

# Shibuya-style pedestrian crossing on trial in Orchard from Dec 16

Lim Min Zhang

Orchard Road will be doing a month-long trial of a scramble pedestrian crossing a la Tokyo's famous junction in the Shibuya district starting on Dec 16, in a bid to make the precinct more pedestrian-friendly.

Shoppers will be able to cross the Cairnhill Road-Orchard Road intersection diagonally, such as from H&M to Robinsons The Heeren directly, for a period of 30 seconds in each instance.

The trial will take place on weekends and public holidays from Dec 16 until Jan 28.

Orchard Road Business Association (Orba) chairman Mark Shaw made the announcement at a press conference at Ngee Ann City Civic Plaza yesterday.

Calling it a "proof of concept", Mr Shaw said the purpose of the scramble crossing is to improve pedestrian connectivity in Orchard Road.

"Trialling this during the year-end festive period is quite timely. It helps us to provide pedestrians with better access to the enhanced Christmas activities within the precinct," he said.

It will be the second time that such a scramble walk will be trialled in the shopping district. A previous six-month trial took place at the Bideford Road-Orchard Road junction in December 2006.

The Orba initiative, supported by the Singapore Tourism Board (STB), Urban Redevelopment Authority and Land Transport Authority, might be expanded if the trial proves successful, added Mr Shaw.

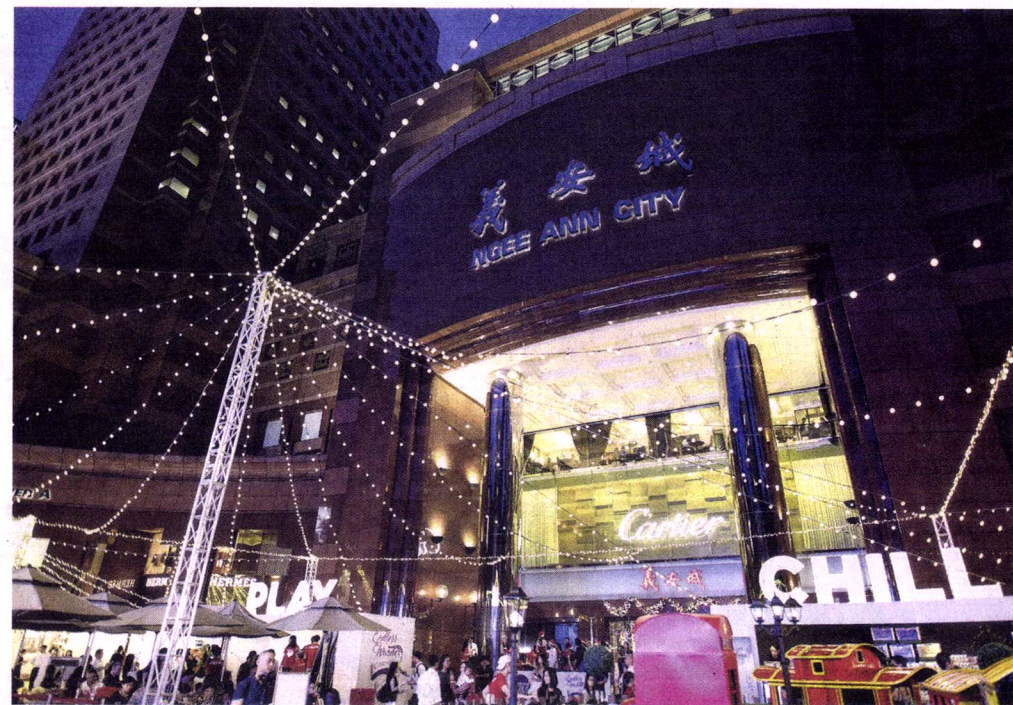
Ms Esther Ho, deputy director of

Nanyang Polytechnic's School of Business Management, said that the trial is a good first step to enhance the shopping experience in Orchard Road.

"From the shoppers' perspective, when you ease the traffic congestion by making it easier to cross, it might provide a more relaxed environment for them to lengthen their time in Orchard Road," she said.

In April, a multi-way cross junction was one of the ideas that Minister for Trade and Industry (Industry) S. Iswaran said was being explored to rejuvenate the precinct, which has been hit by a weak retail landscape and has faced increasing competition from e-commerce in recent years.

On other ideas raised, STB said: "We are exploring some of these ideas as part of longer-term plans for rejuvenating Orchard Road. More de-



The Christmas Village, launched yesterday at Ngee Ann City Civic Plaza, features 25 brands and will be on for a month from today.

PHOTO: ORBA

tails will be shared when ready.

"Meanwhile, short-term initiatives have been and will continue to be rolled out to enhance the precinct's street-level vibrancy, such as the Star Wars activation in Orchard Road in September."

Yesterday's press conference was followed by the launch of the first Christmas Village, organised by Orba and located at Ngee Ann City Civic Plaza, where a pyrotechnic display was held.

The Christmas Village features

more than 25 brands and will be on for a month, starting today.

It is co-organised by Sphere Exhibits, a subsidiary of Singapore Press Holdings.

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