

PLANNING MATTERS

Marina Bay Garden City by the Bay



As part of a forward-looking planning approach adopted by the Singapore government, 360 hectares of land next to the existing Central Business District (CBD) was reclaimed in the 1970s in anticipation of the potential growth of the CBD. This paved the way for the seamless extension of the city and gave Singapore a unique competitive advantage to tap on the synergy with the existing CBD.

Marina Bay is Singapore's most exciting and ambitious urban transformation project that will support its continuing growth as a major business and financial hub in Asia. When fully developed, this new financial district will generate quality office space in a prime downtown location that can rival those in the leading financial centres of Tokyo, New York and London. Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong had said that Marina Bay would define Singapore in the same way that The Bund defines the city of Shanghai.

Far from being a quiet district at night that is typical of other business districts around the world, Marina Bay is envisioned as a vibrant 24/7, environmentally-friendly place where people live, work and play. It has ushered in a new concept of city living that embraces all the opportunities and activities that the city has to offer.

Marina Bay embodies the sustainable approach of an integrated live-work-play concept which brings greater convenience as a place with a necklace of attractions and round-the-clock energy. The Master Plan for Marina Bay focuses on encouraging a variety of uses – commercial, residential, hotel and entertainment, to ensure the buzz continues during and after office hours. Thus, apart from the providing prime office space for global business and financial institutions, Marina Bay will also be home to a full range of quality residential, shopping, dining, cultural, and entertainment facilities.

There are apartments set amidst lush greenery and near the waterfront. Residents and workers can enjoy the parks, waterfront promenade and attend the events and celebrations held at the Bay.

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Skyline

Singapore's signature city skyline is a result of careful sculpting to create a dynamic 'stepped-up' skyline profile. Urban design guidelines for Marina Bay require a variety of development intensities and building heights for the area. For example, building heights are kept low for developments along the waterfront. This safeguards the views to and from individual buildings, enhances their attractiveness and creates a pleasant and aesthetic skyline for the district.

A Sustainable, Environmentally-friendly Precinct

More than just giving Singapore a brand-new stunning city skyline, Marina Bay has been designed with sustainability in mind, adopting environmentally-sustainable strategies and technologies in its development.

Creating a freshwater reservoir

Marina Bay will help Singapore to increase its water supply capacity. A dam has been constructed across the Marina Channel that will act as a tidal barrier to keep out sea water and control flooding. With Marina Barrage, Marina Bay will turn into a freshwater reservoir which will increase water catchment in Singapore and add to the local water supply by 10 per cent.

Planning for a mixed-use district

The concept of 'white sites' has been introduced to Marina Bay to allow for a better mix of uses in each development. Mixed-use districts offer residents and office workers greater conveniences by cutting down the need to travel long distances to access amenities and recreational options. Such a strategy also ensures that vibrancy can be better sustained.





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Sustainable transport and pedestrian-friendliness

Marina Bay will be served by a comprehensive public transport network to provide greater convenience for its residents, workers and visitors. The enhanced connectivity both within Marina Bay and to the rest of Singapore is aimed at encouraging greater use of public transport in Marina Bay, reducing dependence on cars, and reducing energy consumption from the use of private cars.

Innovative infrastructure and systems

Every effort is made to provide sophisticated infrastructure that offers modern conveniences and reliable access to key utilities in Marina Bay.

One of the key pieces of infrastructure is the Common Services Tunnel (CST), designed to be an environmentally-sound way to provide utilities to Marina Bay.

Marina Bay also features another environmentally-friendly infrastructure system within the CST network: the District Cooling System (DCS).

The Marina Bay waterfront promenade has been designed as a well-shaded environment for pedestrians, with lush tree planting. It also includes design features, such as water features, to cool the ambient air temperature and improve pedestrian comfort. The LED lighting and outdoor fans make use of solar energy.

The Marina Bay City Gallery is another example which incorporates sustainable design features.

Eco-friendly buildings

To pave the way for more environmentally-friendly buildings, all new developments at Marina Bay are required to achieve a minimum Green Mark Platinum standard. The Green Mark scheme gives developers the opportunity to design and construct green, sustainable buildings that promote energy savings, water savings, healthier indoor environments and the adoption of more extensive greenery for their projects. This will help to reduce energy usage of the new developments by 25 to 30 per cent.

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Preserving a link to history

At Marina Bay, historically-significant buildings like the Fullerton Hotel has been conserved and restored for adaptive re-use as a luxury hotel. Other historic buildings, such as the former Clifford Pier and the Custom Harbour Branch Building have also been conserved and restored into a boutique waterfront hotel and lifestyle development. By conserving these historical buildings, the distinctive character and identity of the area is retained, providing a reminder of some of our city's historical roots.



Emphasis on urban design and architectural excellence

Much effort has been put into the urban design of Marina Bay to ensure that it becomes a place that is distinctive, dynamic and delightful. For example, the skyline that defines Marina Bay is a harmonious composition of low-rise buildings at the waterfront and skyscrapers in the background. This safeguards the views to and from individual buildings and creates a dynamic 'stepped-up' skyline profile and more pleasant, pedestrian-scaled areas.

Key streets and the waterfront promenade have been planned to be lined with activity-generating uses like shops and F&B establishments. This ensures that the public realm remains vibrant all the time. Public art is introduced to create delightful experiences and enliven the public spaces at the Bay. Buildings are required to provide external lighting to create a memorable skyline and to allow people to appreciate the beauty of the city at night.

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A Vibrant Bay for the People

Envisioned as a thriving and energetic place, Marina Bay is shaping up very well as an endearing community space for Singapore residents.

Marina Bay is home to a number of attractions, including The Esplanade – Singapore’s premier performing arts centre where a myriad of international and local performances are staged; the Merlion Park; and Singapore Flyer – world’s tallest observation wheel. The opening of Marina Bay Sands and Fullerton Heritage in 2010 added to the wide variety of entertainment and dining options offering spectacular views of the Bay.

The waterfront has also been transformed with the opening of the waterfront promenade and The Helix pedestrian bridge, which complete the 3.5km long continuous loop around the Bay. This promenade now links visitors to a wide array of leisure and cultural destinations, such as shops, F&B outlets, the Esplanade and the new ArtScience Museum at Marina Bay Sands.

In 2010, several major large-scale events were staged on the Bay which attracted wide participation from the community. These included the opening and closing ceremonies of the inaugural 2010 Singapore Youth Olympic Games, the third Formula One Singapore Grand Prix, and “i Light Marina Bay”, Asia’s first sustainable light art festival.

Marina Bay also plays host to the annual National Day Parade celebrations and the signature Marina Bay Singapore New Year's Eve Countdown. Following the successful staging of Singapore Biennale@Marina Bay and Arts Fest@Marina Bay, Marina Bay has also become the perfect setting for arts and cultural events. Such events and activities add year-round excitement and buzz to Marina Bay.

For discussion

- 1) Why is the development of Marina Bay important for Singapore’s growth as a leading business, tourism and investment centre?
- 2) What are some of the planning strategies adopted to make Marina Bay a sustainable district?
- 3) List two ideas that you think makes Marina Bay unique and explain why.
- 4) Describe your ideal city. How does it compare to Marina Bay? What can you do to make the district more like your ideal city?
- 5) You are planning a half-day itinerary at Marina Bay for friends visiting from overseas. What attractions and activities in Marina Bay would you suggest?