

Queenstown to be a health district designed to help seniors stay active

Michelle Ng

Singapore's first and oldest satellite town, Queenstown, will be carved out as a health district in a pilot programme to support residents to lead healthier and more productive lives.

This will be done through more integrated planning and design of the estate and more community-

driven programmes, said National Development Minister Desmond Lee yesterday.

The goal is to encourage "purposeful longevity" through opportunities for seniors to engage in paid work, volunteering activities and lifelong learning, said Mr Lee at the HDB Awards ceremony held at HDB Hub.

One of the ways is to develop "affordable and usable technology that helps residents to take care of

their health better and to age in place gracefully", he said.

Mr Lee noted that there is an increasing need to shift disease management away from acute hospitals to the community.

"This means focusing on preventive and primary care, and taking care of people before they fall so sick that they need to go to the hospital, so that healthcare becomes more about enhancing health, rather than just treating sickness,"

he said, adding that the built environment has a key role to play in this.

To improve residents' access to preventive health services, health screenings and talks will be brought closer to residential areas and conducted within the community, he said.

Partners such as Lions Befrienders Service Association, the Agency for Integrated Care and Queenstown Grassroots Organisa-

tions will also help residents to navigate the healthcare system.

To encourage more residents to lead active lifestyles, greater emphasis will be placed on planning and designing the built environment.

An example is a jogging loop at the carpark rooftop garden at Queen's Arc, a Build-To-Order (BTO) project in Queenstown launched in August.

There will also be urban farming spaces, along with a pedestrian

mall with wellness-themed amenities and flexible spaces that can be used to hold community programmes.

A wellness trail and heritage walk are also incorporated into the BTO project to make it convenient for residents to exercise.

The BTO project drew significant interest from home seekers,

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More fitness stations coming up

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with more than seven applicants vying for each of the 534 four-room units, despite a waiting time of more than five years.

Prices for a four-room flat start from \$540,000.

Queenstown was picked as the pilot site for the health district as its demographics closely mirror Singapore's projected national demographics by the year 2030.

The mature town, which was developed in the 1950s, currently has one of the oldest populations in Singapore, with almost one out of every four residents aged 65 and above.

It is one of Singapore's most sought-after housing estates, with the third-highest number of million-dollar Housing Board resale flat transactions after the central area and Bishan.

The health district at Queenstown is bounded by Tanglin Road and Alexandra Road to the east and stretches to Clementi Road to the west. It includes the National University of Singapore,



An artist's impression of the heritage walk at Queen's Arc, a Build-To-Order project in Queenstown. The heritage walk and a wellness trail, incorporated into the project, will make it convenient for residents to exercise. PHOTO: HOUSING BOARD

National University Hospital, Queenstown Polyclinic and Alexandra Hospital.

Existing neighbourhoods within the district will also be enhanced through HDB's neighbourhood renewal programme, such as by including resting areas along covered linkways and having more fitness stations.

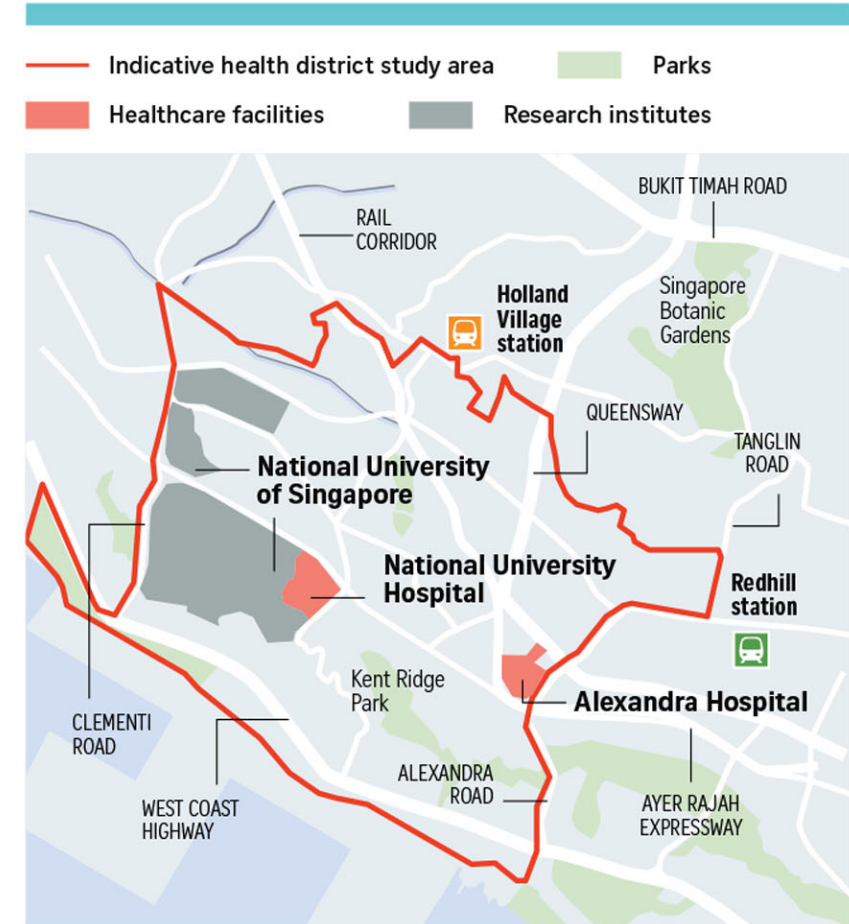
Future housing estates in Ulu

Pandan will have a balance of greenery and water bodies to enhance local biodiversity. These will be connected to the Green Corridor and the wider park connector network to encourage more recreational activities, said HDB.

The HDB, National University Health System and National University of Singapore, along with stakeholders from the public,

private and people sectors, are collaborating on the health district pilot programme.

It will be overseen by Minister of State for National Development and Communications and Information Tan Kiat How, together with Parliamentary Secretary for Health and Communications and Information Rahayu Mahzam and Parliamentary Secretary for



Sources: HDB, NUHS, NUS STRAITS TIMES GRAPHICS

Culture, Community and Youth and Social and Family Development Eric Chua.

Mr Lee said: "Public housing in Singapore goes far beyond putting roofs over people's heads. It touches almost every aspect of our lives and our society. It enables Singaporeans of different backgrounds to share common experiences and helps us to build a more

cohesive society.

"But as much as we have achieved, we must keep pressing on to continually improve our HDB flats and our housing policies in support of the progress of our people and our society, so that Singapore remains strong and united for many generations to come."

ngmich@sph.com.sg