeholders, including professional institutes, to study the feasibility of introducing ecologically-sensitive development guidelines to enable greenery in buildings for enhancing ecological connectivity between key habitats. We will continue to engage these groups to plan for key areas beyond the LTPR engagement period.

On a similar note, URA has been partnering heritage groups for many years, from the Conservation Advisory Panel which started in 2002, to the Heritage and Identity Partnership, which was formed more recently in 2018. We consulted heritage interest groups on how to retain a distinctive identity and sense of place for Singaporeans, even as we adapt to the rapidly changing and unexpected needs of the future. The LTPR discussions provided useful insights into going beyond celebrating our built heritage (physical structures and areas), to also encompassing people's memories of places.

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Underrepresented Segments— Incorporating a Broader Range of Views

One of the challenges of engagement is obtaining as many representative views as possible. Beyond the topical interest groups, we also tried to reach out to groups who might otherwise be underrepresented in engagements.

MCCY put us in touch with representatives from self-help groups, such as Yayasan MENDAKI, Singapore Indian Development Association, Chinese Development Assistance Council and the Eurasian Association, as well as groups like SG Enable, so that we could better incorporate views from different parts of the community. We also had an intimate dialogue with beneficiaries of Daughters of Tomorrow, an organisation supporting women from low-income families, on what was important to them.

While this was the first time we got in touch with these groups, it forged the path for further engagements on future planning projects. We invited members of these groups to join in discussions and workshops with the general public, so that they could provide their perspectives to the person-on-the-street. Subsequently, we invited these groups to the LTPR exhibition to see how their inputs were reflected in the Long-Term Plan.

Professional Institutes— Tapping on Practitioners' Expertise

United by the common goal of bettering the urban environment in Singapore, the URA has enjoyed longstanding partnerships with professionals in the urban planning field, including architects, landscape architects, planners, engineers, designers and real estate developers. These partnerships have produced good practice design guides, competitions, seminars and speakers' series, dialogues, and publications. We sought the support of such professionals, both through their institutes and their firms, to contribute their expertise and views on LTPR.

The professional institutes proactively helped to raise awareness of the LTPR, and arranged for platforms for their members to exchange ideas on the future of Singapore. For example, the Singapore Institute of Architects (SIA) and Singapore Institute of Landscape Architects conducted webinars on topics covered in the LTPR, such as how greenery and biodiversity make a city attractive to live in, the importance of integrating nature into urban landscapes, and which aspects of our living environment can most benefit from data and innovation-driven solutioning in the longer term. The webinars included polls to get the audience's feedback on strategies

and elements to include in the Long-Term Plan. The Singapore Institute of Planners (SIP), Urban Land Institute Singapore and SIA conducted workshops for their members, yielding interesting discussions, and even sketches and visuals on what the future of Singapore could be.

The LTPR exhibition provided an opportunity to showcase forward-looking concepts from the professional community. We featured ideas for the redevelopment of Paya Lebar Air Base from SIA and SIP, as well as from the "Runway for Your Imagination" ideas competition that SIA, SIP and URA had jointly launched in 2020, giving the public ideas on what the town of tomorrow could look like. The exhibition also featured thought-provoking "What If?" panels, contributed by thought leaders from architecture, design and engineering firms, on how our cityscape and planning can adapt to future changes.



This illustrative plan for the future Paya Lebar Air Base is one of the outcomes of a collaboration between SIA, SIP and URA.

Image: Singapore Institute of Architects (SIA) and Singapore Institute of Planners (SIP)

Reflections and Next Steps

As a land use planning exercise with national-level impact, the LTPR compelled us to reach out broadly to achieve our engagement goals. We were grateful that partnerships with agencies such as MCCY, NYC, MOE and PA allowed us to bring our message to stakeholders beyond our usual scope, and for the strong support from interest groups and professional institutes.

The longstanding partnerships, as well as the ones newly created, will play a vital role in planning for Singapore's urban environment going ahead. The Draft Master Plan Review will be the next major opportunity to continue working with our trusted partners, to translate the broad strokes of the long-term plans into medium-term land use plans at the district- and parcel-level.

Partnerships with the People sector are key to how urban planning plays out over time. On one hand, partnerships are crucial in helping to translate longer-term, abstract visions—such as “making Singapore distinctive and endearing”—into daily lived realities. An example of this is URA's pilot Business Improvement District (BID) programme, which seeks to empower community partners to carry out placemaking of their precinct. We carry out placemaking with the private sector by:

- Meeting stakeholders regularly to explore ideas and address challenges;
- Facilitating events and activities by guiding the stakeholders and event organisers on the agency requirements and permits; and

- Identifying opportunities for partnership between the stakeholders and potential partners to grow their event (see Discover Tanjong Pagar box story).

On the other hand, the feedback that we receive on everyday developments also informs our planning guidelines and policies, and feeds back into the reviews of our medium- and long-term plans. Regardless of the sector we come from—Government, Private or People—we all have the capacity to contribute towards Singapore's urban environment. Through partnerships, we will be able to work together better, and do our part to make Singapore into a great city to live, work and play in. 🌱

DISCOVER TANJONG PAGAR—PARTNERING THE PEOPLE SECTOR IN PLACEMAKING



66

Discover Tanjong Pagar's Community Green is home to an eco-playground made of upcycled wood, which was designed in collaboration with community stakeholders.

Image: Discover Tanjong Pagar

Discover Tanjong Pagar (DTP) is a collaborative partnership between property and business owners that was formed in 2019 to transform Tanjong Pagar into a more connected, vibrant and sustainable precinct through placemaking. As part of the pilot Business Improvement District (BID) programme launched by URA in 2017, DTP works closely with government agencies and the community to connect people and businesses, and create a place where people want to be. Some of the placemaking initiatives that DTP has spearheaded include:

- **Community Green**—In November 2019, DTP adopted a 1,650m² open space bounded by Tras

Link, Wallich Street and Peck Seah Street and turned it into a beautiful green space for community activities.

- **Tree Planting**—In December 2020, DTP pledged to work with partners and stakeholders to plant 100 trees in the precinct by 2025, as part of the One Million Trees movement by NParks. In February 2022, 24 trees were planted together with green partners—The Sustainability Project & One Million Books, Tanjong Pagar residents and the URA. The trees were donated through the Plant-A-Tree programme by NParks' Garden City Fund.

DTP also organised a Bean to Green community initiative, which involved partnering Cantonment Primary School in August 2022 to recycle used coffee grounds from an espresso bar at OUE Downtown Gallery into fertiliser. The students set up a booth to sell the fertiliser, and the proceeds went towards the planting of eight trees in the precinct.

- **Eco-Playground**—In March 2022, DTP launched an inclusive eco-playground at Community Green. The playground is made of upcycled wood from felled trees, and is designed in collaboration with children and stakeholders from Tanjong Pagar. It features

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creative elements that promote multi-generation learning and interaction, and is a popular spot for all to gather and unwind.

- **Street Activation of Tras Link**—In September 2022, DTP worked with agencies such as URA, the Singapore Police Force, Land Transport Authority and Singapore Land Authority to temporarily close Tras Link. With the help of the Singapore Wellness Association and residents, the street was transformed into a giant playground with heritage-themed games for kids and adults. The temporarily closed Tras Link was also one of the sites used to host Mid-Autumn Festival celebrations, together with Community Green and Guoco Tower Urban Park.
- **Supporting Disadvantaged Communities**—Since 2019, DTP has been giving back to society through the Tanjong Pagar Gives Back movement. In December 2019, DTP organised a Christmas gift donation drive, partnering charities, non-profits and social service agencies to spread festive cheer to a group of 1,000 beneficiaries. These included children in need, youths at risk, vulnerable seniors and migrant workers. In October and November 2021, DTP collaborated with SG Cares Volunteer Centre @ Kreta Ayer to raise over \$24,000 to purchase grocery vouchers for over 750 elderly residents in Tanjong Pagar. Throughout the pandemic, DTP also organised group-buys to support hawkers and small businesses.

- **Organising Community Activities**—Discover Tanjong Pagar has organised fitness activities, such as Spartan Challenge, District Race, Yoga in the Park; festive events such as lantern-making competitions, balloon-sculpting workshops and concerts; and heritage events such as tours, exhibitions and film screenings.

Reflections by URA

As the concept of precinct partnership was new to stakeholders in Tanjong Pagar, it took us some time to help them understand the potential and benefit of working together to enhance the precinct. It is heartening that over time, the stakeholders came together to define a shared vision, and work together on placemaking efforts for the precinct. Through the journey, URA has played the role of a facilitator, cheerleader and mentor. We helped DTP understand agency guidelines, connected them to potential partners to explore collaborations, and also shared knowledge and resources to spark new ideas. We believe in building trust and being on the ground to understand their challenges, support them in their efforts and strengthen their capacity for placemaking.

Visit www.discovertanjongpagar.sg to learn more about Discover Tanjong Pagar's latest initiatives.