

Jurong Lake District, Singapore

Insights on the ULI Advisory Services Process



During January 2018, a panel of land use experts convened in Singapore to explore development strategies for the upcoming Jurong Lake District. Partnering with the Centre for Liveable Cities (CLC), the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA), and the Ministry of National Development (MND), the ten-member Urban Land Institute (ULI) Advisory Services Panel spent a week in the island nation learning about the proposed master plan for the Jurong Lake District and recommended future growth strategies to make the district more attractive, vibrant, and liveable for residents, travellers, and businesses.

The Advisory Services Process

The ULI Advisory Services programme involves a unique process that gathers industry leaders and experts across several disciplines – including master development, master planning, investment, project finance, public service in project delivery, planning, and politics – to provide independent strategic recommendations for the sponsor or partner. Finding value from this approach, the Singapore government partnered with the ULI Advisory Services programme to examine the Jurong Lake District master plan. The Jurong Lake District ULI Panel consisted of members from three continents and five countries. Over five days, the panellists were briefed by different agencies and led on site tours, conducted in-depth interviews with stakeholders, and deliberated over recommendations for the project.

Preparations for an Advisory Services panel often take two to three months. Over those months, the ULI team works with the panel sponsor or partner to determine the project scope, assemble the panel of experts, and complete on-site logistics for the week. In October 2017, the Jurong Lake District Panel started with a panel analysis session at the ULI Fall Meeting in Los Angeles. During the two-hour session, the CLC and the URA



worked with senior members of ULI's global leadership on initial reactions to the proposed project and refined the preliminary project scope. During the months leading up to January 2018, ULI worked with the CLC and the URA to prepare in-depth project briefing materials, and formed the Panel.

The five-day Panel begins on Sunday with panellists arriving at the project location. Typically, Sunday is an opportunity for the Panel to settle in, organise amongst themselves, and meet with the sponsor or partner for formal introductions in the evening over dinner. Due to the packed schedule of presentations and site tours, the Jurong Lake District panellists, however, were immediately briefed upon arrival by the CLC on the urban planning system of Singapore. This was followed by an informative walking tour of the central business district. The Panel learned about key features and experiences from planning Tanjong Pagar, Raffles Place, and Marina Bay that could help inform the future development of the Jurong Lake District.

On the first official day of the Jurong Lake District Panel, the URA, together with the Land Transport Authority and JTC Corporation, briefed panellists on the challenges and opportunities presented in the district, as well as led them on a study tour to two mixed-use developments, JEM and Westgate, and a second-level pedestrian network known as the J-Walk. A key component of the project briefing days, the on-site study tour provides the opportunity for panellists to visualise and connect what they were previously briefed on. In addition, the sponsor or partner typically hosts a public reception, and invites stakeholders as well as community members to meet with Panel members on the project. At a public reception at the JTC Summit, the Panel spoke with the over 90 people from the public, private, and community sectors in attendance to gain a greater understanding of the development's context.

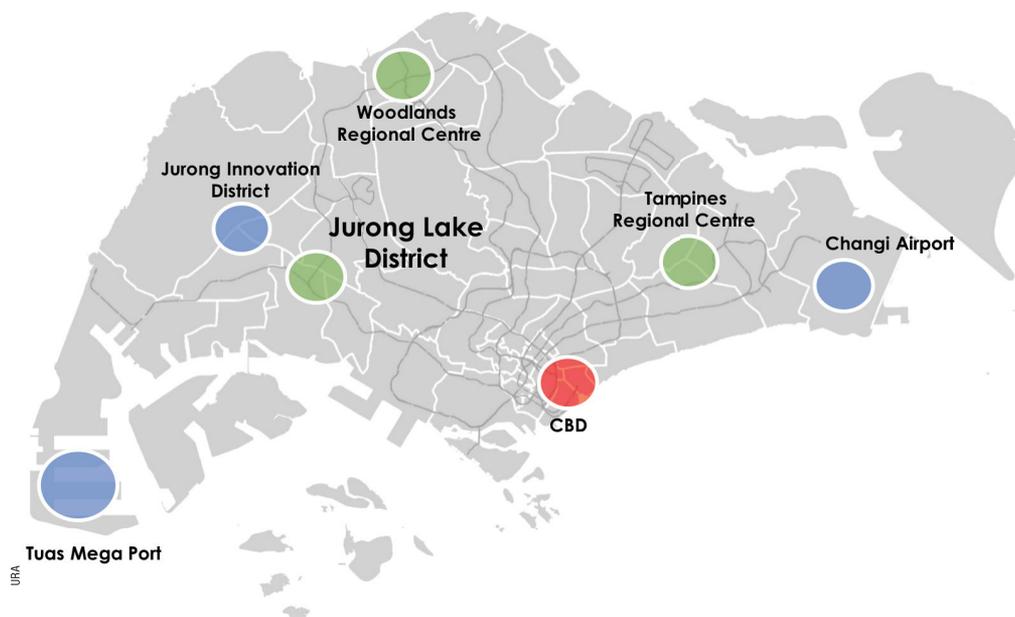
On the second day, the Panel has the opportunity to conduct 60-minute interviews with different stakeholders in a private setting. Cited as the linchpin of the Advisory Services process, the interviews provide an opportunity for candid, informative conversations on the issues that emerged, as well as for gathering and connecting different stakeholders. The sponsor or partner is removed from this process to promote candid feedback. The Jurong Lake District Panel interviewed more than 60 public and private stakeholders of the district, who provided important information for the Panel's recommendations.

The third to fifth days are workdays for the Panel to consolidate the information gathered, distill it, and produce recommendations in both written and presentation form. The Panel consolidated the information gathered and deliberated on the strategic recommendations that would allow the Jurong Lake District to achieve its full potential. The Panel presented its observations and recommendations to the CLC, the URA, the MND, and other government agencies on Friday before departing.

After the on-site process is completed, the ULI team works with the Panel to produce a written report with the recommendations in greater detail for the sponsor or partner. The following is an executive summary of the scope of the Jurong Lake District Panel.



A map of Singapore highlighting the CBD, major growth nodes, and key developments surrounding the Jurong Lake District.



Project Context and Scope

Home to 5.7 million people, Singapore is a 720-square-kilometre island city-state that has experienced dynamic economic growth over the past five decades. Jurong was developed in 1961 as the nation's first industrial town. To accommodate the country's rapid development, the URA proposed a decentralisation strategy in the 1991 Concept Plan to spread economic opportunities beyond the city centre and across the island, bringing jobs closer to homes. Located on the west side of Singapore, the 360-hectare Jurong Lake District was conceptualised in 2008 as part of a revision to the previous Jurong Regional Centre master plan.

The ULI Panel's assignment was to provide strategies on the Jurong Lake District's position in relation to the central business district, as well as the approach in carrying out the development and implementation of selected sites within the district. In addition, the Panel was asked to provide recommendations addressing two main issues:

- How to structure a land sale or partnership with a master developer for a strategic parcel of land in the Jurong Lake District that will take into consideration the planning objectives, changing needs, financial risks, and long gestation period of the project.
- How to make the Jurong Lake District, planned as Singapore's Western Business District, attractive to investors, tenants, residents, and visitors, taking into consideration upcoming developments nearby such as Tuas Mega Port and Jurong Innovation District, as well as enhanced connectivity due to new rail transport infrastructure.

The Panel recognised the high degree of ambition, opportunity, and challenge associated with the Jurong Lake District master plan. Based on the informative week of collaboration, the Panel recommended strategies for the Jurong Lake District area to the CLC, the URA, and the MND for consideration.

In a new age of dramatic political changes and economic disruption, the ULI Advisory Services programme provides a unique opportunity to gather some of the real estate and land use industry's brightest leaders to address complex urban issues. In Singapore, the Panel provided recommendations for the Jurong Lake District in the hope of maximising the opportunities and goals for the area. The Panel members fully engaged with this process and each will retain a lasting interest in the progress of this region of Singapore. The Panel wishes the CLC, the URA, and the MND every success in the future with this important endeavour.

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About ULI

The Urban Land Institute (ULI) is a nonprofit research and education organisation supported by its members. Founded in 1936, ULI now has more than 40,000 members worldwide, representing the entire spectrum of land use and real estate development disciplines working in private enterprise and public service. A multi-disciplinary real estate forum, ULI facilitates an open exchange of ideas, information, and experience among industry leaders and policy makers dedicated to creating better places. For more information, please visit us at <https://uli.org>.