

Shibuya-style crossing at Orchard Road

Diagonal intersection for pedestrians to be trialled in bid to rejuvenate shopping district

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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 from 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 at 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.

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

He said the purpose of the scramble walk was to improve pedestrian connectivity along 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 at the shopping district.

A six-month trial took place at



The Shibuya shopping district in Tokyo, Japan.
PHOTO: REUTERS

the Bideford Road-Orchard Road junction in December 2006.

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

Ms Esther Ho, deputy director at Nanyang Polytechnic's School of Business Management, said the trial is a good first step to enhance Orchard Road's shopping experience.

"From a shopper's 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 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 faces increasing competition from e-commerce in recent years.

STB said: "We are exploring some of these ideas as part of longer-term plans for rejuvenating Orchard Road.

"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.

The Christmas Village features more than 25 brands and will last for a month, starting today.

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

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