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Safeguarding Living Heritage in Urban Contexts

Capacity-Building Workshop in Europe

12-13 October | Antwerp, Belgium

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Flanders State of the Art

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ErfgoedLab Antwerpen

unesco Chair on Critical Heritage Studies and Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage

Bogotá and Singapore case studies

Bogotá

- 8.5M inhabitants
- 2,600 m ASL
- 20 districts
- 478 km2 of urban area (27%)
- 1,298 km2 of rural area (73%)

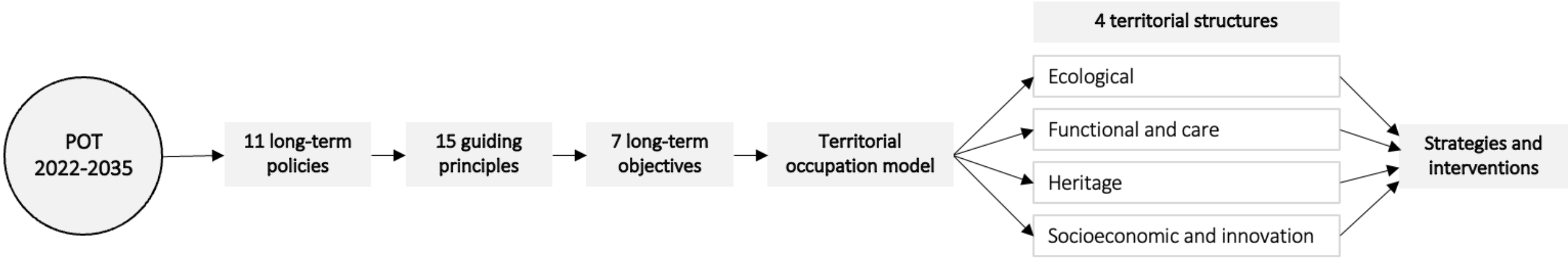


Bogotá’s territorial management plan - POT

- Roadmap for the territorial development of Bogotá.
- The elaboration process comprised extensive public engagement and multisectoral coordination.
- The Secretary of Planning was responsible for leading and coordinating the process, collaborating closely with key entities like the Institute of Cultural Heritage.



Bogotá’s territorial management plan - POT



Urban planning structures

Ecological structure:

It is the highest hierarchical structure that organizes the territory and ensures ecosystemic equilibrium for a sustainable occupation model. It is composed of: National System of Protected Areas, Conservation Zones, Areas of special eco-systemic importance, and Complementary areas for conservation.

Integrative structure of heritage

Integrates heritage which constitues the memory of the historically built city and urban and rural landscapes where diverse identities are expressed. **It is composed of: Cultural, Intangible, Natural, and Archaeological and Paleontological Heritage.**

Functional structure:

Aims to ensure territorial balance in the availability of services related to care, public space and mobility in urban and rural low-income areas to achieve inclusion and economic and social sustainability. It is composed of the following systems: Pedestrian and Public Space, Mobility, Care and Social Services, and Public Services.

Socioeconomic, creative and innovation structure:

Embodies Bogotá's dynamism and capacity to reactivate its economy, protect its knowledge, provide housing and create the jobs of the future. It is materialized through three areas of mixed activities and land uses: Proximity Areas, Structuring Areas, and Large Metropolitan Services Areas.

Integrative structure of heritage

It promotes **comprehensive heritage management**, strengthening social ties and the productive life of the social and community groups that live in the city's iconic urban and rural landscapes.

Is intended to safeguard the **tangible, intangible, and natural heritage**

Integrative structure of heritage

It recognizes the **“symbolic value of women and communities associated with natural and tangible and intangible cultural elements**” and the “ancestral and traditional trades, infrastructure and cultural practices ensuring their viability”.

ICH is a key territorial element:

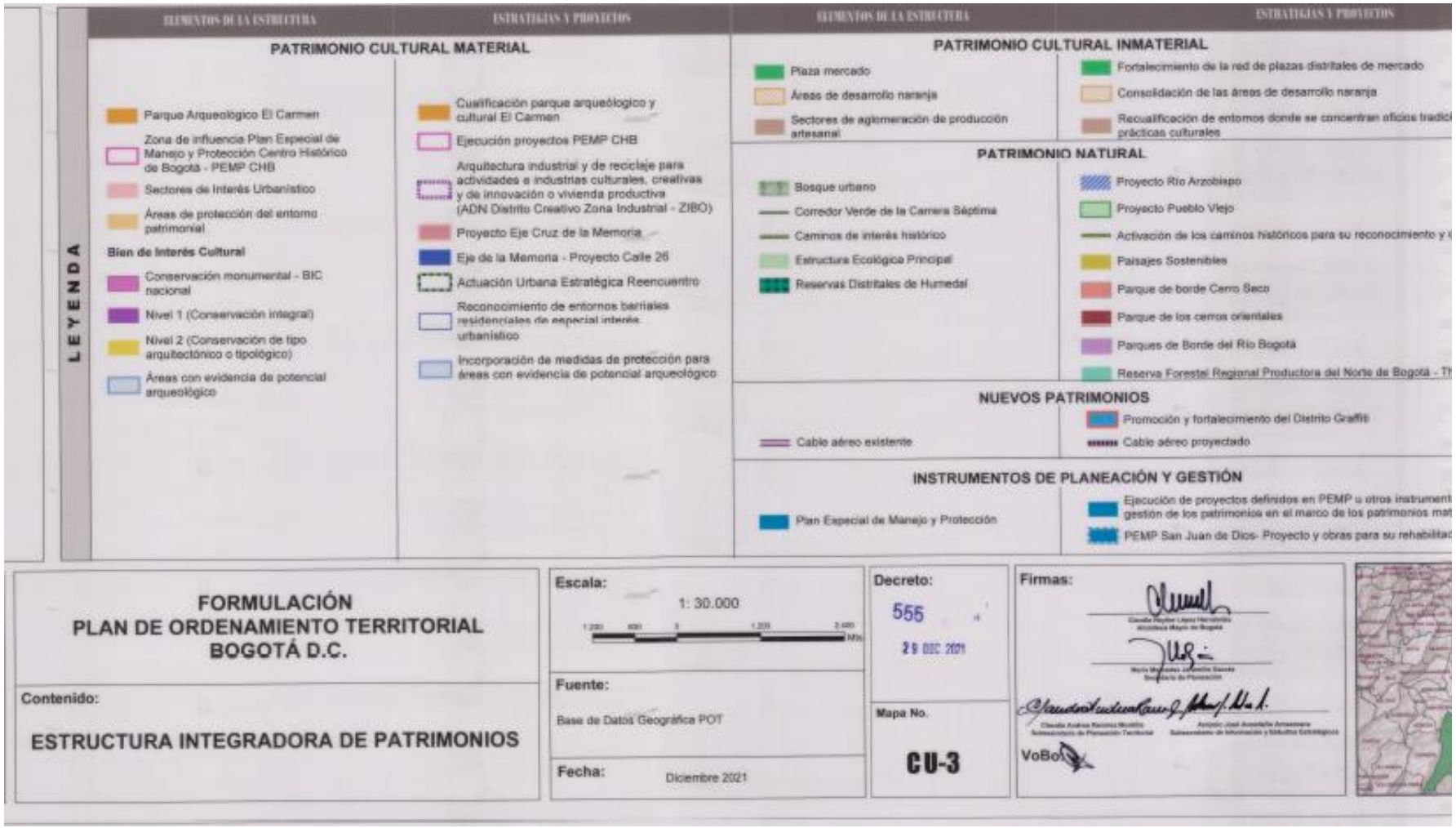
“manifestations, practices, uses, representations, expressions, knowledge, techniques, ways of life, and ways of managing the territory and cultural spaces…”

as these “generate feelings of identity and establish links with the collective memory and the territory”.

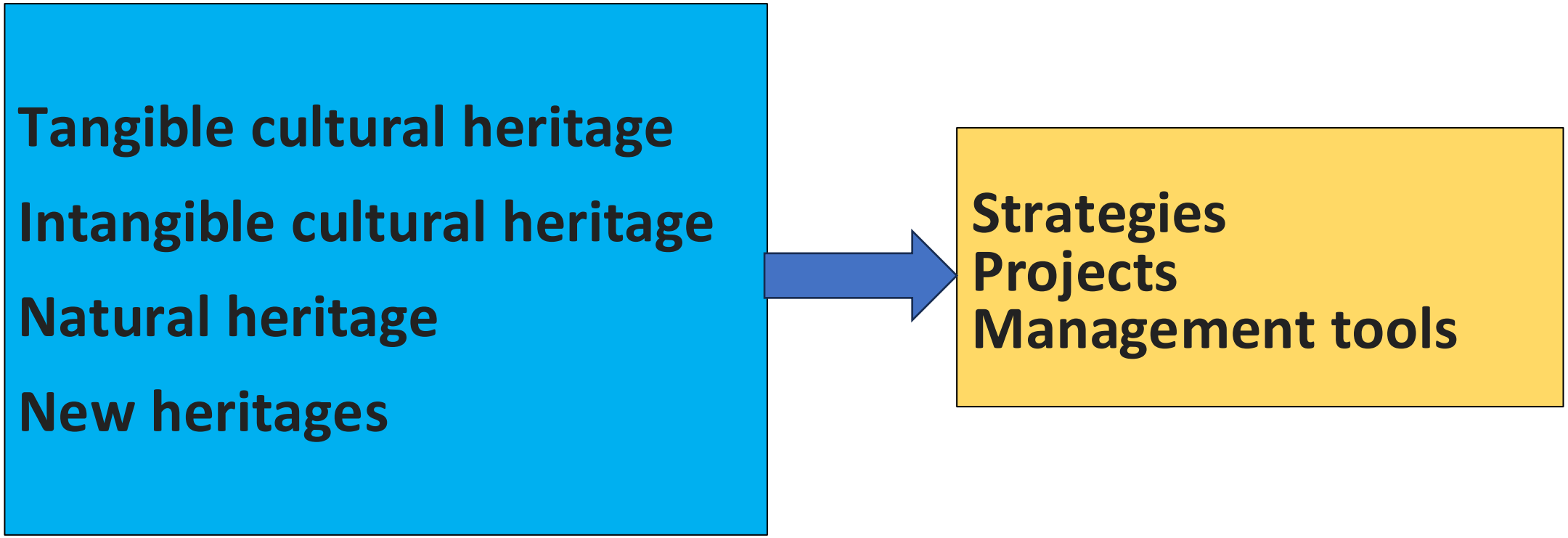


Foto: Maria Emma Quintero, Helena Ballesteros y Ana Victoria Gualteros. Tejedoras del grupo Tejiendo Sueños
Fuente: SCRD 2017

Integrative structure of heritage



Integrative structure of heritage



Integrative structure of heritage - strategies

- **Protection of natural heritage** and the renaturalization of environments through public spaces, traditional gardens, and historic heritage trees.
- **Safeguarding of traditional knowledge, cultural practices** and rural ways of life that help foster local economies.
- **Revitalization and consolidation of heritage areas** and those where traditional and ancestral productive activities take place (creative districts).
- **Recognition** of the importance of the **relationship between the eastern hills and ecological corridors**, highlighting these natural and cosmogonic elements.
- **Recognition of elements located at the urban-rural boundaries** that possess heritage value for strengthening regional relationships.

Integrated Heritage Observatory



Its role is to research, measure, monitor, and analyze urban dynamics related to heritage, with the aim of **strengthening the role of cultural - both tangible and intangible - and natural heritage in spatial planning.**

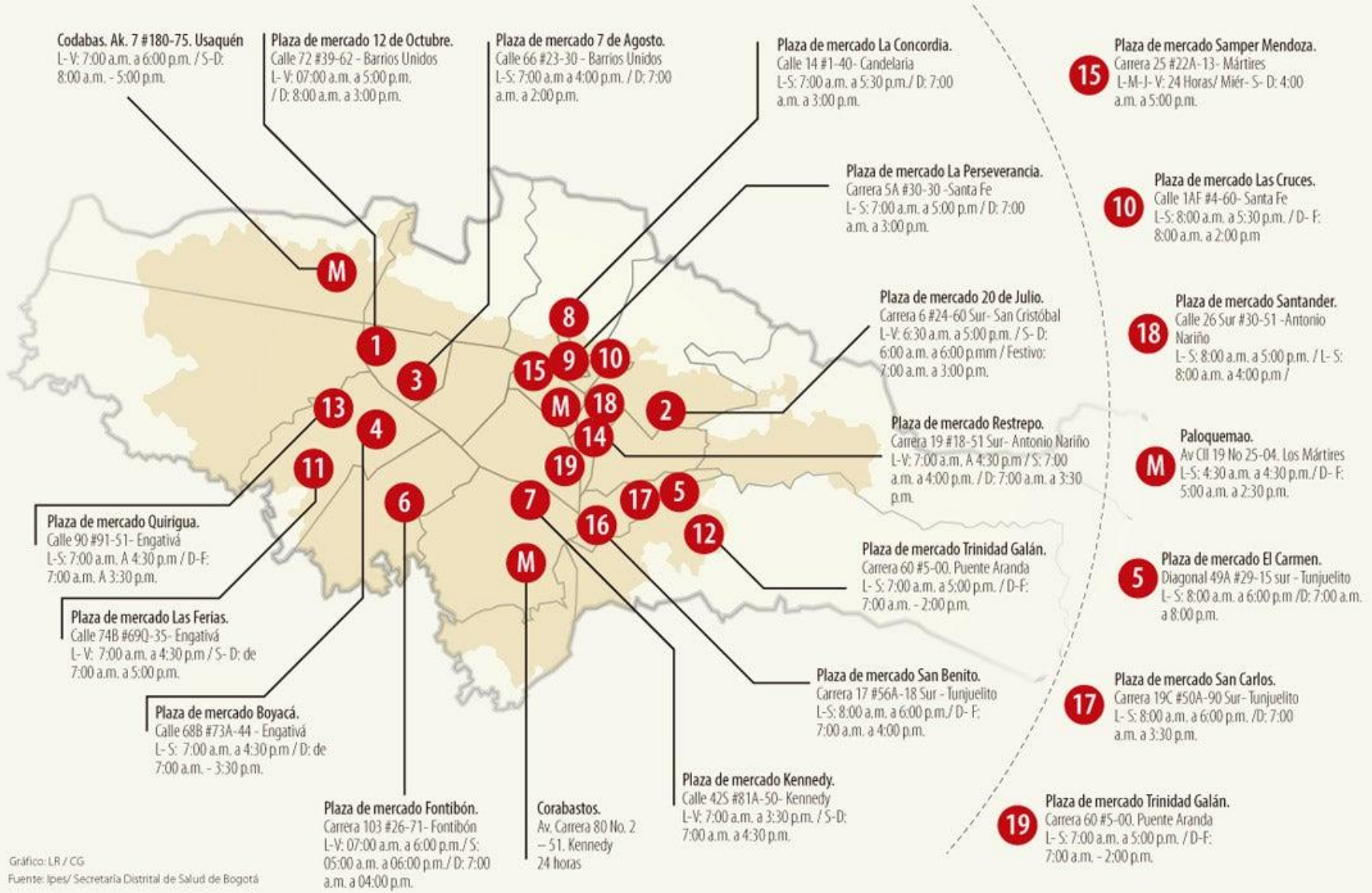
Urban planning structures



PLAZAS DE MERCADO EN BOGOTÁ

PATRIMONIO VIVO: UNA ACTIVACIÓN PARA SEGUIR RECONOCIENDO LO QUE NOS UNE

LAS PRINCIPALES PLAZAS DE BOGOTÁ



Traditional markets of Bogotá

The old Restrepo Market was the meeting point where food vendors, merchants, workers, sellers, citizens and representatives of district entities came together to participate in the launch of the inventory of living heritage of the traditional markets in Bogotá.





@María Claudia López 2017









In Bogotá's markets, memory, identity, and the future are intertwined.

Their knowledge, crafts, and traditions are part of the city's living heritage.

The facades were embellished with urban art – graffiti art.



Alcaldía de Bogotá 2019


Alcaldía de Bogotá 2019

Singapore

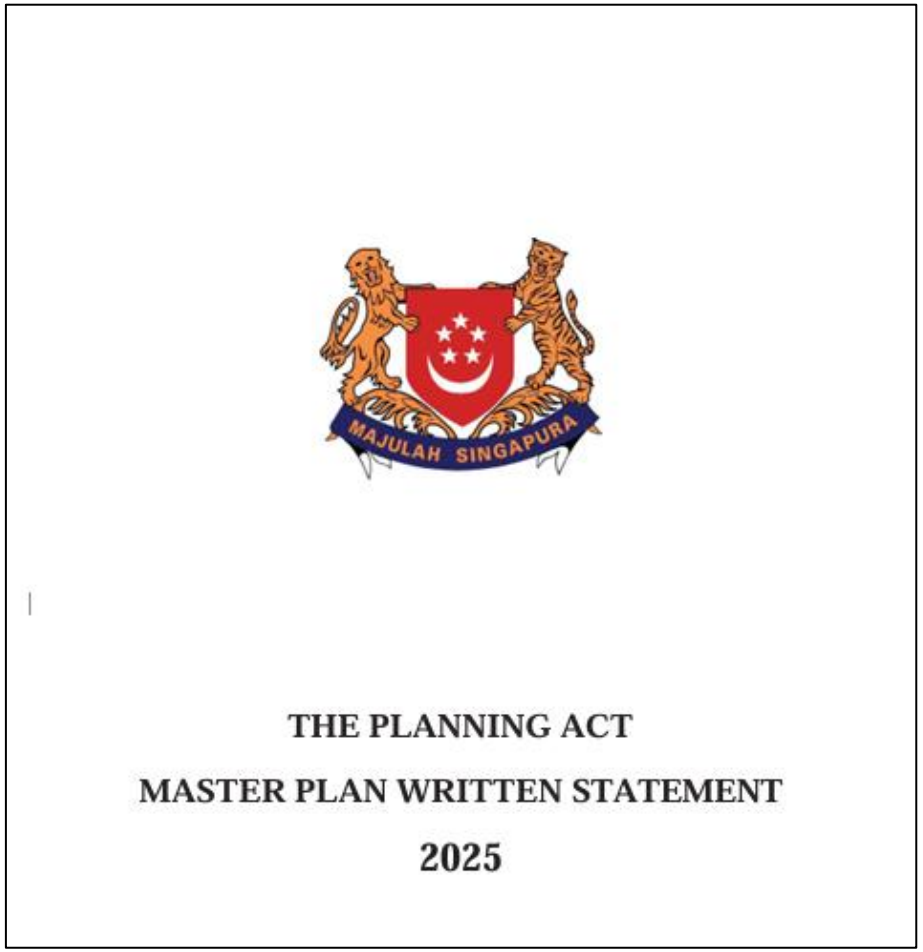
- 5.7M inhabitants
- Located at see level
- 5 regions
- 454 km² of urban area .



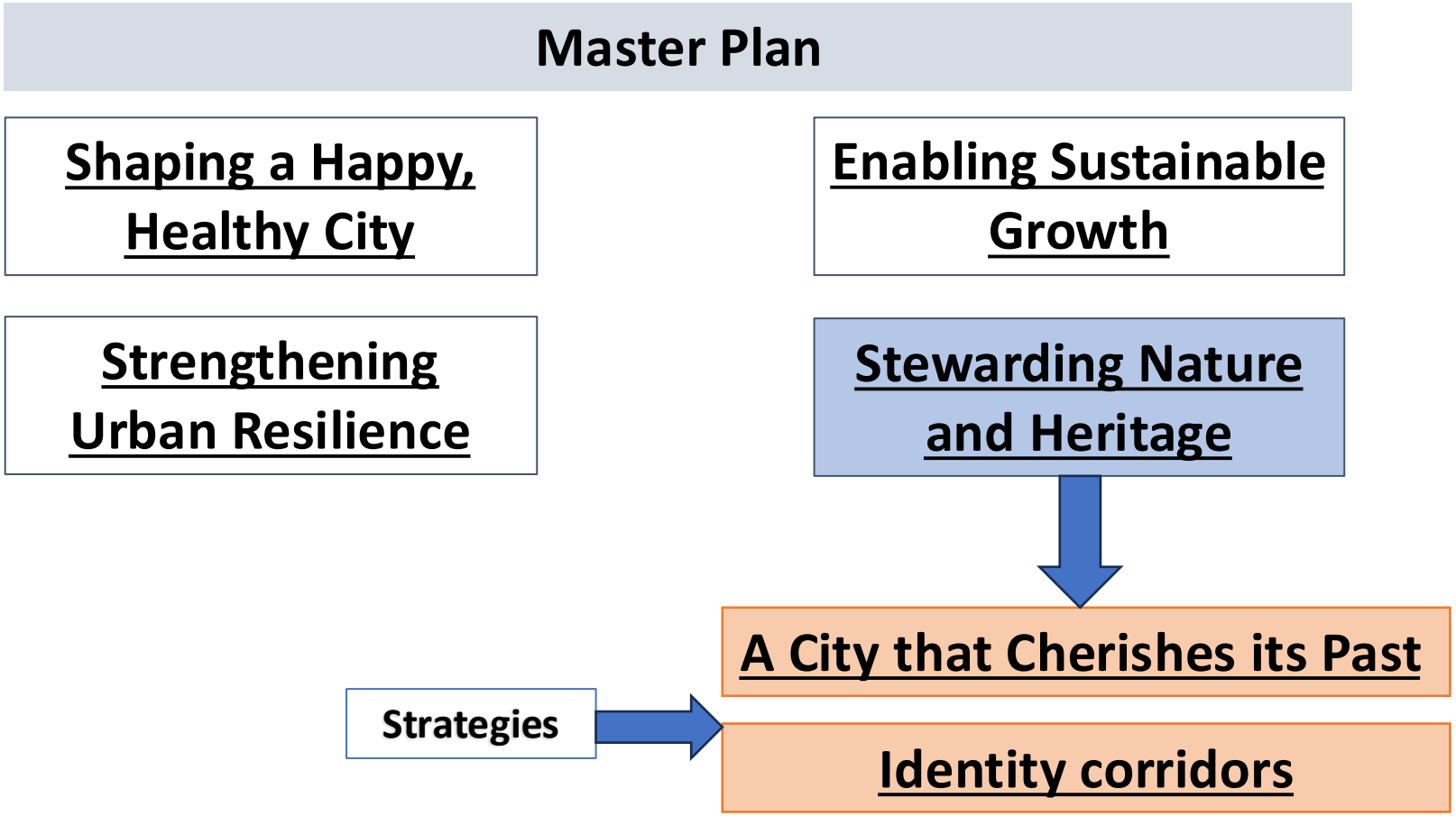
Singapore’s Master plan

The Master Plan (MP) is the statutory land use plan which guides Singapore's development in the medium term over the next 10 to 15 years.

It is **reviewed every five years** and translates the broad long-term strategies of the Long-Term Plan into **detailed plans** to guide the development of land and property.



Singapore’s Master plan 2025 - themes



Stewarding Nature and Heritage

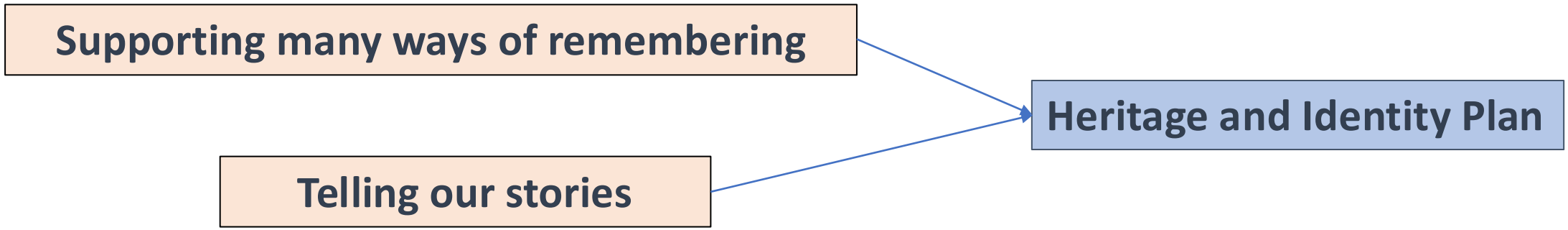
"Singapore is an endearing home because of the heritage we share and the City in Nature we enjoy. **Buildings and places** that anchor our memories are celebrated.

The **island's natural capital** are also strengthened to benefit biodiversity and our well-being. Some of these green spaces are also multi-functional by design to meet different needs."

Stewarding Nature and Heritage

A City that cheriches its past

Beyond conservation, there are also different ways to celebrate and recall Singapore´s Heritage. By weaving history and vibrancy into the cityscapes.



Heritage and Identity Plan

The **Heritage and Identity Plan** is an initiative **to identify, retain and enhance heritage and identity areas, nodes, corridors and buildings** across Singapore.

It outlines their potential to contribute to the layered history of our island home, and **keeps the meanings and memories of places alive.**

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The elements of our Heritage & Identity Plan

National Monuments
The most important and historically significant buildings and sites in Singapore. There are 75 such monuments today.

Conservation Areas and Buildings
There are currently more than 7,200 conserved buildings and structures in over 100 conservation areas. Most of them are shophouses and bungalows.

Identity Nodes
Areas with special character and charm. Their familiar scale and settings are retained through urban design guidelines.

Identity Corridors
Networks of historically developed transport routes and urban nodes. They connect places with heritage and identity.

Urban Design Areas
Developments in these areas are guided to ensure that individual buildings contribute to and strengthen the planning vision and create an attractive and pedestrian-friendly environment.

Marked Historic Sites
These places of historical significance have heritage markers to recall buildings that made way for development.

Heritage Activation Nodes (HAN)
Neighbourhoods with initiatives that involve the local community in celebrating their heritage. View **Recreation Master Plan** panels for more information.

HDB Towns

HDB Town Centres
Central amenity hubs that anchor the identity of towns developed by the Housing and Development Board (HDB).

Feature Areas
The rich heritage of these places is being incorporated into long-term plans for the area. Head over to the respective Regional Panels for more details.

Map for illustrative purposes only

Heritage Activation Nodes

The National Heritage Board's Heritage Activation Nodes (HAN) initiative aims to involve the community in developing projects that celebrate the heritage of their neighbourhoods.

Since 2024, a series of HANs have launched in different precincts, offering opportunities for the community to create and execute projects that highlight local heritage.

https://www.nhb.gov.sg/what-we-do/our-work/community-engagement/han-heritage-champions/about-heritage-activation-nodes

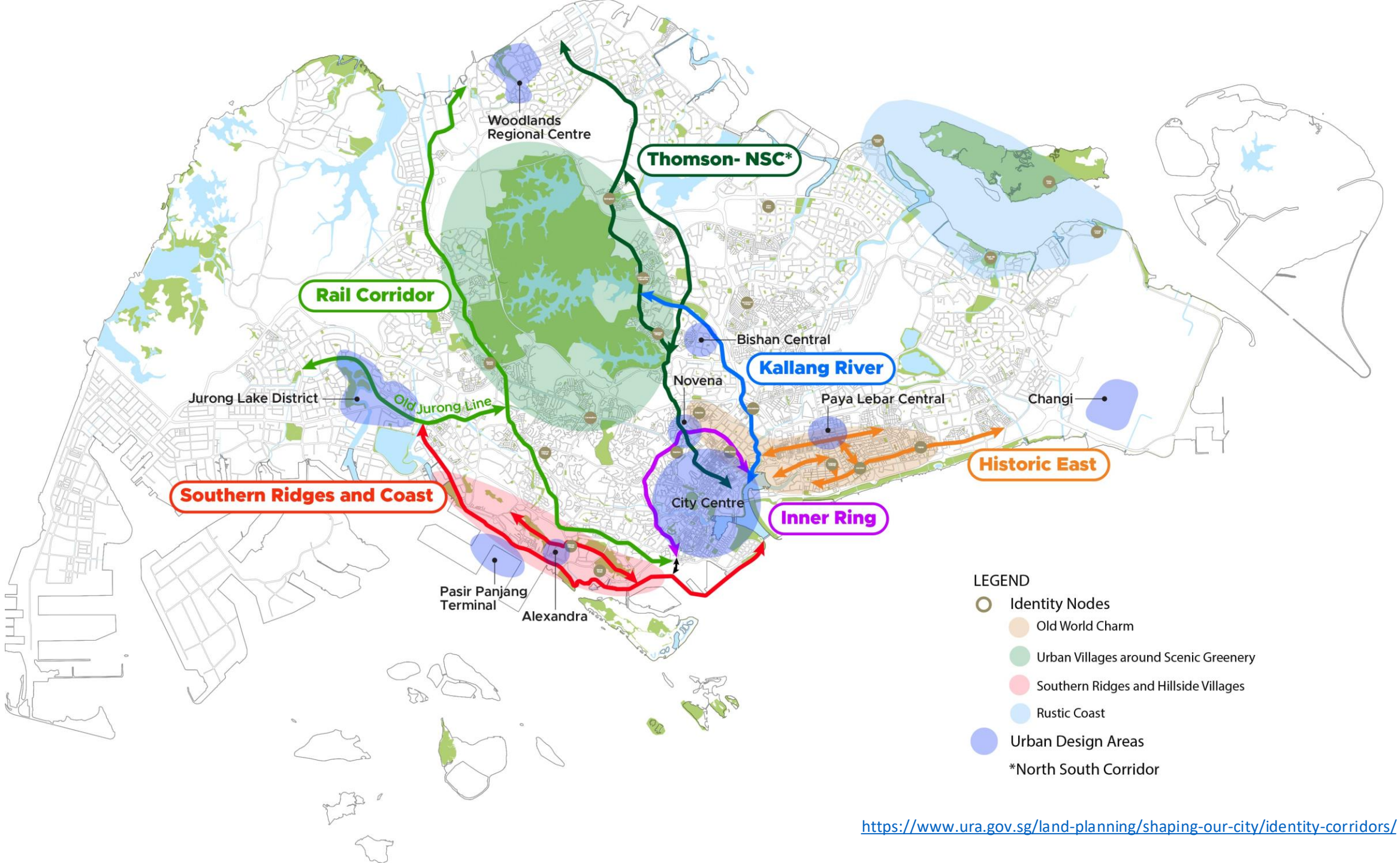


Identity Corridors

The purpose is to:

- **Enhance key heritage routes**
- **Integrate public spaces**
- **Improve connectivity**

More than 2,300 from the community came together in person to shape the future of the Identity Corridors



https://www.ura.gov.sg/land-planning/shaping-our-city/identity-corridors/

WHAT DOES THE COMMUNITY SAY ABOUT

KALLANG RIVER

WHAT IS THE KALLANG RIVER CORRIDOR?

The Thomson–Kallang Corridor includes the Kallang River, Singapore's longest waterway, flowing through neighbourhoods like Bishan, Potong Pasir, Kolam Ayer and Upp Boon Keng. Residents and local communities see it as a distinctive and local waterway, winding through the heartlands and reflecting the nation's life and soul.

Almost 500 people have been engaged in 2024 and 2025, sharing their wishes and aspirations in shaping Kallang River's future together.

Urban Redevelopment Authority

VITALITY

EXPLORING MADE EASY

Many people feel that the river offers a sense of discovery and connection to surrounding estates and places. Improvements like better wayfinding, more pitstops and dedicated lanes for fast and slow users would enhance the experience of exploration along the river.



"There should be a sense of discovery when you explore the river. Like a Discovery Trail."

CONNECTING GENERATIONS ACROSS THE RIVER

Local residents and communities hope to see Kallang River become more inclusive and accessible — creating a vibrant space for multi-generational gathering and bonding.



"During COVID, the Potong Pasir PCN became a space for the community to come together, for them to find life."

A LIVING RIVER – WATERS YOU CAN TOUCH

There is a strong desire for greater access to the water and wider range of water-based activities, from family-friendly play to expert pursuits, the community envisions a river that feels like their own backyard — an inviting waterway rather than just a functional canal.



"A river is only a river if it's used, right? If not, it's just a longkang. Just a drain."

RESTORATIVE

"URBAN ESCAPE" FOR HEARTLANDERS

Residents by the river see the waterway as a vital retreat from city life where lush greenery and wildlife create a space for wellness and tranquility, which should be preserved.



"Kallang River is a place for my 'me-time', to decompress. It's my personal, enjoyable space and time to unwind."

SINGAPORE'S HOME RIVER

KALLANG RIVER

CREATING BUZZ, BUT NOT TOO NEAR ME

Areas for activities and buzz should be located close to the river basin and away from residential flats to maintain the sense of tranquility around residents' homes.



"I want the vibrancy, but not near me."

"Occasionally if there is a dragon boat event, it's okay. It brings in some fun and life."

ROOTEDNESS

MAKING HISTORY COME ALIVE

The river is rich in stories of life and progress. There is consensus that these should be rediscovered and shared through heritage markers and murals to highlight Kallang River's history, keeping its legacy alive for future generations.



"This is our main river, like the 'Amazon' of Singapore. The main river delta.

There is a very historical element to it. Singapore started here, the city, the settlements, along the river."

RIVER AS "OUTDOOR CLASSROOM"

The community sees Kallang River's rich biodiversity and landscape as a valuable space for learning as an outdoor classroom for schools, sparking curiosity and discovery in everyday moments.



"It's about bringing the kids out and expose them to nature. It's about the exploration, the curiosity."

WHAT IS THE HISTORIC EAST CORRIDOR?

The Historic East (HE) Corridor is identified by geographical nodes namely, Old Airport, Katong-Joo Chiat, Geylang-Changi Road, Siglap, Marine Parade and Bayshore. The inherent multi-ethnic heritage and its rich history sets the distinctive identity and culture that is thriving today and to be treasured for the future.

Together with the community, through public engagement, identity themes that define the identity of the corridor was developed, serving as a guide for future projects and developments.

Urban Redevelopment Authority

HISTORIC EAST

A COMMUNAL CULTURAL TAPESTRY

AUTHENTIC

MELTING POT OF CULTURE AND HERITAGE



The East has a rich historic background of diversity in cultures and ethnicities. Beyond preservation, the public finds it important to surface the stories of the past in a more accessible and experential way, for future generations.

"Info boards are nice, but heritage is more enjoyable, meaningful, when shared by the people who own it or lived it."

"We have the Peranakans, Eurasians, Malay, Chinese communities. They're all here."

FOR LOCALS, BY LOCALS



Easties take pride in today's delicate balance in the commercial entities within the neighbourhood, which celebrates local heritage, flavours and design while embracing new trendy commercial offerings. The challenge ahead is to maintain and preserve this balance.



"The success of the East is shown in (how it's more than just) i12. It's not the most popular spot. People get out of the malls in the East."

CHILL

GREENIFICATION OF THE EAST



The public hopes to bring back greenery for a more walkable, enjoyable experience and revitalise the urban environment.



"Soften concrete spaces with nature. Bring back our lost forest."

REMEMBERING THE "COAST" OF EAST COAST



With the proximity to East Coast Park, people of the East have a natural affinity to nature and the sea. More connections and access would enhance this identity that resonates with the community.

"It used to be a kampong near the sea, there's a lot of historic value in the area. But now there's only a surface level understanding of that history."

OPEN SPACES TO CHILL, VIBE AND CELEBRATE

"Those who live in the East stay in the East" – there's a special sense of connection and coniviality in the hood. The public wishes for more open spaces for the community to gather, mingle and celebrate to strengthen this identity.





"Katong-Joo Chiat is more than just a 'Day Destination', we should have night life too – live music, markets!"

COMMUNAL

"If I bring my grandmother, it's not really safe for her, given the number of cars going through at high speed."

"CAR-LITE, NOT CAR-LIKE"

While the East is meant to be explored at leisure on foot, traffic and road safety takes away from the current walking and cycling experience, especially for the elderly and those with accessibility needs.

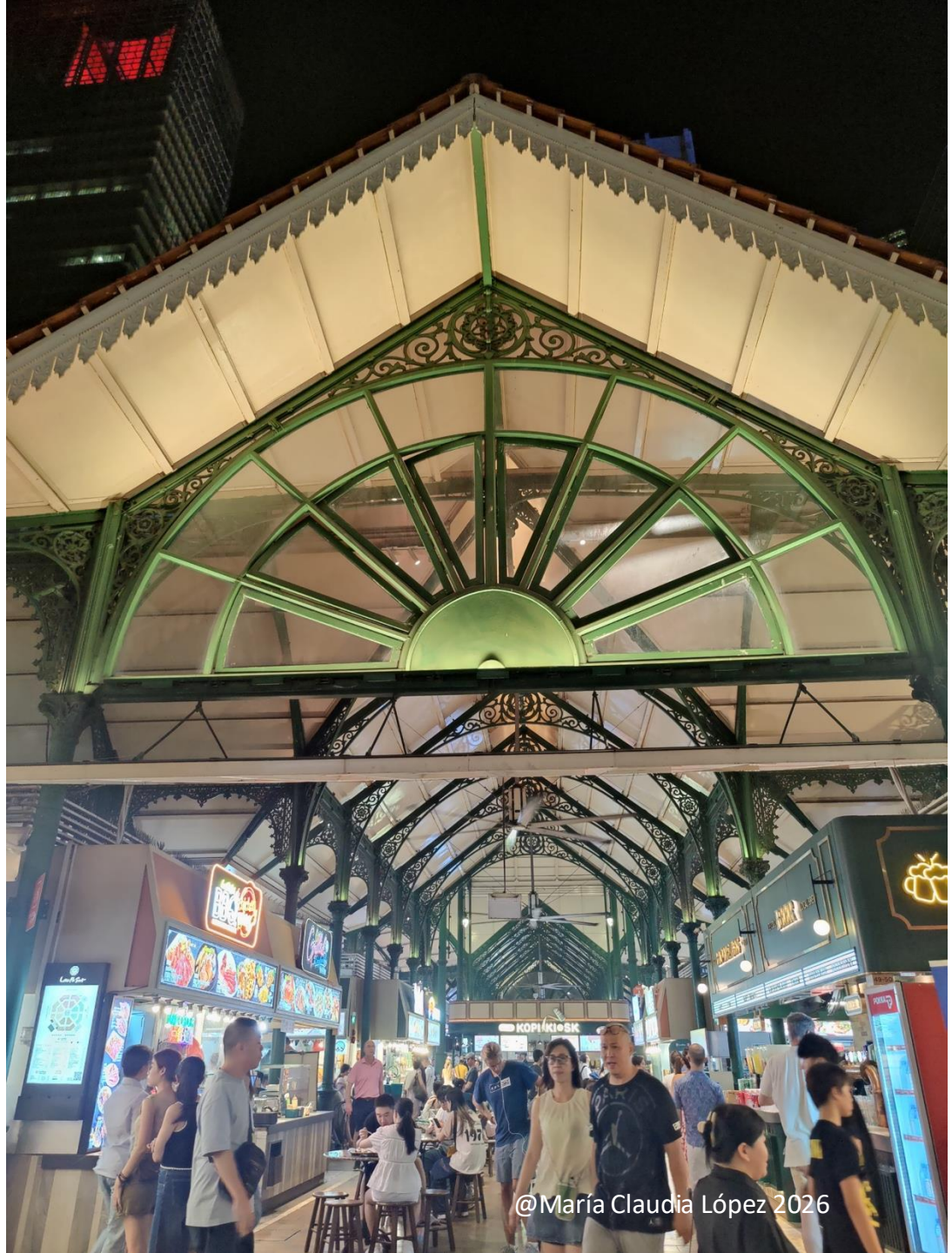


STREET-BASED NEIGHBOURHOODS THAT CONNECT

The East is cherished for its low-rise charm, mixed-use developments and backlanes (or lorongs) that promote a sense of friendliness and slower living. Many hope to revive the vibrancy of underutilised backlanes through ground-up programming and events.



"In the past, the front of shophouses was for business and money while backlanes were the soul of the community. Creating more access today (and bringing life back) to the backlanes is meaningful."



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Thank you

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