

CIVIC DISTRICT: SINGAPORE'S CIVIC AND CULTURAL DISTRICT BY THE BAY

1. The Civic District is envisioned to become Singapore's "Civic and Cultural District by the Bay.
2. Today, the Civic District is home to some of the most significant historic buildings and spaces in Singapore, such as the former Supreme Court and City Hall buildings, Old Parliament House, and the Padang. It is also the cultural heart of Singapore with the Asian Civilisations Museum, Victoria Theatre and Concert Hall, and The Esplanade Theatres on the Bay.
3. The last Master Plan for the Civic District was prepared in 1988. Since then, a number of new buildings and spaces, such as the Esplanade Theatres, Merlion Park, and the ArtScience Museum have been developed. A number of buildings have also been adaptively reused for new arts uses, including the Asian Civilisations Museum (the former Empress Place Building) and the Arts House (the former Old Parliament House).
4. The new National Art Gallery, the refurbished Victoria Theatre and Concert Hall, and the new extension to the Asian Civilisations Museum will all be opened by 2015, when Singapore celebrates her 50th birthday.
5. While refurbishment has been done, care has been taken to enhance the heritage and history of the area.
6. In tandem with this, the design and quality of the public spaces as well as the pedestrian connectivity to the Civic District will be enhanced to strengthen the identity and attractiveness of the District as a world-class arts and cultural hub.
7. We will be seeking feedback from the public on the following plans.

Pedestrian-friendly spaces

8. Our vision is to have a pedestrian-friendly precinct within the heart of the Civic District.
9. Street level pedestrian connectivity within the district as well as to adjacent precincts will be improved, including connections to Fort Canning Park, Bras Basah Bugis, the nearby City Hall MRT station, and the waterfront promenade around Marina Bay.

10. For a start, we will pedestrianise the portion of Empress Place between the Asian Civilisations Museum and the Victoria Theatre and Concert Hall to integrate the buildings into a seamless park-like setting.

In the longer term, we will explore options to pedestrianise St. Andrew's Road, Connaught Drive, Fullerton Road and Parliament Place (between Victoria Theatre and Concert Hall, and Singapore Cricket Club), such as closing these roads to cars on a temporary basis for activities or events. We will also explore other long-term options such as closing Anderson Bridge, Fullerton Road, Parliament Place, Connaught Drive and St. Andrew's Road to through vehicular traffic, while leaving it open for destination bound vehicles, public buses and pedestrians. This will create a bigger civic open space and allow pedestrians to stroll freely in a car-free environment.

11. Successful pedestrianisation projects will, however, require the support of the community. We will be taking the occasion of this Master Plan exhibition to seek views and comments from the public on these plans. For instance, with support from local stakeholders, we can envision a phased approach to make the area car free during the weekends.

Space for People and Events

12. The public spaces within the Civic District will be enhanced to coincide with the opening of the National Art Gallery, the renovation of the Victoria Theatre and Concert Hall, and the Asian Civilisations Museum.
13. These spaces will enable the public to enjoy the lush and historic environment of the Civic District, and provide space for interactive and fun activities.
14. At Empress Place, a more elegant and expansive public space will be created. The F1 Grand Prix race track will be adjusted to provide for a larger space within Empress Place, creating an elegant public space in front of Victoria Theatre and Concert Hall.
15. The waterfront promenade along Esplanade Park will be 'opened up' with stepped plazas and an urban beach, allowing people to get closer to the water. The stepped plazas will double up as seats for spectators to view events on the river.
16. The public can also look forward to an enhanced Esplanade Park. There will be a series of nodes and smaller spaces within the park that can be programmed for events. At the same time, parks in the area will be redesigned to include amenities like public seating, night lighting, and wayfinding signage.