**RE-IMAGINING CITIES**

**URA Showcase Reflects Increasingly Globalised, Rapidly Changing Cityscape**

**Singapore, September 12, 2014** – A showcase of bold new urban concepts for the future, featuring research, planning and design projects for Singapore and the region was launched today at the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) Centre Atrium.

Titled ‘RE:IMAGINING CITIES – Urban Design Research in Singapore’, the exhibition brings together for the first time, two internationally renowned urban design institutions: Future Cities Laboratory (FCL), a leading research programme of the Singapore-ETH Centre (SEC) and the City Form Lab from the Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD), partnered with the School of Architecture & Planning at MIT.

The exhibition presents FCL’s plans for the rejuvenation of some of Singapore’s most historic districts. It reveals urban design proposals for Farrer Park, Lavender and Ophir-Rochor, as well as its strategies to seamlessly connect these diverse, vibrant and culturally rich inner city neighbourhoods. One of the highlights is the ‘Backlanes Project’, where historic alleys are transformed into fascinating new spaces for alfresco dining and entertainment (please see Annex A for details).

The exhibit also showcases SUTD City Form Lab’s latest research methods in data collection, measurement and analysis that support complex urban design and policy solutions in Singapore and overseas. Such research equips designers and planners with tools to better understand the effects of design decisions on the future use of the built environment. Examples of applying these methods include Bugis and the Rail Corridor in downtown, Punggol in the northeast of Singapore and Surabaya in Indonesia.

Assistant professor Andres Sevtsuk, Director of City Form Lab said: “Planners and designers of urban environments have at their disposals new strategies, analysis methods and tools that allow us to design for increasingly complex and uncertain futures. Through this exhibit, we hope to demonstrate how some of these approaches are applied to the planning of Singapore and other cities in the region and demonstrate the complementary relationship between research and design.”

“FCL’s work is designed to enhance the qualitative development of high density living in an increasingly globalised and rapidly changing Singapore,” said Professor Kees Christiaanse, who is leading the Rochor+ project by FCL.

“By reimagining the past – and in an area that not only has great historical significance, but is one of the last greater intact districts, we have found an ideal platform for urban planning, historical analysis, building technology and simulation-based research, all within an area of 2.2km by 1.6km,” he added.

Open till October 8, admission to the exhibition is free. For more information, please visit: [http://www.futurecities.ethz.ch/event/re-imaging-singapore-urban-design-research](http://www.futurecities.ethz.ch/event/re-imaging-singapore-urban-design-research) and [http://cityform.mit.edu/projects/urban-design-research-in-singapore](http://cityform.mit.edu/projects/urban-design-research-in-singapore)
About the Future Cities Laboratory by SEC

The Singapore-ETH Centre for Global Environmental Sustainability (SEC) in Singapore was established as a collaboration between ETH Zurich and the National Research Foundation (NRF) and is part of the CREATE Campus. The SEC frames a number of research programmes, the first of which is the Future Cities Laboratory (FCL).

Strongly supported by the ETH Zurich Departments of Architecture (DArch) and Engineering (DBaug), FCL focuses on transdisciplinary research on urban sustainability, encompassing material science, advanced fabrication, architecture, engineering, landscape ecology, computer science, transportation planning, and urban and territorial design. FCL aims to develop integrated solutions for the sustainable development of future cities, districts and regions.

About SUTD City Form Lab

The Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD) is Singapore’s fourth publicly-funded university, and one of the first universities in the world to incorporate the art and science of design and technology into a multi-disciplinary curriculum. Established in collaboration with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), SUTD seeks to nurture technically-grounded leaders and innovators in engineering product development, engineering systems and design, information systems technology and design, and architecture and sustainable design, to serve societal needs.

The City Form Lab at SUTD, founded in collaboration with the School of Architecture & Planning at MIT, focuses on urban design, planning and architectural research. By bringing together multi-disciplinary urban research expertise and excellence in design, CFL develops context sensitive and timely insight about the role of urban form in affecting the quality of life in 21st century cities.

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Annex A

The SUTD City Form Lab exhibit describes four typical phases of urban design research: data collection, measurement, analysis and design. Though separated for clarity here, these four phases of research are nonlinear in reality; they intertwine and inform each other.

Data collection
Examples include both paper-based and digitised field surveys of built environments in Singapore and in Indonesia, as well as participatory workshops that seek to identify urban issues and potential solutions with inter-disciplinary participants from city governments.

Measurement
This part of the exhibit demonstrates novel software tools developed at the City Form Lab for quantifying the characteristics of built environments at both a neighborhood and a metropolitan scale.

Analysis
The projects show how analytics can inform important design and policy decisions in cities – how Singapore’s Rail Corridor can be reconnected with the rest of Singapore, what we can learn from Bugis about achieving diversity in downtown neighborhoods, and how parcel and block dimensions in urban grids can be optimized to maximize pedestrian accessibility.

Design
The design section illustrates how research results in the lab’s work have led to urban design solutions for a transit oriented corridor in downtown Surabaya, Indonesia, integrating new development with traditional kampung morphology.
Biographies

Andres Sevtsuk, Director, City Form Lab, SUTD
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Andres is an Assistant Professor of Architecture and Planning at the Singapore University of technology and Design. He leads the City Form Lab at SUTD, which investigates the urban built environment and its influence on the social, economic and environmental performance of cities using state of the art spatial analysis tools. Andres joined SUTD in 2011 from MIT, where he spent the previous seven years, initially as a student and then as a lecturer in Architecture and Urban Studies & Planning. He holds an SMArchS in architecture and urbanism, and a PhD in urban studies and planning from MIT and completed his earlier studies at L'École d'Architecture de la Ville & des Territoires in France. Andres has worked as an architect, urban designer, consultant and researcher in Europe, United States and now in Singapore. He has developed ground-breaking methods for urban analysis and modeling, published a number of articles and book chapters on urban design, spatial analysis and urban technologies, and presented his work at various international events, including TEDx and the Venice Architecture Biennale.

Raul Kalvo, Researcher, City Form Lab, SUTD (raul_kalvo@sutd.edu.sg)

Raul is an architect, programmer, artist and humanist. Prior to joining the City Form Lab, he worked with 3+1 Architects in Tallinn and taught descriptive geometry and computation design at the Estonian Academy of Arts. At the City Form Lab, Raul has been the project manager for the SUTD Library Pavilion, the Archifest Pavilion, and the World Cities Summit exhibition.
Onur Ekmekci, Researcher, City Form Lab, SUTD (onur_ekmekci@sutd.edu.sg)

Onur is a researcher at the City Form Lab at the Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD). Born in Istanbul, Onur studied architecture at the City University of New York and attended various academic programs, including Bauhaus Kolleg’s post-graduate level urban studies program “Cities of Tomorrow” (researching mainly on Singapore’s modernist urban development), as well as Berlage Institute (Netherlands), and TFH Berlin (Germany). He received his master degree in Sustainable Urban Planning and Design from KTH-the Royal Institute of Technology (Sweden). Prior to joining the City Form Lab, he worked at Tsao & McKown and Curtis+Ginsberg Architects in New York City, working on residential and commercial projects in New York City and Taipei. He has contributed to journals including ArchDaily, MONU, eOculus and Studio Magazine among others. At the City Form Lab, Onur has led documentation surveys of dense urban neighborhoods in Bugis and Punggol and explored novel analytic techniques for capturing their critical quality indicators. He also worked on the production of a concept plan for the districts surrounding the future MRT line in downtown Surabaya, Indonesia, in collaboration with the World Bank and the City of Surabaya.
Annex B

Rocher+ project by the Future Cities Laboratory

Rocher+ is the collective title for a multidisciplinary research platform which brings together researchers with expertise in Urban Planning, Transport Planning, Historical Analysis, Building Technology and Simulation based research at the Future Cities Laboratory (FCL) of the Singapore-ETH Centre (SEC) as well as the ETHZ Design Research Studio.

The 2.2 km by 1.6km area is one of the last historically intact districts in Singapore and therefore an ideal case for a variety of studies:

The Lavender area

The site of some of the oldest Housing Development Board (HDB) apartments in inner city Singapore, the Lavender MRT neighbourhood lends itself to a strategy for densification in view of the rapidly growing creative scene and younger Singaporeans drawn to the excellent location next to Kampong Glam. Rather than demolish the ageing buildings, a proposal to increase accessibility and connectivity in the neighbourhood provides a strong sense of cohesiveness to the entire area.

The Ophir-Rochor area

The planned CBD extension to the Ophir-Rochor area – overlaying the plans for the north-south expressway, offers rich spatial potential to connect the existing diverse, vibrant and culturally rich neighbourhoods that surround the site. A proposal of both physical and visual linkages highlights the importance of connectivity to the area – with Kampong Glam a few minutes walk to the northeast, Little India to the northwest and the Waterloo pedestrian area extending south to the Arts District.

The Farrer Park area

The area around the Farrer Park MRT station plays host to two distinct user groups. The number of high-end medical tourists is increasing following the opening of an integrated hospital and hotel complex, complemented by the growing availability of short-term rental properties to accommodate friends and family. In parallel, the neighbourhood experiences a weekly influx of foreign workers, creating a semi-permanent ‘community hub’ in the area. Establishing a new framework of open spaces, that includes a community centre, would help to facilitate the co-existence of the two diverse groups.

The Backlanes of Little India

A strategy for the consolidation of cumbersome and unsightly air conditioning units into one single outlet would free up precious space in the historic shophouse back lanes, providing viable public spaces – for food and beverage and entertainment outlets. The reimagining of the spaces, derived from studies in energy efficiency, pedestrian movement, historic stock building and urban diversity, showcases a ‘design vision’ for the back lanes between Serangoon Road and Lembu Road in Little India.