

Tanjong Pagar pilots Business Improvement District programme

By Amy Tan / EdgeProp Singapore | September 13, 2019 11:30 AM SGT

SINGAPORE (EDGEPROP) – Eight property and business owners at Tanjong Pagar are collaborating to form Discover Tanjong Pagar. The precinct was the first out of nine precincts to take-off the Business Improvement District (BID) programme announced by the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) in September last year.

The eight stakeholders in this pilot are Carlton City Group's Carlton City Hotel Singapore; OUE's Downtown Gallery; GuocoLand Singapore's Guoco Tower; Far East Organization's Icon Village; Tian Teck Group's International Plaza; Far East Hospitality's Oasia Hotel Downtown Singapore; the owner of Orchid Hotel; and Sofitel Singapore City Centre.

The group has been working closely with government agencies to build a community and connect people and businesses together. "With the rejuvenation of the precinct, it is timely for the multiple stakeholders to join hands to further the transformation of Tanjong Pagar through synergised efforts," says Cheng Hsing Yao, chairman of Discover Tanjong Pagar and group managing director of GuocoLand Singapore.

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To launch Discover Tanjong Pagar, the stakeholders partnered the People's Association and Sports SG to organise activities such as a lantern walk and an artisan market at Tanjong Pagar. (Photo: Shutterstock)

Tanjong Pagar is the first area in Singapore to be gazetted under the government's conservation plan in 1989. In recent years, it has also seen new additions on the residential front, including Altez, Skysuites@Anson and Wallich Residence. Incidentally, Wallich Residence is part of the Tanjong Pagar Centre integrated development developed by GuocoLand Singapore which includes Sofitel Singapore City Centre and Guoco Tower. Other mixed-use developments include Icon and Icon Village, Downtown Gallery and Oasia Downtown. New hotels in the area include Carlton City Hotel and Orchid Hotel.

Prior to the announcement of BID, Cheng says GuocoLand has already been thinking about how to work together with its neighbours in Tanjong Pagar to transform the area. On its part, GuocoLand has been organising activities at its flagship integrated mixed-use project, Tanjong Pagar Centre. When it unveiled its 150,000 sq ft Urban Park as part of the development in October 2017, the developer started programming community fitness, lifestyle, music and family-friendly activities.

One of the initial efforts by the eight stakeholders was to give back to the community during the Christmas season, before the pilot BID was formed. According to Cheng, this initiative benefitted 800 beneficiaries and the stakeholders are planning to continue giving back to the community through its programmes.

"At the end of the day, our circle of influence is within our own development," he says. As such, he believes Discover Tanjong Pagar is beneficial to everyone in the district

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To launch Discover Tanjong Pagar, the stakeholders partnered the People's Association and Sports SG to organise activities such as a lantern walk and an artisan market at Tanjong Pagar. "At this launch event, a lot of people were coming from the surrounding areas because we had this event. Quite a few people said they've never been here before," he says.

Upcoming activities include an urban exploration race where runners can explore and navigate their way through Tanjong Pagar, as well as collect points to win the top prize of a 3D/2N weekend stay at Oasia Hotel Downtown.

According to Cheng, the stakeholders have also started discussions with government agencies such as Singapore Tourism Board and National Heritage Board. "We are discussing with them how to promote or leverage their knowledge on heritage and history since Tanjong Pagar is one of the oldest districts in Singapore," he reveals.

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Currently, participation in the BID is voluntary with each stakeholder contributing a portion of the budget. According to Cheng, this amount is matched one-for-one by the URA for a period of four years. "Within these four years, they are helping us to get more resources to use. It's not a big budget so we have to spend wisely," he adds.

While there are only eight stakeholders at the moment, they are currently in talks to rope in more property and business owners in time to come. These include shophouse owners at Tras Street and even further at Duxton Hill and Keong Saik Road.

"For [the stakeholders], it is a lot of effort and time because we have our day jobs and we are doing this and trying to make it more efficient and effective," Cheng says.

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