

Future Cities Laboratory

FCL to Contribute to Study to Refresh Orchard Road

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FCL will provide insights on thermal comfort and pedestrian experience along Orchard Road in a collaborative project to refresh Singapore's main shopping belt.



The Future Cities Laboratory (FCL) at the Singapore-ETH Centre is part of a multi-disciplinary team appointed by the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) and the Singapore Tourism Board to undertake a thorough six-month study on Orchard Road. The study will contribute to the development blueprint of Singapore's famed shopping precinct for the coming 15 to 20 years, to strengthen its positioning, offerings, and visitor experience.

FCL, as part of a panel of technical advisers, will focus on assessing thermal comfort and pedestrian experience along Orchard Road. The study will bring together the expertise of FCL researchers working on diverse projects: [Cooling Singapore](#), [Cognition, Perception and Behaviour in Urban Environments](#) and [Dense and Green Building Typologies](#).

(FCL) FUTURE CITIES LABORATORY 未来城市实验室

About

[Cooling Singapore](#)

[Cognition, Perception and Behaviour in Urban Environments](#)

[Dense and Green Building Typologies](#)

Media

[Article on Business Times](#)

These researchers will advise the core project consultants on specific design and mitigation strategies to enhance overall pedestrian experience and ambient thermal comfort in the Orchard Road retail precinct. The consortium, led by Singapore-based property economics and planning firm Cistri, includes DP Architects, Arup, DataSpark and Rider Levett Bucknall (RLB).

The study, launched on 11 April 2018, was featured on the Business Times on 12 April 2018. Read the article [here](#).

Multi-dimensional study unveiled for Orchard Road redux

Consortium led by Australia's Cistri to prep Singapore landmark for next 15-20 years

BT EXCLUSIVE

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Singapore

ONCE a magnet for global tourists and regional shoppers, Orchard Road is today losing its draw as stores along the world-famous shopping belt battle disruption from online shopping to overseas shopping.

But help is on the way: the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) and the Singapore Tourism Board last week awarded the tender to Singapore-based Cistri to undertake a thorough study of the issues involved and come up with recommendations to set the tone for Orchard Road's development blueprint for the next 15 to 20 years.

The firm – an international offshoot set up two years ago by Australian urban development research and consultancy Urbis – beat 10 other contenders which included players that have operated here for much longer.

For a start, Cistri is roping in multi-discipline partners to widen the skills and perspectives for its six-month study. The consortium includes DP Architects, Arup, Future Cities Laboratory, DataSpark and Rider Levett Bucknall (RLB).

Cistri's parent itself has over 50 years of experience in offering property economics advice to clients located in and investing in Asia and the Middle East.

Cistri regional director Peter Hyland, who has been in urban planning for over 35 years, said the firm brings to the table very strong knowledge of both local and international retail economics.

"This is a project that requires diverse thinking and international experience," Mr Hyland noted. "One of our qualities is that we are very good in working with multi-disciplinary teams and bringing out the right findings."

Mr Hyland pointed out that DP Architects has played a significant role in shaping Orchard Road's present form, while Arup brings an international perspective on transport infrastructure.

RLB offers global expertise in project cost assessment, while Future Cities Laboratory – set up by ETH Zurich and Singapore's National Research Foundation – has insights into trends and innovations in urban sustainability.

As for DataSpark, the mobility intelligence company of Singtel has an unmatched library of mobility insights. This will enable the team to learn how people move through Orchard Road and identify broader behavioural patterns, Mr Hyland added.

The tender award to Cistri sets in motion the business study on Orchard Road as the government seeks to implement an actionable blueprint to strengthen Orchard Road's positioning, offerings and visitor experience.

In an exclusive interview with *The Business Times*, both Mr Hyland and Cistri director Jack Backen did not want to be drawn into making swift observations about Orchard Road, flagging that it is vital to first sift out the noises.

"Our approach is very much to diagnose the problems there first and not jump to the solutions," said Mr Backen, who has 13 years of urban consultancy experience after working as an economist in Australia's public and private sector.

"There are many people talking about what's wrong, what's right, but we need to know which issues are real, which are not real, and which issues should be taken seriously," he added. It is also not about replicating in Singapore everything that works overseas.

"Every shopping mall owner needs to think about the specifics of their market and understand the dimensions of their market – who these people are and why they might come."

Undoubtedly, Singapore's retail market has gone through a rough patch in recent years. But Mr Backen noted that it remains fundamentally sound.

Singapore is still one of the top two, if not three, key markets in the region – including Hong Kong and Shanghai – where retailers from the West would choose to start with in Asia, though there are rising alternatives such as Tokyo, Seoul and Bangkok.

"E-commerce is something people talk about a lot. We think e-commerce needs to be seen in perspective," Mr Backen said, adding that there are other changes in consumers' spending patterns such as shopping overseas.

Cistri regional director Peter Hyland (left) says the project requires diverse thinking and international experience while director Jack Backen says its approach is "to diagnose the problems first and not jump to the solutions".

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Continued on next page



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