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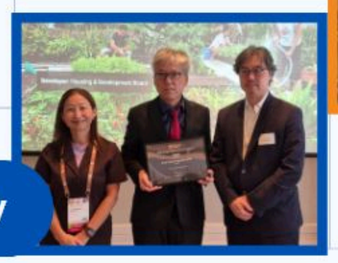

26 May

11 Jun

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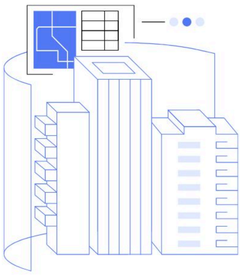
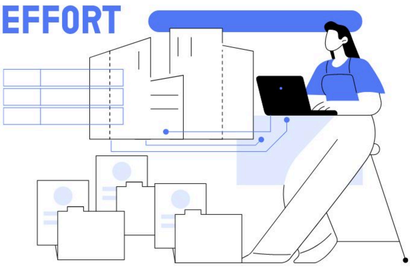
INDOOR MAPPING AT GEO CONNECT ASIA 2026

Big things happened on 31 March 2026 — PLG's Information Technology & Geomatics (ITG) Department made history by hosting the very first Indoor Mapping Forum at the Marina Bay Sands Expo & Convention Centre, and it did not disappoint. The forum served as a key platform for discussing indoor mapping standards, methodologies, and industry best practices to support the future development of essential daily applications.



A WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT EFFORT



Leading a Whole-of-Government (WOG) initiative alongside the Singapore Land Authority (SLA) and JTC Corporation, HDB spearheaded discussions on the initiatives, challenges, and diverse use cases involved in mapping complex indoor environments.

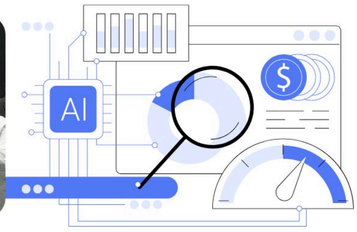
The event attracted over 100 attendees, bringing together representatives from government agencies (including HDB, SLA, HTX, LTA, and BCA), academia, and the private sector. The forum wasn't just another meeting, but a genuine coming-together of minds to foster collaboration and steer conversations around the real challenges and exciting possibilities of mapping complex indoor environments.

The goal? To get everyone on the same page about indoor mapping standards, methodologies, and best practices — because when it comes to mapping the insides of our buildings, there's a lot more to it than you might think.

HIGHLIGHTS

The forum kicked off with an opening address by Director (Information Technology & Geomatics) RS Loh Suat Yen, who set the stage by highlighting just how strategically important indoor mapping is for Singapore's urban future. From there, Geomatics Manager Dayanithy Rajagopalan took attendees on a deep dive into the project — covering technical milestones and the collaborative heavy-lifting that goes into building a robust indoor mapping ecosystem.

The energy really picked up during the panel discussions, moderated by Deputy Director (Geomatics & Land Survey) RS Sherwin Tan and Deputy Director (Geoanalytics & Data Intelligence) Dr Benjamin Lim, where ideas flew freely across government, industry, and academia stakeholders. And the team was especially honoured to have the support of DCEO(E) and GDPL in attendance — underscoring HDB's commitment to geomatics engineering and geospatial excellence.



WHY IT MATTERS

This forum marked a meaningful step towards creating a seamless digital representation of HDB's indoor spaces within our built environment — think better navigation, smarter services, and richer data integration for the everyday applications that Singaporeans rely on. The groundwork laid here will help turn indoor mapping from a technical ambition into a lived reality.

DID YOU KNOW?

The forum was held alongside the 6th edition of Geo Connect Asia (GCA), which ran from 31 March to 1 April 2026. As one of the region's flagship geospatial events, GCA brought together agencies and companies from across ASEAN to exchange knowledge and push the boundaries of geomatics innovation. The event was opened by Senior Parliamentary Secretary for the Ministry of Law Eric Chua — a fitting nod to the significance of geospatial work at the national level.

> **"Geospatial technologies and services are not just tools – they are enablers of better decisions, better policies and ultimately, better lives for everyone. The next frontier for Singapore is to harness geospatial intelligence to understand our world better, and to shape it more intentionally to support ageing, inclusion, as well as community wellbeing."**
>
> Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Ministry of Law Eric Chua

Well done to our PLG colleagues for putting up a fantastic showcase of what HDB and its partners are building — not just above ground, but within it!

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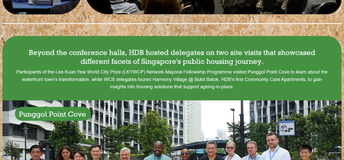
WORLD CITIES SUMMIT 2026
THROUGH THE HDB LENS

From knowledge exchange to on-the-ground learning experiences, HDB's participation at World Cities Summit (WCS) 2026 highlighted Singapore's public housing journey through innovation and strides in urban solutions that drive liveability, sustainability and resilience.

Through a plenary session, site visits and a showcase at the Singapore Pavilion, HDB engaged international delegates, city leaders and urban practitioners in conversations on building inclusive, liveable and future-ready communities.

The 'Singapore Pavilion' showcased Singapore's dynamic approach to building future-ready cities, as well as re-imagining sustainable urban development for all. HDB's booth showcased our journey of housing a nation and building inclusive, liveable and sustainable communities. Through interactive exhibits and displays, visitors learned about HDB's efforts in town planning and design, estate rejuvenation, and the translation of research and innovation into practical solutions that enhance residents' lives.

At the WCS plenary session on 'Revitalising Cities for Inclusive, Sustainable Communities', HDB brought together experts and practitioners to discuss how cities can rejuvenate urban spaces while fostering social inclusion and environmental sustainability. The session attracted about 380 participants and featured presentations, followed by a moderated panel discussion.

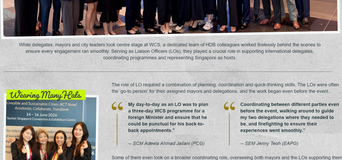


Beyond the conference halls, HDB hosted delegates on two site visits that showcased different facets of Singapore's public housing journey.

Participants of the Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize (LKYWCP) Network Mayoral Fellowship Programme visited Punggol Point Cove to learn about the waterfront town's transformation, while WCS delegates toured Harmony Village @ Bukit Batok, HDB's first Community Care Apartments, to gain insights into housing solutions that support ageing-in-place.

Punggol Point Cove

Harmony Village @ Bukit Batok



Behind the Scenes: REFLECTIONS FROM HDB COLLEAGUES

While delegates, mayors and city leaders took centre stage at WCS, a dedicated team of HDB colleagues worked tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure every engagement ran smoothly. Serving as Liaison Officers (LOs), they played a crucial role in supporting international delegates, coordinating programmes and representing Singapore as hosts.

Wearing Many Hats

SCDO/PM Charlene Ong (CDO), Dave Tan (HOM), SCM Adeela Ahmad Jalani (PCG) and CH Cherylne Jia (PCG)

The role of LO required a combination of planning, coordination and quick-thinking skills. The LOs were often the go-to person for their assigned mayors and delegations, and the work began even before the event.

> "My day-to-day as an LO was to plan a three-day WCS programme for a foreign Minister and ensure that he could be punctual for his back-to-back appointments."
>
> *— SCM Adeela Ahmad Jalani (PCG)*

> "Coordinating between different parties even before the event, walking around to guide my two delegations where they needed to be, and firefighting to ensure their experiences went smoothly."
>
> *— SEM Jenny Teoh (EAPG)*

Some of them even took on a broader coordinating role, overseeing both mayors and the LOs supporting them.

> "As a Desk OIC, I ensured that all mayors under my charge were cared for, their personal itineraries planned out, and the LOs followed through on them. At the same time, we also looked after our LOs and provided support wherever needed."
>
> *— SENIOR Joel Tan (BIG)*

> "As his Accompanying Officer was unable to travel to Singapore, I had to communicate directly with the Minister I was assigned to daily and got to hour firsthand what it is like being a Minister in his country. He was very down-to-earth and polite – this made my experience as an LO very pleasant and memorable."
>
> *— SCM Adeela Ahmad Jalani (PCG)*

Memorable Encounters and Meaningful Connections

SEV Victor Wong, EIO Pierre Tan & SEM Jenny Teoh from EAPG

Beyond the logistics, many LOs found the opportunity to interact with international leaders especially rewarding.

> "A memorable moment would be receiving the Jakarta Governor in the VIP Complex, as this opportunity is likely not common for HDB staff!"
>
> *— SEM Mark Chan (HMS)*

> "My head of delegation from Yokohama was very appreciative that I sent her off speaking some Japanese!"
>
> *— SEM Jenny Teoh (EAPG)*

> "As his Accompanying Officer was unable to travel to Singapore, I had to communicate directly with the Minister I was assigned to daily and got to hour firsthand what it is like being a Minister in his country. He was very down-to-earth and polite – this made my experience as an LO very pleasant and memorable."
>
> *— SCM Adeela Ahmad Jalani (PCG)*

> "One moment that stood out was seeing the bilateral meetings I helped arrange come together smoothly — watching both sides engage meaningfully and leave the room having achieved what they came for. It sounds simple, but knowing that the groundwork laid in advance made that possible is quietly satisfying."
>
> *— SEM Victor Wong (EAPG)*

At the end of the day, there will be great satisfaction in seeing months of preparation come together. A simple gesture can also leave a lasting impression.

Lessons in International Engagement

SEV Victor Wong (EAPG), SENIOR Hajeela Lim (RGI), SENIOR Joel Tan (BIG), SPLH HUNER Chin Meng Lu (HR)

Supporting city leaders from around the world also provided valuable insights into diplomacy, protocol and cultural differences. There was ultimately some balance required in being a good host.

> "I was often fielding numerous detailed questions ranging from event arrangements to protocol considerations. Although some matters were beyond the control of LOs, we tried our best to manage their concerns."
>
> *— SEM Mark Chan (HMS)*

> "There were moments where we had to politely but firmly uphold our rules, and getting that balance right felt like a small but important part of representing Singapore well."
>
> *— SEM Victor Wong (EAPG)*

> "I had the privilege of meeting mayors from different countries and cities, fellow MNO and HDB colleagues, LOs from different public service agencies and external partners. It helped shape my perspective on city-building and brought more purpose and meaning to my day-to-day work in HDB."
>
> *— SENIOR Joel Tan (BIG)*

Challenging but Rewarding

SLAROT Benjamin Liew (CDO), EIO Pierrean Ramnan (HNS), EEICT Kenjack Bandrino (ISS)

Despite the long hours and fast-paced environment, the experience was one that left a lasting impression on our colleagues who echoed similar sentiments.

> "Chaotic but fun!"
>
> *— SEM Jenny Teoh (EAPG)*

> "It was tiring, but without a doubt, definitely worth it."
>
> *— SENIOR Joel Tan (BIG)*

> "The exposure to protocol work and international relations was something quite outside the usual scope for HDB staff, and it offered valuable insights and learning opportunities."
>
> *— SEM Mark Chan (HMS)*

> "WCS 2026 showed me that behind every successful international meeting is a large crew of people making sure everything runs smoothly — and I'm glad I got to play my part with fellow LOs."
>
> *— SEM Victor Wong (EAPG)*

Through their dedication, adaptability and commitment to service, our colleagues played an important role in helping Singapore welcome city leaders from around the world, demonstrating the professionalism and hospitality that underpin the World Cities Summit experience.

Big thank you to all HDB colleagues involved in making this summit a success!

@HOME TEAM
EDIT: Veronica Boulay, SHRM Chanander Ang, SHRM Kim Kai Ren, SHRM Yuki Hu, SHRM Velma Lim, SHRM Alyssa Loh, SHRM Jing Ng

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BRINGING *neighbourhoods* TO LIFE EARLIER

At the Committee of Supply 2026, HDB announced an enhanced approach to bring key amenities and services into new housing estates earlier in the development cycle. The goal is simple: the neighbourhood should already feel like a functioning place to live when residents collect their keys.

Traditionally, amenities such as coffee shops, supermarkets, childcare centres and bus services were introduced progressively as population levels in new Build-To-Order (BTO) estates grew. This ensured operational sustainability, but it also meant that early residents sometimes experienced a gap between moving in and having everyday conveniences within reach.

Planning for essential services will now be integrated earlier, with closer collaboration between agencies and service providers. As a result, selected amenities can be made available earlier.

Closing The *'settling-in gap'*

For many households, the first few weeks in a new estate are defined by small but repeated journeys — to find groceries, locate childcare options or figure out the most efficient commute to work. The enhanced approach aims to shorten this adjustment period.

This can mean:

Essential daily needs becoming available earlier within the estate

Childcare services beginning operations closer to initial occupancy

Transport connectivity being aligned more closely with key collection timelines

Here are four main changes that can help new estates transition more quickly into lived-in communities.

Finding The First Coffee Shop

In every new estate, residents compare notes on where to buy groceries and where the nearest coffee shop is. The search for that first reliable kopitiam is often the unofficial beginning of neighbourhood identity. It becomes the place where morning routines settle, weekend breakfasts begin and familiar faces start to appear.

Under earlier development patterns, this process often unfolded slowly as commercial spaces filled up over time. With amenities arriving earlier in new estates, these everyday anchors can emerge sooner — helping residents establish routines faster and giving the neighbourhood an early sense of rhythm.

The Quiet Infrastructure Of Everyday Life

Some of the most important parts of a neighbourhood are also the least noticed. Sheltered linkways being one of them.

They connect homes to MRT stations, bus stops, shops and community spaces — quietly shaping how people move through their day. More importantly, they remove friction from everyday routines, especially in a climate where sudden rain is part of life. They support thousands of small daily decisions: whether to walk to the MRT, whether to run a quick errand, whether to head out despite the weather.

HDB has enhanced the provision of sheltered linkways in new BTO developments by connecting projects to key amenities such as neighbourhood centres, markets and food centres as well as community clubs. This expands on the previous provision, which focused mainly on bus stop connections.

A more extensive sheltered network allows residents to move more comfortably between homes, amenities and transport nodes, which can make a meaningful difference to daily life. Sheltered linkways do more than keep people dry as their presence reflects a broader principle in estate planning — that connectivity is not an afterthought, but part of how neighbourhoods are designed to work from the start.

Bringing Childcare Closer To Home

For young families moving into a new estate, settling in often revolves around one key question: how quickly daily routines can stabilise. Childcare is central to that equation.

Under the enhanced planning approach, childcare centres in selected new BTO estates will commence operations earlier, reducing the need for families to rely on facilities outside the estate during its early years.

For parents, the impact is practical and immediate — shorter commutes for drop-offs and pick-ups, fewer logistical constraints during work hours and greater certainty in daily planning. For children, it also means earlier opportunities to form friendships within their own neighbourhood, laying the foundation for a shared community experience from a younger age. Over time, these early connections often become the building blocks of a stronger community.

Bus Services From Day One

When residents collect the keys to a new home, one of the first questions they often ask is: 'How do I get to work from here?' Transport connectivity plays a defining role in how quickly a new estate becomes fully usable.

Recognising this, selected new BTO estates will see bus services introduced in-tandem with first key collections. This marks a shift from traditional models where routes were phased in gradually as demand increased.

For residents, the benefit is straightforward: the ability to reach MRT stations, schools and workplaces easily. But the impact goes beyond convenience. Early transport availability helps shape how residents explore their surroundings, access amenities and begin forming daily habits within the estate.

In many ways, buses are what allow a new town to function as a connected whole.

From Housing Projects To *lived-in places*

The enhanced approach to earlier amenity provision reflects a broader shift in how new towns are conceived. Housing is not treated as a standalone delivery programme, but part of a coordinated process of community formation.

By aligning homes, services and transport more closely in time, new estates can move more quickly from construction sites into functioning neighbourhoods. Instead of arriving in just a new flat, residents are arriving in a place where everyday life can begin immediately.

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THE WOW CALENDAR

Apr 2026

15 Apr | Award

Facility of the Year – Senior Living

May 2026

13 May | Award

May Day Awards

19 May | Award

STE Excellence Award

26 May | Award

Urban Land Institute Asia Pacific Award

June 2026

11 Jun | Award

International Sustainability Award

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