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Building a Friendlier, More Inclusive Singapore

The latest revisions to the Code on Accessibility now require selected developments to provide accessible changing rooms for persons with severe disabilities.

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CEA Council for
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The art of engaging a property agent

Find out how you can grow this relationship



Grow Your Relationship with Your Property Agent in 4 Steps

You've decided to engage a property agent, so what's next? Check out the four steps to learning the art of engaging a property agent.

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Heartland Play!

HDB's new-generation thematic playgrounds are designed to inspire creative play and to highlight the history of the towns they are in.

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Love Our 'Hood Youth Challenge: Youths Co-create Ideas to Improve Our Living Environment

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Building a Friendlier, More Inclusive Singapore

For most of us, existing public facilities like footpaths and toilets are sufficient for our needs. However, there are others like Jasmine who struggle to attend to the toileting needs of her non-mobile daughter, Sarah, whenever they are out of the house.





Jasmine and Sarah testing out an accessible changing room with an adult changing table.

Fortunately, caregivers like Jasmine will soon be able to travel around Singapore with greater peace of mind, knowing that there will be more accessible public changing rooms for her daughter. The latest revisions to the Code on Accessibility now require selected developments to provide accessible changing rooms for persons with severe disabilities, making it easier for them to be changed and cleaned up with dignity.

The Code on Accessibility is intended to help built environment players develop a Singapore with people like Jasmine in mind. First introduced in 1990, the Code has undergone five revisions over the years, and the very latest revision – the Code on Accessibility in the Built Environment 2019 – was launched on 22 April this year after rigorous consultations with relevant government agencies, institutions of higher learning, industry stakeholders and voluntary welfare organisations.

The new revisions to the Code will be implemented from 1 November 2019 onwards, and will apply to all new buildings and existing buildings undergoing Additions & Alterations (A&A).

Singapore's elderly population is also rapidly increasing, and is expected to reach 21% by 2025. To address the needs of our rapidly ageing population, the 2019 Code has also refined existing requirements to provide more equitable access to the elderly and to persons with disabilities. Such refinements include providing more accessible parking lots within hospitals and shorter ramp runs for easier manoeuvring on wheelchairs.

Thanks to recent advancements in technology, there has also recently been a proliferation of personal mobility aids in Singapore, including motorised wheelchairs and electric scooters. These personal mobility devices allow the elderly and persons with disabilities more autonomy within our urban environment.

To accommodate these changes in personal mobility, the new Code thus includes requirements for larger accessible toilets. Design requirements for accessible lifts have also been refined to allow people to manoeuvre their personal mobility aids with greater ease.

Under the new Code, mandatory provision of lactation rooms will now also be extended to healthcare buildings, larger business parks and mixed developments, giving mothers the opportunity to feed their children or express milk in the comfort of a private space.

For more information about the 2019 Code, visit go.gov.sg/accesscode2019.

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Grow Your Relationship with Your Property Agent in 4 Steps



You've decided to engage a property agent, so what's next? Here are four steps to learning the art of engaging a property agent:

1. *Lay a solid foundation* by ensuring that your agent is registered with the Council for Estate Agencies (CEA). Each registered property agent has a unique CEA registration number, e.g. R123456A. Check CEA's [Public Register](#) to verify if your property agent is registered before engaging him. It is [an offence](#) for any individual to carry out estate agency work without valid registration.
2. *Seed trust* by negotiating your agent's commission before work starts and honour it after the property transaction has been completed. You are free to [negotiate the commission](#) and the terms with the agent before he starts work. There is no maximum nor minimum percentage, nor "standard market rate". CEA does not fix or provide any guidelines on commission amounts. Check if GST is included in the commission; only [GST-registered](#) property agencies are allowed to charge and collect GST. After the transaction has been completed, you should pay the commission to the property agency, not to the agent.
3. *Nurture good habits* by ensuring that your agent only represents you in the transaction, not both you and the other party in the same transaction. He or she should also conduct the necessary checks for your transaction. CEA has created some [checklists](#) to guide you and your agent in this process.
4. Finally, *cultivate responsibility* by signing two important documents before your agent starts work:
 - i. CEA's [prescribed estate agency agreement](#) is a binding contract to protect the interests of both you and the estate agency. Details include the agency's duties, the agreed commission rate, and declaration by the agent of any conflict of interest. There are [different types of agreements](#) and

you can choose the one that works best for you for the sale, purchase, or lease of residential properties in Singapore.

- ii. The Customer's Particulars Form is a compulsory measure agents must take to prevent money laundering and counterterrorism financing in Singapore. Your agent will provide you with the form, which you must fill in, sign, and hand back to your agent.

Now that you have learned the art of engaging a property agent, share our website at www.cea.gov.sg/4steps with your family and friends, so that they can be happier consumers too!

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Heartland Play!

Playgrounds are well-loved hangout spots in the Housing & Development Board (HDB) heartlands and are where many fond childhood memories were made.

HDB's new-generation thematic playgrounds are designed to inspire creative play and to highlight the history of the towns they are in. For example, in Keat Hong, where army camps used to be, children can "drive" tanks around "watch towers" at military-themed playgrounds.

Other new-generation thematic playgrounds include the "Adventure Playground" at Canberra estate. HDB collaborated with residents to conceptualise, design, and build this kelong-themed playground from scratch.

About 1,800 residents participated in design workshops and roadshows led by HDB to come up with this dream playground, which took a year and a half to complete!

Remembering old-school playgrounds

Some of the most iconic playgrounds built from the mid-1970s to the 1980s were also inspired by local culture and heritage. Think animals, fruits, vegetables, and everyone's favourite mythical creature, the dragon! These old-school HDB playgrounds included simple play components like slides and see-saws.

To pay homage to these endearing HDB playgrounds, HDB has now designed limited edition playground-themed collectibles.



The complete MyNiceHome Starter Kit.

Stand a chance to get hold of these collectibles by taking part in the [MyNiceHome](#) giveaway! Here's how:

1. Take a selfie at the MyNiceHome Gallery

The MyNiceHome Gallery at HDB Hub features tastefully decorated HDB show flats for a stylish dose of design inspiration. Pose for a photo at the selfie corner, upload it on Instagram before the end of October, and hashtag "mynicehome". Here are the full address and opening hours of the gallery:

Address:

Biz Four, 3rd storey, 470 Lorong 6 Toa Payoh
Singapore 310470

Opening Hours:

Monday to Saturday: 8.30 am – 5.00 pm
Sunday and Public Holiday: Closed

2. Participate in a MyNiceHome Home Tour



Instagram photo corner at My Nice Home Gallery.



Home tours on the MyNiceHome website.

Have an insta-worthy home? MyNiceHome readers can submit photos of their home [here](#) and receive some playground-themed goodies if their home is picked for

the website!

If you don't already know, the [MyNiceHome website](#) is a place for you to find everything related to HDB living. From useful tips on buying and selling a flat to decor inspiration, we have it all!

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Love Our 'Hood Youth Challenge: Youths Co-create Ideas to Improve Our Living Environment

Back again this year, the Municipal Services Office (MSO) organised the "Love Our 'Hood Youth Challenge" on 27 July. Supported by the National Parks Board (NParks), Land Transport Authority (LTA), National Environment Agency (NEA) and Singapore Kindness Movement (SKM), the challenge invited youths to put forward creative ideas to improve their living environment.

Winning teams stood a chance to receive up to \$10,000 to bring their ideas to life.

The challenge attracted 74 sign ups, from youths in schools such as the Singapore University of Technology and Design, Republic Polytechnic, ITE College West, and Metta School, as well as a few teams of young working adults. Together, they brainstormed and came up with ideas to tackle congregation noise, responsible dog ownership, cleanliness, and the responsible use of personal mobility devices.



Sharing and discussion by teams.

Two winning teams from last year's challenge returned to share their experience in implementing their projects in their communities. Resource persons from the supporting partners also provided plenty of insights and context about the various municipal topics.

After an intensive pitching session where teams were judged on the impact, feasibility, sustainability and innovation of their ideas, five teams successfully clinched the “Top Idea” award and one team the “Special Mention Idea” award.



Teams rehearsing and pitching their ideas to the judges.

The winning ideas included:

- Setting up a “vending machine” that dispenses bags to make it convenient for owners to pick up after their dogs
- Developing a detector/indicator to measure volume levels and display messages to nudge the community to keep noise down
- Using creative messages and visuals to encourage the binning of cigarette butts
- Using beacon technology to encourage the responsible use of personal mobility devices

Follow our [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages to keep a lookout for these projects when they are put into action!



Thank you to all participants and supporting partners!

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For the Love of Animals and Plants

July saw the launch of two avenues to greatly benefit animals and plants. One improves the health and welfare of our community animals, and the other strengthens conservation efforts for plant biodiversity.

Giving better care to community animals

On 6 July 2019, Minister for Social and Family Development and Second Minister for National Development Mr Desmond Lee officiated at the opening of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA)'s upgraded Community Animal Clinic.

SPCA is one of the animal welfare groups (AWGs) that the Animal & Veterinary Service (AVS), a cluster of NParks, works closely with. SPCA's clinic has provided prompt medical care and rehabilitation for many community animals, who are often found in poor health.

Now equipped with more advanced diagnostic capabilities, the upgraded clinic will be able to provide more advanced treatment for injured or sick community animals. It will also play a bigger role in supporting the [Trap-Neuter-Release-Manage](#) (TNRM) programme for stray dogs.



Minister Lee met Flute the cat, who was abandoned and whose hind limbs are paralysed. Flute has been undergoing physiotherapy sessions at the SPCA clinic and has also been fitted with a set of wheels to aid his mobility.

Launched in November 2018, the five-year TNRM programme for stray dogs is a collaboration between NParks, AWGs, the Singapore Veterinary Association, and the community. This nationwide programme is a humane, science-based approach to managing Singapore's stray dog population.

Under the programme, NParks provides funding support to the AWGs conducting pre- and post-surgical boarding, sterilisation, vaccination and microchipping for dogs. Several AVS veterinarians also help to carry out basic body examinations, sterilisation procedures, and post-operative care at SPCA's clinic.

With the upgraded clinic, SPCA can now handle about 20 per cent more TNRM sterilisation surgeries, and it expects to further increase this capacity by end-2019. At the same time, NParks is working with the partner AWGs and various stakeholders on other TNRM efforts, including outreach initiatives.

Saving seeds for the present and future

On 13 July 2019, NParks opened Singapore's first seed bank at the Singapore Botanic Gardens. Located in the conserved House 4 at Cluny Road, the Seed Bank can store the seeds of up to 25,000 plant species, approximately half the total number of plant species in the region and more than double the current 10,000 plant species in the Singapore Botanic Gardens' living collection.

This will help safeguard the germplasm of threatened plant species in Southeast Asia, and will support vital research into optimising storage methods for these seeds.



The Singapore Botanic Gardens Seed Bank is located in the conserved House 4 at Cluny Road.

Collecting seeds for storage helps build a valuable resource for habitat restoration and species conservation. The Seed Bank will strengthen the Gardens' capacity to insure native plant populations against threats such as disease, climate change, and natural and man-made disasters.

Besides collecting seeds from Singapore's forests, nature areas, and parks, the Gardens will also collaborate with other botanic gardens and research institutions on seed exchanges.

Research is crucial to continually optimise seed storage procedures and to understand the physiology of different seeds.



At the Seed Cleaning Laboratory in the Seed Bank, seeds are cleaned to remove excess plant bulk and minimise the risk of rot.

The Seed Bank strengthens the Gardens' universal value as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, providing opportunities for visitors to learn about seeds and the science of seed storage through its interpretive gallery and outdoor garden. The interpretive gallery features informative and interactive displays, such as seed specimens and glass windows with explanatory captions providing a glimpse into the various laboratories and rooms. Meanwhile, the outdoor garden with seed sculptures behind the Seed Bank offers a more intimate experience for visitors to learn about seed dispersal.



*NParks CEO Mr Kenneth Er and Minister Lee planted a Double Coconut (*Lodoicea maldivica*) palm in the outdoor garden of the Seed Bank. The Double Coconut has the heaviest seed in the plant kingdom.*

The Gardens' efforts in conservation, research and education would not be possible without support from the community through NParks' registered charity and Institution of Public Character (IPC), the Garden City Fund. This includes a generous donation of \$1 million from the Goh Foundation in memory of Mrs Goh Cheng Liang née Teo Sok Yong. Other donors include HSBC, Goldbell Foundation, Yokogawa Engineering Asia Pte Ltd, Alfa Tech, Kirtida & Bharat Mekani, Britesparx Design Pte Ltd, and Benel Singapore.

In total, more than \$1.17 million has been raised to help initiate the research and education elements at the Seed Bank. NParks aims to raise a further \$5 million over the next 10 years through the Garden City Fund's Give to the Gardens programme for conservation, research, and education efforts at the Seed Bank.

You can contribute to these efforts by donating through the [Give to the Gardens](#) programme. And if you're curious to find out more about seed banking and seed biology, visit the [Singapore Botanic Gardens Seed Bank](#), which opens daily from 9 am to 6 pm except for the last Friday of every month.

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RSVP: Reinventing Spaces into Vibrant Places



Several state-owned spaces are set to be transformed into leisure options for the public to enjoy, under a new programme launched by the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) and the Singapore Land Authority (SLA).

Under the programme – named Reinventing Spaces into Vibrant Places (RSVP) – selected state-owned properties and land in key precincts will be put up for tender. The overall concepts and proposed uses for the sites should complement other offerings in their precincts, and should include programming to provide even more opportunities for the community to interact.

Tenderers will be assessed on how well their proposals reinforce and complement the unique charm and character of the area, as well as how they enhance visitor experience through suitable and innovative programming. To ensure a more holistic assessment of the bids, 50 percent of the overall score has been allocated for the bid price, while the other half will go to quality of concept.

In addition to putting vacant spaces to interim use, RSVP gives business owners, architects and designers the opportunity to team up to test creative business concepts.

“We hope that the RSVP programme will help inject more vitality and delight into our precincts, turning vacant spaces into places that encourage people to venture, connect and interact,” said Chou Mei, Group Director of Conservation & Urban Design, URA.

“A city is more than the sum of its buildings and infrastructure; it is a place where people live, work, and hang out with friends and family. We hope the programme will help to create endearing and lovable places that everyone will enjoy.”

The first RSVP site, 45 Sultan Gate, was put up for tender in May 2019 in tandem with the launch of the programme. The development of a new point of interest in the heart of the Kampong Glam Historic District will encourage more people to visit the area and enhance the precinct’s identity as a melting pot of heritage and culture.

More sites will be identified and progressively rolled out for concept tender under RSVP. Such sites could range from shophouse units and standalone buildings to utility infrastructure and public spaces.

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