

Practicing GX—Learnings from Singapore’s “City in Nature” Vision

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Abstract

A densely populated tropical island city Singapore is recognized as a testing ground for Green Transformation (GX) ideas. As a successor to the “Garden City” aspiration from the 1960’s, the “City in Nature” vision was initiated in 2020, and it has promoted design solutions and construction technologies that maximize eco-system services for the urban dwellers. In other words, vegetation, soil, and water systems have become integral components of the city environment that are carefully curated to perform not only as a device for outdoor comfort but also as an urban infrastructure. What factors motivated Singapore to implement this exploratory vision? How are spatial designs and policies manifested in the cityscapes that we see today? And what are the implications that we can learn from this endeavor? The lecture will address these questions through an in-depth review of public landscape projects carried out in the 2010’s as case studies—Jurong Lake Gardens, Bishan Ang-Mo-Kio Park, etc. On one hand, analysis of these cases unpacks Singapore’s strategic effort to tackle domestic urban issues, such as land scarcity, water resource shortage, and heat-island effect, through applying GX ideas. On the other hand, the concept of place-making focuses on delivering natural experiences for the users, promoting their physical and mental well-being. The learnings from Singapore’s GX initiatives are a gateway for us to think about our own localized motivation, approach, and benefits of embedding GX—a heavily context-sensitive concept into our cities.



Kenya Endo is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Tokyo, studying infrastructure politics and resource development in Southeast Asia. Kenya is trained as a landscape architect with an interest in designs interrelated with infrastructure and urban hydrology. During his 11 years of stay in Singapore, he worked both as a practitioner and an educator to facilitate nature-based solutions within development projects in Southeast Asia.

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