

**Sustainable Residential Town Development in Different Contexts:
Good Practices from Ho Chi Minh City and Singapore**

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Abstract:

Public space in residential towns plays a vital role in community bonding and revitalization, social desegregation as well as active living. They come in two typical forms: a place (dominant) or a street. In the Asian context, the street has a historical tradition of rich human activities with lively street life that is highly adaptable to change, yet gradually lost in contemporary housing development. This paper aims to investigate significant well-designed street spaces in residential towns and how they help to adapt to new urban lifestyle. It focuses on two emerging new residential towns within two Asian metropolises, i.e. Phu My Hung in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) and Punggol Eco-town in Singapore - officially recognized as model urban areas in Vietnam and Singapore respectively. The paper first starts with general field observations of different street spaces in HCMC and Singapore to provide local contexts and their big pictures, in which HCMC appears to be a bustling city with diverse messy-yet-culture-rich street life while Singapore is shown as a vastly cleared up, well-organized city with very limited street activities. Specifically, the focus study on the selected new residential towns seeks to understand and compare the two residential towns in order to draw scalable architectural and urban design lessons. Using qualitative methods, it finds out that both of the residential towns have been successfully designed to become large-scale, green, mix-used, compact, high-rise and high-density waterfront developments. They both have been primarily developed by a single developer, and aim to provide harmonious public spaces, convenient modern living and pedestrian-friendly environment. However, they also feature innovative design solutions differently. Phu My Hung has thrived to become a 'glocalized' (globalized+localized) township catered for local upper-middle class and foreign expatriates. It accommodates a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-sectoral changing populace of diverse background and age ranges. Significant and creative design solutions include a provision of diverse public spaces at different building levels, high-level street spaces with lively street life, adaptability to change, high connectivity, public accessibility to modern facilities, etc. Punggol Waterfront Housing is conceived as the first eco-town towards concept living, while providing public housing to cater for a rapidly growing population with changing demography, aspirations and lifestyle needs. It will have seven housing districts with abundant greenery, waterways, promenade and various streetscapes to soften its high density. These new public street strategies include "Green Fingers" extended from the central green space to reach the coastal promenade, heritage trail converted from existing vehicular road, and second-level public realm for greater connectivity. Through comparison, lessons in public space design, particularly street space in residential towns for greater urban street life in future projects are drawn.

Keywords: Public space, street space, sustainable residential towns, Phu My Hung, Punggol Eco-town