

Podcast Episode

Season 1, Episode 2: Prof Cheong Koon Hean, Chairman, Centre for Liveable Cities

From the Voices of ULI

Date: December 09, 2021

00:00:02 --> 00:00:04: Hi, I'm Scott Dunn and welcome
 00:00:04 --> 00:00:07: to the first season of Voices of Yoly.
 00:00:07 --> 00:00:09: A podcast brought to you by
 00:00:09 --> 00:00:14: the Urban Land Institute Asia Pacific in conversation with
 thought
 00:00:14 --> 00:00:15: leaders
 00:00:15 --> 00:00:18: and industry experts. I'll be asking them to reflect personally
 00:00:18 --> 00:00:20: on their career journeys,
 00:00:20 --> 00:00:24: particularly on the actions that they've made that have had
 00:00:24 --> 00:00:29: significant impact on land use and development today and
 what
 00:00:29 --> 00:00:32: their vision holds for the future of our communities
 00:00:32 --> 00:00:37: that we live in. In today's episode,
 00:00:37 --> 00:00:40: we'll be talking to Doctor Chung Kuning,
 00:00:40 --> 00:00:43: who's the chairman of the center of Livable Cities at
 00:00:43 --> 00:00:47: the Ministry of National Development in Singapore.
 00:00:47 --> 00:00:49: Welcome to voices of your life.
 00:00:49 --> 00:00:51: To start with, I want to hear a little bit
 00:00:51 --> 00:00:54: about your early years about the place you grew up
 00:00:54 --> 00:00:55: in and Singapore.
 00:00:55 --> 00:00:56: What was that community like?
 00:00:57 --> 00:01:00: I Scott. Thank you for having me on the program
 00:01:00 --> 00:01:03: and hello to everyone who's tuning in.
 00:01:03 --> 00:01:06: Well, I grew up in the east in Singapore and
 00:01:06 --> 00:01:07: and I love
 00:01:07 --> 00:01:09: the east side of Singapore.
 00:01:09 --> 00:01:09: It's
 00:01:09 --> 00:01:13: really a your visitors. Singapore is a very eclectic and

00:01:13 --> 00:01:15: all will feel about
00:01:15 --> 00:01:19: the East because it has the see the Nice parts
00:01:19 --> 00:01:24: and the typical piranacon type flavors in the custom jet
00:01:24 --> 00:01:25: areas.
00:01:25 --> 00:01:29: And in fact in the recent time out magazine it
00:01:29 --> 00:01:30: has listed cattle.
00:01:30 --> 00:01:32: I think they also mean to chat,
00:01:32 --> 00:01:36: which is a heritage. Area as one of the coolest
00:01:36 --> 00:01:38: neighborhoods in the world and
00:01:38 --> 00:01:41: cattle now sits at, I think #33 of our 100
00:01:42 --> 00:01:44: places that were listed.
00:01:44 --> 00:01:46: So in a way it's a very nice eclectic feel
00:01:46 --> 00:01:49: and I recall when I was young there used to
00:01:49 --> 00:01:51: be a lot comes around,
00:01:51 --> 00:01:54: you know, and for international audiences are compound
means a
00:01:54 --> 00:01:55: little village.
00:01:55 --> 00:01:59: There were a lot of villages around in the old
00:01:59 --> 00:02:02: days and you had to see and just very near
00:02:02 --> 00:02:03: to to use.
00:02:03 --> 00:02:04: So that was. Really very nice.
00:02:05 --> 00:02:07: Did you spend a lot of time out 'cause the
00:02:07 --> 00:02:08: camp on usually has?
00:02:08 --> 00:02:11: You know, very good social spaces and then also did
00:02:11 --> 00:02:14: you at that time spend much time along the East
00:02:14 --> 00:02:17: Coast are actually on the ocean.
00:02:17 --> 00:02:17: Yeah,
00:02:17 --> 00:02:21: actually there used to be some really nice parts today.
00:02:21 --> 00:02:24: Of course, with the reclamation the seas pushed out,
00:02:24 --> 00:02:27: but previously the seas was actually quite close to the
00:02:27 --> 00:02:30: east side and you can take very nice walks along
00:02:30 --> 00:02:31: the parts.
00:02:31 --> 00:02:33: And I remember this jetty that.
00:02:33 --> 00:02:36: Is that a park you can walk out the jetty
00:02:36 --> 00:02:39: you know and people used to swim there,
00:02:39 --> 00:02:41: so it's it's actually very nice and with some of
00:02:41 --> 00:02:44: the very old bungalows you know there were located just
00:02:45 --> 00:02:45: next to the sea,
00:02:46 --> 00:02:48: right? Actually, there's a few of those still remaining,
00:02:48 --> 00:02:50: but they're a little bit further back from the ocean
00:02:50 --> 00:02:51: now,
00:02:51 --> 00:02:54: yes, so when was it when you first started to

00:02:54 --> 00:02:57: get interested in city planning,
00:02:57 --> 00:03:00: architecture, real estate? And I guess when did you first
00:03:00 --> 00:03:03: start understanding the functioning of the of the city
00:03:03 --> 00:03:05: well? It did start that way.
00:03:05 --> 00:03:07: Scott, when I was in school,
00:03:07 --> 00:03:10: I ended up taking subjects that were a little bit
00:03:10 --> 00:03:11: technical.
00:03:11 --> 00:03:14: You know? Meaning I did a lot of mathematics and
00:03:14 --> 00:03:17: things like physics and it was of course that was
00:03:17 --> 00:03:20: very suitable for someone to do engineering.
00:03:20 --> 00:03:24: Although I at that time not many women did engineering,
00:03:24 --> 00:03:28: but I realized that after high school that actually I
00:03:28 --> 00:03:32: had a creative side because I like literature and music.
00:03:32 --> 00:03:34: And so I thought architecture.
00:03:34 --> 00:03:37: Was probably the best balance.
00:03:37 --> 00:03:39: Give me a balance of my right brain and my
00:03:40 --> 00:03:40: left brain.
00:03:40 --> 00:03:43: It enabled the technical side to be mixed with the
00:03:43 --> 00:03:44: creative side,
00:03:44 --> 00:03:48: so that's why I picked the architecture and I was
00:03:48 --> 00:03:52: fortunate to have had the opportunity then to have the
00:03:52 --> 00:03:56: Colombo PEN scholarship given to me and to have a
00:03:56 --> 00:03:59: chance to study overseas at that time in Singapore.
00:03:59 --> 00:04:02: You know, being a country that was very young to
00:04:02 --> 00:04:04: be able to go to university.
00:04:04 --> 00:04:07: And to be able to study overseas was a great
00:04:08 --> 00:04:12: opportunity because not many people could afford to do it
00:04:12 --> 00:04:13: at that time.
00:04:13 --> 00:04:15: So it was quite a big adventure to be able
00:04:15 --> 00:04:17: to study architecture overseas.
00:04:18 --> 00:04:21: Right, I guess I you would get influenced from some
00:04:21 --> 00:04:24: of the the cities you'd visit as well as through
00:04:24 --> 00:04:25: the studies.
00:04:25 --> 00:04:28: Then in terms of of architecture and design so that
00:04:28 --> 00:04:32: foundation was really started through kind of university and
00:04:32 --> 00:04:33: more
00:04:32 --> 00:04:33: on the academic side,
00:04:34 --> 00:04:38: yes, and actually The funny thing was that at the
00:04:38 --> 00:04:41: end of my 'cause we are we are bonded to
00:04:41 --> 00:04:44: being civil service for a number of years.
00:04:44 --> 00:04:48: When I came back I was not.
00:04:48 --> 00:04:50: Put a drop in architecture.

00:04:50 --> 00:04:53: I was actually posted to a job that had to
00:04:54 --> 00:04:55: deal with the planning,
00:04:55 --> 00:04:58: so there was quite a change and for the first
00:04:58 --> 00:05:01: time I was exposed to something beyond architecture.
00:05:01 --> 00:05:05: Of course initially there was some disappointment because
uh,
00:05:05 --> 00:05:09: when I did my architecture degree actually did reasonably
well,
00:05:09 --> 00:05:13: but and then I was thrown into this job that
00:05:13 --> 00:05:14: did that.
00:05:14 --> 00:05:16: We planning and I had to find out what planning
00:05:16 --> 00:05:17: was all about.
00:05:17 --> 00:05:18: But I must say that.
00:05:18 --> 00:05:21: That in a way, open up new doors because overtime
00:05:21 --> 00:05:23: I realized that you know,
00:05:23 --> 00:05:26: hey, planning can actually give you a greatest fear of
00:05:26 --> 00:05:29: influence beyond just a single building.
00:05:29 --> 00:05:32: You could actually influence the city a lot more than
00:05:32 --> 00:05:34: if you were to do architecture.
00:05:34 --> 00:05:39: So in that sense, I grew to like urban planning
00:05:39 --> 00:05:42: and to grow that passion in cities.
00:05:42 --> 00:05:46: So in a way, it was a interesting twist in
00:05:46 --> 00:05:48: a career change.
00:05:48 --> 00:05:50: Did you get a lot of opportunity in that time
00:05:50 --> 00:05:52: period then to visit other places?
00:05:52 --> 00:05:56: Yes, uh, I visited a lot of cities because,
00:05:56 --> 00:05:59: you know, Scott, there is no perfect city.
00:05:59 --> 00:06:01: Most times I'm often asked the question.
00:06:01 --> 00:06:04: So which is the best city in the world?
00:06:04 --> 00:06:06: I can tell you there's no perfect city,
00:06:06 --> 00:06:10: but different cities are very good at different aspects in
00:06:10 --> 00:06:13: their development and you want to learn from them.
00:06:13 --> 00:06:16: You want to learn from the best on what they
00:06:16 --> 00:06:16: did right?
00:06:16 --> 00:06:18: But you also want to learn what they did wrong.
00:06:18 --> 00:06:20: So that you don't repeat it.
00:06:20 --> 00:06:23: So I I just give you a couple of examples.
00:06:23 --> 00:06:26: You know when we were working on the transformation of
00:06:26 --> 00:06:28: the waterfront in Singapore,
00:06:28 --> 00:06:30: we actually looked at many cities,
00:06:30 --> 00:06:33: right? I I had a very close look at places
00:06:33 --> 00:06:36: like a Sydney where they had the Darling Harbour,
00:06:36 --> 00:06:39: specially when we will starting to look at the planning

00:06:39 --> 00:06:43: and urban design of Marina Bay and some of the
00:06:43 --> 00:06:44: waterfront areas.
00:06:44 --> 00:06:47: And then you can look at the Melbourne Docklands and,
00:06:47 --> 00:06:49: uh, London Docklands at that time.
00:06:49 --> 00:06:53: The eastern Docklands were being planned and developed,
00:06:53 --> 00:06:56: and you have Vancouver. That fantastic model fronts,
00:06:56 --> 00:07:02: especially for residential developments and even places like
Amsterdam or,
00:07:02 --> 00:07:04: uh, you know, and aspects of New York.
00:07:04 --> 00:07:07: I still remember walking around Battery Park and the World
00:07:07 --> 00:07:10: Trade Center when the World Trade Center was still
standing.
00:07:10 --> 00:07:15: You know, at that time before 9:11 so it was
00:07:15 --> 00:07:17: quite amazing.
00:07:17 --> 00:07:19: You know, if you want to look at vibrant.
00:07:19 --> 00:07:21: Batiste and there are a lot of other cities,
00:07:21 --> 00:07:22: right? It could be London,
00:07:22 --> 00:07:26: New York, even the Spanish cities that bar Barcelona.
00:07:26 --> 00:07:28: If you want to learn about sustainability,
00:07:28 --> 00:07:30: you have places like Copenhagen,
00:07:30 --> 00:07:33: the Netherlands, smart cities. Again,
00:07:33 --> 00:07:37: we did many trips to look at smart cities will
00:07:37 --> 00:07:39: be things like again Helsinki,
00:07:39 --> 00:07:42: Barcelona, Madrid, New York, San Francisco,
00:07:42 --> 00:07:46: Seattle so many. And the Chinese cities Beijing centered on
00:07:46 --> 00:07:49: to the other up and coming cities.
00:07:49 --> 00:07:51: And if you will look at conservation,
00:07:51 --> 00:07:55: you will be also looking at cities that had great
00:07:55 --> 00:07:56: conserved heritage.
00:07:56 --> 00:08:00: Just one more little anecdote.
00:08:00 --> 00:08:02: Was also involved when I was in HDB.
00:08:02 --> 00:08:05: In the reclamation work in Singapore,
00:08:05 --> 00:08:11: HDB is one of the largest reclamation agencies or Singapore,
00:08:11 --> 00:08:16: and I remember going to Rotterdam because they were
reclaiming
00:08:16 --> 00:08:17: or their Newport.
00:08:17 --> 00:08:21: They moved the river pot up towards the sea right
00:08:21 --> 00:08:23: and freed up a lot of land and I was
00:08:23 --> 00:08:27: out there for three hours in the driving wind dinner
00:08:27 --> 00:08:31: waiting to see how they close off the reclamation.
00:08:31 --> 00:08:35: Closing off the final stages of the reclamation from the
00:08:35 --> 00:08:39: sea is a very technically challenging process,

00:08:39 --> 00:08:41: so as I was out there in the driving wind
00:08:41 --> 00:08:44: with all the sand blowing around just looking at how
00:08:44 --> 00:08:45: they were doing it.
00:08:45 --> 00:08:47: So all this is really learning Scott.
00:08:47 --> 00:08:48: We are always learning. No,
00:08:48 --> 00:08:50: it's true, and it's interesting,
00:08:50 --> 00:08:53: and I guess I mean with some of those early
00:08:53 --> 00:08:54: projects.
00:08:54 --> 00:08:58: How did that really shape your design thinking process then
00:08:58 --> 00:09:02: in terms of maybe talk about a couple of your
00:09:02 --> 00:09:03: initial projects.
00:09:04 --> 00:09:06: I suppose if you look at Marina Bay is a
00:09:06 --> 00:09:07: very good example.
00:09:07 --> 00:09:11: You know even the the the shape and the size
00:09:11 --> 00:09:12: of the Bay.
00:09:12 --> 00:09:13: How wide should it be?
00:09:13 --> 00:09:15: How long should it be?
00:09:15 --> 00:09:17: I think that is a big question of scale,
00:09:17 --> 00:09:21: right? So we looked at different work fronts.
00:09:21 --> 00:09:24: Darling Harbour is a very good example but the skill
00:09:24 --> 00:09:27: was more intimate or darling harbour and and I think
00:09:28 --> 00:09:31: for those who have visited you will see that it's
00:09:31 --> 00:09:34: very vibrant. It costs a scale or smaller with a
00:09:34 --> 00:09:36: lot of activities around the Bay.
00:09:36 --> 00:09:39: But we then looked at places like Baltimore.
00:09:39 --> 00:09:43: Baltimore has a much larger skill and in the end
00:09:43 --> 00:09:46: we chose something a little closer to Baltimore.
00:09:46 --> 00:09:50: Why? Because the scale of Marina Bay with all the
00:09:50 --> 00:09:53: surrounding buildings is very high.
00:09:53 --> 00:09:56: It's much higher and. Larger so we could not afford
00:09:56 --> 00:09:58: to have a skill that's too small,
00:09:58 --> 00:10:01: but yet we want it to be a skill that
00:10:01 --> 00:10:06: is generally sufficiently intimate for a lot of activities on
00:10:06 --> 00:10:10: the water that you can stand around the Bay,
00:10:10 --> 00:10:13: but not be overwhelmed by the buildings all around it.
00:10:13 --> 00:10:15: So this is urban design,
00:10:15 --> 00:10:18: right? The sense of skill and looking at what other
00:10:18 --> 00:10:22: people have done really helps you to scale in your
00:10:22 --> 00:10:24: mind exactly what is the right scale.
00:10:24 --> 00:10:26: You want to do so.
00:10:26 --> 00:10:27: That's an example. Well,
00:10:27 --> 00:10:30: I guess, and switching into Marina Bay and the the

00:10:30 --> 00:10:33: impact of of Marina because I think that's something you
00:10:33 --> 00:10:35: know early in your career.
00:10:35 --> 00:10:38: In the in the early 90s you became head of
00:10:38 --> 00:10:43: the Urban Design Development Part Department with a focus
on
00:10:43 --> 00:10:47: on Marina Bay and already at that time there is
00:10:47 --> 00:10:51: a lot of area that was reclaimed and so in
00:10:51 --> 00:10:55: terms of that that initial evolution.
00:10:55 --> 00:10:59: And that initial thinking of the efficiency of the land
00:10:59 --> 00:11:01: and that return on investment.
00:11:01 --> 00:11:06: I guess if if the initial component was more related
00:11:06 --> 00:11:07: to to Baltimore,
00:11:07 --> 00:11:10: how did that start to then change as you got
00:11:10 --> 00:11:13: into the design parameters looking at the land that you
00:11:14 --> 00:11:14: had,
00:11:14 --> 00:11:17: but then thinking about how the city was going to
00:11:17 --> 00:11:20: evolve overtime and how to balance the right different mix
00:11:20 --> 00:11:22: of uses for those faces.
00:11:22 --> 00:11:22: It's
00:11:22 --> 00:11:24: a very good question, Scott.
00:11:24 --> 00:11:28: Uh, for those tuning in who may not be familiar
00:11:28 --> 00:11:29: with Singapore,
00:11:29 --> 00:11:33: actually, Marina Bay is the new city extension of Singapore.
00:11:33 --> 00:11:35: I must say that Marina Bay is really a great
00:11:35 --> 00:11:39: example of forward planning that Singapore is known for,
00:11:39 --> 00:11:42: and I think a lot of credit must go to
00:11:43 --> 00:11:48: my predecessors because the land at Marina Bay was
reclaimed
00:11:48 --> 00:11:53: in the 70s in the 1970s by previous planners who
00:11:53 --> 00:11:57: anticipated the need. To grow the city and as most
00:11:57 --> 00:11:58: people know,
00:11:58 --> 00:12:02: Singapore is a very small city state of a belly.
00:12:02 --> 00:12:07: 720 square kilometers is a city and a country very
00:12:07 --> 00:12:08: land constrained.
00:12:08 --> 00:12:12: But planners therefore looked ahead and knew that they had
00:12:12 --> 00:12:13: to create land,
00:12:13 --> 00:12:17: and by reclaiming the land in the 1970s,
00:12:17 --> 00:12:23: it completely helped to ease the pressures of Urban
Development
00:12:23 --> 00:12:25: in the existing city.
00:12:25 --> 00:12:29: And it has a lot of implications because it enabled
00:12:29 --> 00:12:33: us to actually conserve large areas of Singapore,
00:12:33 --> 00:12:35: which is our built heritage.

00:12:35 --> 00:12:37: Otherwise, like in most cities,
00:12:37 --> 00:12:40: we would have to tear down a lot of these
00:12:40 --> 00:12:44: old buildings and we managed to conserve them by large
00:12:44 --> 00:12:44: districts,
00:12:44 --> 00:12:46: not just singular buildings, right?
00:12:46 --> 00:12:50: I think you have Chinatown Little India compound.
00:12:50 --> 00:12:54: Glad they were complete districts that we kept and so
00:12:54 --> 00:12:55: Singapore have actually.
00:12:55 --> 00:13:00: Safeguard up more than 7000 buildings and structures and
much
00:13:00 --> 00:13:02: of it in huge districts.
00:13:02 --> 00:13:05: So that was a very important consideration.
00:13:05 --> 00:13:09: Of course. Therefore, really, Marina Bay is a hot shows
00:13:09 --> 00:13:13: the hallmark of a Singapore's governance are always say,
00:13:13 --> 00:13:18: and it helps us to strike this balance between development
00:13:18 --> 00:13:21: and the conservation of heritage.
00:13:21 --> 00:13:24: Maybe I just talk a little bit by about Marina
00:13:24 --> 00:13:24: Bay.
00:13:24 --> 00:13:29: Actually Marina Bay. Have multiple plans developed since
the 80s
00:13:29 --> 00:13:30: and the 90s.
00:13:30 --> 00:13:32: We went through several versions,
00:13:32 --> 00:13:35: you know, and at that time we even brought in
00:13:35 --> 00:13:40: Impu and Tanguy who developed different plans for Marina
Bay
00:13:40 --> 00:13:43: and the configuration of the big CAP.
00:13:43 --> 00:13:47: Changing the first reclamation was not the final configuration,
00:13:47 --> 00:13:50: and as I explained, we actually went around looking at
00:13:50 --> 00:13:54: other cities before we decided on the final configuration,
00:13:54 --> 00:13:58: which was slightly smaller. The B then the earlier we
00:13:58 --> 00:14:03: claimed areas so we sized be overtime and there were
00:14:03 --> 00:14:06: multiple plans you know and I must say that I
00:14:06 --> 00:14:10: came in at a time in the early 2000s and
00:14:11 --> 00:14:16: was uh had this great opportunity to finalize that plan.
00:14:16 --> 00:14:20: In fact change some of the ideas and eventually had
00:14:20 --> 00:14:25: the opportunity to implement it together with my URA team.
00:14:26 --> 00:14:29: There are a couple big changes that you brought to
00:14:29 --> 00:14:29: the plan.
00:14:30 --> 00:14:31: Yeah, I think I think.
00:14:31 --> 00:14:33: Firstly is the shape of the Bay,
00:14:33 --> 00:14:37: for example, but we pretty much in the end adopted
00:14:37 --> 00:14:41: among grid format for the baby and that was again
00:14:41 --> 00:14:46: slightly influenced by Somd that came in much later after

00:14:46 --> 00:14:50: the I MP and the Tongue Gay plan.

00:14:50 --> 00:14:52: Possibly because it was the most efficient plan,

00:14:52 --> 00:14:54: so there was one change.

00:14:54 --> 00:14:57: As I said, the Bay was resized,

00:14:57 --> 00:15:01: the shape was changed. That's the second change.

00:15:01 --> 00:15:04: The third change, which is a very important change,

00:15:04 --> 00:15:07: was that. We brought in.

00:15:07 --> 00:15:10: Gardens by the Bay. Alright,

00:15:10 --> 00:15:14: the local planners decided that we needed something that is

00:15:14 --> 00:15:15: very different.

00:15:15 --> 00:15:21: That distinguished Singapore from other cities because this

00:15:21 --> 00:15:23: was supposed

00:15:21 --> 00:15:23: to be our global signature image.

00:15:23 --> 00:15:26: So what stands out to people about Singapore?

00:15:26 --> 00:15:30: The buildings are your typical international buildings,

00:15:30 --> 00:15:33: right? But what is Singapore known for?

00:15:33 --> 00:15:36: It is known as a Garden City.

00:15:36 --> 00:15:39: So we brought in. In a way,

00:15:39 --> 00:15:44: a prime land almost 100 hectares of land set aside.

00:15:44 --> 00:15:49: For a garden, so that was a big signature move.

00:15:49 --> 00:15:51: By the planners, but in a way it was also

00:15:52 --> 00:15:55: influenced by looking at other global cities.

00:15:55 --> 00:15:57: I mean you have London that has tight path.

00:15:57 --> 00:16:00: You have New York has Central Park right?

00:16:00 --> 00:16:04: And it added so much of a green relief to

00:16:04 --> 00:16:05: the city.

00:16:05 --> 00:16:07: But of course gardens by the Bay is far more

00:16:07 --> 00:16:08: modest,

00:16:08 --> 00:16:10: but still a very large piece of land

00:16:11 --> 00:16:16: open space in the heart of cities is always the

00:16:16 --> 00:16:17: the anchor.

00:16:17 --> 00:16:20: And and it's it's a place that overtime is.

00:16:20 --> 00:16:24: Been shown to be incredibly valuable beyond just financial

00:16:24 --> 00:16:28: value,

00:16:24 --> 00:16:28: but social and environmental value and and on that point

00:16:28 --> 00:16:29: of value.

00:16:29 --> 00:16:32: I guess, this reclamation that was done a lot of

00:16:32 --> 00:16:35: costs put in a lot of costs in terms of

00:16:35 --> 00:16:39: building some of the core infrastructure for getting the

00:16:39 --> 00:16:43: building

00:16:39 --> 00:16:43: blocks ready and developed. Was there pressure on the

00:16:43 --> 00:16:47: team

00:16:43 --> 00:16:47: in terms of starting to push that out to the

00:16:47 --> 00:16:50: market to get a return on all of this investment?
00:16:50 --> 00:16:54: And maybe talk a little bit about that component of
00:16:54 --> 00:16:56: it in terms of.
00:16:56 --> 00:16:59: Trying to to get private sector involved and start to
00:16:59 --> 00:17:02: develop all of the different parcels of land.
00:17:02 --> 00:17:06: Absolutely Scott is very challenging so I would just touch
00:17:06 --> 00:17:09: a little bit on the plan before I move on
00:17:09 --> 00:17:12: to how do we deal with getting investors in?
00:17:12 --> 00:17:15: The plan is designed such that it brings a lot
00:17:15 --> 00:17:19: of real estate value to every parcel that was marked
00:17:19 --> 00:17:20: up right.
00:17:20 --> 00:17:23: We had this grid. Wrote grid that came in and
00:17:23 --> 00:17:27: we had brought in gardens by the Bay.
00:17:27 --> 00:17:29: Not only does it have social value,
00:17:29 --> 00:17:33: it has real estate value because it meant that almost
00:17:33 --> 00:17:37: every parcel of land in Marina Bay had either a
00:17:37 --> 00:17:40: civil war front view or a garden view,
00:17:40 --> 00:17:43: and the way we brought in the road grid meant
00:17:43 --> 00:17:47: that the parcels became a can be adjusted flexibly.
00:17:47 --> 00:17:49: It can be big parcels,
00:17:49 --> 00:17:52: or it can be small parcels depending on the need.
00:17:52 --> 00:17:55: And later we can talk about some of the more
00:17:55 --> 00:17:58: iconic projects and why they were parceled out in a
00:17:58 --> 00:17:58: certain way.
00:17:58 --> 00:18:01: But Scott, when we were when I came in as
00:18:01 --> 00:18:02: the CEO of Newari,
00:18:02 --> 00:18:06: there was in 2003 and and you know,
00:18:06 --> 00:18:10: we felt it was time to start on the infrastructure
00:18:10 --> 00:18:14: for Marina Bay because otherwise there's immense pressure
for land
00:18:14 --> 00:18:16: in the existing city.
00:18:16 --> 00:18:18: The plan was done. We were ready to go.
00:18:18 --> 00:18:23: Unfortunately we were hit by sauce and that really.
00:18:23 --> 00:18:28: Disseminated, the economy sauce was a crisis of
confidence,
00:18:28 --> 00:18:31: not just a pandemic, but it was a crisis of
00:18:31 --> 00:18:32: confidence.
00:18:32 --> 00:18:36: And suddenly all real estate came to a halt,
00:18:36 --> 00:18:39: right? And I had two big challenges.
00:18:39 --> 00:18:43: One is internal and one is external.
00:18:43 --> 00:18:47: The internal one wants to convince the decision makers to
00:18:47 --> 00:18:52: put in millions of dollars to bring infrastructure to Marina

00:18:52 --> 00:18:52: Bay,
00:18:52 --> 00:18:56: even though. We think there may be no investor because
00:18:56 --> 00:19:01: planning requires you to put in the investment into millions
00:19:01 --> 00:19:05: of dollars of infrastructure in order to have the land
00:19:05 --> 00:19:08: ready for the time when you need to develop it
00:19:08 --> 00:19:09: right.
00:19:09 --> 00:19:10: And it's a chicken and egg,
00:19:10 --> 00:19:13: because if you don't put in the investment,
00:19:13 --> 00:19:17: how can you convince investors that you're serious and that
00:19:17 --> 00:19:20: you put your money where your mouth is,
00:19:20 --> 00:19:23: so it was first an internal challenge and I must
00:19:23 --> 00:19:25: say I had to go back several times.
00:19:25 --> 00:19:28: Before I could convince the government that yes,
00:19:28 --> 00:19:31: it's time to sync the money in.
00:19:31 --> 00:19:34: Even though we were just in the midst of an
00:19:34 --> 00:19:37: economic crisis and slowly coming out of the crisis.
00:19:37 --> 00:19:41: Fortunately, the crisis didn't last too long because South was
00:19:41 --> 00:19:42: over within two years.
00:19:43 --> 00:19:48: You know? Now the external challenge was convincing
investors,
00:19:48 --> 00:19:51: so we did a lot of selling and marketing to
00:19:51 --> 00:19:52: investors.
00:19:52 --> 00:19:56: So we participated in a lot of the international real
00:19:56 --> 00:19:56: estate.
00:19:56 --> 00:19:58: Bears like nip it in Nice,
00:19:58 --> 00:20:02: France, which is the largest real estate fair every year
00:20:02 --> 00:20:03: in the world right?
00:20:03 --> 00:20:05: So we participate a lot.
00:20:05 --> 00:20:08: We explained a lot about the plan and as a
00:20:09 --> 00:20:12: result I think investors started to take notice,
00:20:12 --> 00:20:15: but they took even more notice when we tell them
00:20:15 --> 00:20:15: that look,
00:20:15 --> 00:20:20: we've already committed millions of dollars and we have
started
00:20:20 --> 00:20:21: on the infrastructure.
00:20:21 --> 00:20:25: That was very important to build confidence.
00:20:25 --> 00:20:28: I think that is. Absolutely important
00:20:28 --> 00:20:34: yeah. Interesting 'cause we had Simon Tracy conversation
assignment on
00:20:34 --> 00:20:38: Asia Square Tower and he did reference midpenn as the
00:20:38 --> 00:20:42: point of which they were first introduced to Marina Bay
00:20:42 --> 00:20:46: and to that as a potential site and then went
00:20:46 --> 00:20:48: on from from their 2006,

00:20:48 --> 00:20:52: 2007. So yeah, I think that those roadshows definitely helped
00:20:52 --> 00:20:56: in terms of getting interest and to see availability.
00:20:56 --> 00:20:58: But was it? Was there ever pressure on?
00:20:58 --> 00:21:01: On the amount of land to release and the timing
00:21:02 --> 00:21:02: of that,
00:21:03 --> 00:21:06: yeah well yes in Singapore you see it's a little
00:21:06 --> 00:21:10: different maybe from say Hong Kong right there is there's
00:21:11 --> 00:21:13: very long term comprehensive planning,
00:21:13 --> 00:21:17: so the amount of land that we released every year.
00:21:17 --> 00:21:20: We are careful not to over release or to under
00:21:20 --> 00:21:25: release because we do projections very long term projections
on
00:21:25 --> 00:21:27: demand and supply.
00:21:27 --> 00:21:30: And So what? B1 is a moderated market.
00:21:30 --> 00:21:34: We don't want this huge swings of a undersupply and
00:21:34 --> 00:21:37: then the bucket shoots up and we don't want these
00:21:37 --> 00:21:42: huge bubbles that burst right suddenly because you
oversupply.
00:21:42 --> 00:21:46: So it's actually a reasonably carefully managed process.
00:21:46 --> 00:21:48: Understanding market meats and will,
00:21:48 --> 00:21:51: we will release it accordingly.
00:21:51 --> 00:21:53: And because the planning is so comprehensive,
00:21:53 --> 00:21:57: we also knew where to direct the growth too,
00:21:57 --> 00:21:58: and at that time indeed.
00:21:58 --> 00:22:01: Early 2000s and mid 2000s the focus was Marina Bay
00:22:01 --> 00:22:05: and so we released land in Marina Bay rather than
00:22:05 --> 00:22:09: releasing land everywhere that competed with Marina Bay.
00:22:09 --> 00:22:12: So this is a very important process.
00:22:12 --> 00:22:15: I just want to come back and mention about you
00:22:15 --> 00:22:19: know this road shows and explaining planners also need to
00:22:19 --> 00:22:23: explain to people your aspiration and your vision and to
00:22:23 --> 00:22:26: excite the investors that we're in it for the long
00:22:26 --> 00:22:27: haul.
00:22:27 --> 00:22:30: And if they invest. There is value in their investment,
00:22:30 --> 00:22:32: so I I give you one example.
00:22:32 --> 00:22:36: I remember sitting next to Sheldon Adelson,
00:22:36 --> 00:22:39: who of course at that time on Marina Bay Sands
00:22:40 --> 00:22:43: the sensor project right and I I was sharing with
00:22:43 --> 00:22:44: him that look.
00:22:44 --> 00:22:47: The whole idea is to have this necklace of pearls
00:22:47 --> 00:22:51: around the Bay which were major iconic projects that were
00:22:51 --> 00:22:53: scattered around the Bay,

00:22:53 --> 00:22:55: forming this necklace or poles,
00:22:55 --> 00:22:58: and I said the Marina Bay Sands project which took
00:22:58 --> 00:22:58: up.
00:22:58 --> 00:23:02: Almost one entire side of the Bay would be one
00:23:02 --> 00:23:05: of these very important Pearl you know,
00:23:05 --> 00:23:09: and in the end, after he had bid it successfully
00:23:09 --> 00:23:12: and won the project when the project was completed and
00:23:12 --> 00:23:14: I remember there was a dinner,
00:23:14 --> 00:23:16: you know. And I sat next to him and he
00:23:16 --> 00:23:17: told me he said,
00:23:17 --> 00:23:21: you know, I remember that you visited Las Vegas and
00:23:21 --> 00:23:24: and you told me about the necklace oppose and we
00:23:24 --> 00:23:26: have built that Pearl,
00:23:26 --> 00:23:29: you know? So it didn't sink into the investor.
00:23:29 --> 00:23:32: Right that this big aspiration is important.
00:23:32 --> 00:23:34: And of course I didn't only talk to him,
00:23:34 --> 00:23:37: I talked to so many potential investors and then they
00:23:38 --> 00:23:41: understood what the plan and vision was about and that
00:23:41 --> 00:23:44: gave confidence in investing in Marina Bay.
00:23:44 --> 00:23:48: So that was actually a very very important.
00:23:48 --> 00:23:48: Yeah,
00:23:48 --> 00:23:51: I think that's a part that not a lot of
00:23:51 --> 00:23:55: people see is the amount of time and effort spent
00:23:55 --> 00:23:59: and actually promoting and selling the plan in terms of
00:23:59 --> 00:24:03: getting. Others involved at that time we were working quite
00:24:03 --> 00:24:06: closely with Sheldon on Cotai resort and all the work
00:24:06 --> 00:24:09: in Macau and then that started here.
00:24:09 --> 00:24:12: So both places actually grew up around the same time
00:24:12 --> 00:24:14: period in terms of impact,
00:24:14 --> 00:24:15: which is and
00:24:15 --> 00:24:17: when and when a sauce,
00:24:17 --> 00:24:21: a financial crisis got, you might remember right in the
00:24:21 --> 00:24:24: middle when all this was under construction,
00:24:24 --> 00:24:27: Sheldon Adelson had to decide where to put the money,
00:24:27 --> 00:24:30: you know, and he put his own money in Singapore.
00:24:30 --> 00:24:33: Because he had confidence in the project and we finished
00:24:33 --> 00:24:33: it.
00:24:33 --> 00:24:37: Can you imagine a half finished Marina Bay Sands right
00:24:38 --> 00:24:39: below Marina Bay.
00:24:39 --> 00:24:43: Well, thank goodness that didn't happen and he finished it
00:24:43 --> 00:24:46: and the rest is really history.
00:24:46 --> 00:24:51: I must mention the other thing about managing and

addressing
00:24:51 --> 00:24:52: confidence.
00:24:52 --> 00:24:55: Scott, you might remember Marina Bay Financial Centre,
00:24:55 --> 00:24:59: right? It's a huge parcel of land even though it's
00:24:59 --> 00:25:00: a consortium.
00:25:00 --> 00:25:03: How do you get people to put down so much
00:25:03 --> 00:25:06: money with billions of dollars not to bid for that
00:25:06 --> 00:25:07: piece of land?
00:25:07 --> 00:25:10: So we also structured these sales or site in such
00:25:10 --> 00:25:13: a way that we shared the risk with the developer.
00:25:13 --> 00:25:17: And if you recall we had an options approach.
00:25:17 --> 00:25:21: We allow the bid to take place in phases,
00:25:21 --> 00:25:23: right? You bid for the phase one.
00:25:23 --> 00:25:26: You put option money on phase two and when the
00:25:26 --> 00:25:29: time is right we will then sell you phase two
00:25:29 --> 00:25:30: and we shared the risk.
00:25:30 --> 00:25:32: Because if the market went up,
00:25:32 --> 00:25:34: of course UPS more. It's a market went down.
00:25:34 --> 00:25:37: We will have adjusted their pricing.
00:25:37 --> 00:25:40: So all this is about you know the importance of
00:25:40 --> 00:25:45: working in partnership with the private sector and that is
00:25:45 --> 00:25:47: very important to instill confidence,
00:25:47 --> 00:25:48: and
00:25:48 --> 00:25:51: I think that's one thing that when I worked on
00:25:51 --> 00:25:53: the plan with you from 2010 to 2014,
00:25:53 --> 00:25:56: that was one thing we looked at was,
00:25:56 --> 00:26:01: you know, parcel size and more accessibility to smaller
developers.
00:26:01 --> 00:26:04: For smaller investors to be able to participate in the
00:26:04 --> 00:26:07: build out of the vision of the of the area
00:26:07 --> 00:26:09: in the plan and that it doesn't,
00:26:09 --> 00:26:13: doesn't always need to be these huge parcels which the
00:26:13 --> 00:26:16: cost to to getting on board is incredibly high,
00:26:16 --> 00:26:19: so it allows for more participation in terms of how
00:26:19 --> 00:26:22: the Community is actually implemented over time.
00:26:23 --> 00:26:24: Many people asked me, you know,
00:26:24 --> 00:26:28: and said, look the puzzles in Marina Bay are too
00:26:28 --> 00:26:28: large,
00:26:28 --> 00:26:31: but you must understand at what phase that development.
00:26:31 --> 00:26:35: It was at that time what we needed was catalytic
00:26:35 --> 00:26:36: projects right?
00:26:36 --> 00:26:40: To kick off the whole of Marina Bay and projects

00:26:40 --> 00:26:42: like Marina Bay Sands.

00:26:42 --> 00:26:46: Of course, with a mixed development and Marina Bay Financial

00:26:47 --> 00:26:51: Centre were large because they were catalytic projects.

00:26:51 --> 00:26:54: It's obvious Marina Bay Sands had to be large.

00:26:54 --> 00:26:58: We actually studied a lot of the mixed developments that

00:26:58 --> 00:27:01: incorporated CEO casino and by the time you add in

00:27:01 --> 00:27:02: convention.

00:27:02 --> 00:27:06: Centres, shopping and hotels. It needed to be large to

00:27:06 --> 00:27:10: be able to design a high quality integrated development,

00:27:10 --> 00:27:12: including the Art Science Museum,

00:27:12 --> 00:27:17: now Marina Bay Financial Centre was large because at that

00:27:17 --> 00:27:21: time the feedback from the market was that they wanted

00:27:21 --> 00:27:23: large floorplates for trading floors.

00:27:23 --> 00:27:26: So that was why it was not but we did

00:27:26 --> 00:27:29: it in phases and we allowed the risk to be

00:27:29 --> 00:27:31: mitigated by going forward.

00:27:31 --> 00:27:35: Marina Bay. Not all the pastors need to be large.

00:27:35 --> 00:27:40: I think we have established a very good critical mass

00:27:40 --> 00:27:41: already,

00:27:41 --> 00:27:46: so now perhaps it's time to think about more vibrancy,

00:27:46 --> 00:27:50: finer grain or medium sized green to bring in a

00:27:50 --> 00:27:53: lot more diversity into the Bay,

00:27:53 --> 00:27:55: so perhaps that's something you are a might want to

00:27:56 --> 00:27:57: think about going forward.

00:27:57 --> 00:27:57: Yeah,

00:27:57 --> 00:28:00: now that the the rail line is coming through and

00:28:00 --> 00:28:03: some of the stations are getting close to completion.

00:28:03 --> 00:28:06: I think there's opportunities to really look at that in

00:28:06 --> 00:28:08: terms of the next wave of development.

00:28:08 --> 00:28:11: Just one question, I guess in terms of what's being

00:28:11 --> 00:28:12: built today,

00:28:12 --> 00:28:14: is there a favorite place that you have in Marina

00:28:14 --> 00:28:14: Bay?

00:28:15 --> 00:28:18: Well, yeah, our favorite places tend to be the ones

00:28:18 --> 00:28:19: that were involved with,

00:28:19 --> 00:28:24: right? So I would say that yeah,

00:28:24 --> 00:28:27: because I I spent a lot of time working on

00:28:27 --> 00:28:28: the projects,

00:28:28 --> 00:28:30: so I think that two,

00:28:30 --> 00:28:34: obviously Marina Bay Sands. Mainly because the impact was

00:28:34 --> 00:28:35: so
great,

00:28:35 --> 00:28:38: you know and we worked on the urban design guidelines
00:28:38 --> 00:28:42: and the planning guidelines so when it was tendered actually
00:28:42 --> 00:28:45: we have a very thick volume of planning and design
00:28:45 --> 00:28:49: guidelines. It didn't just happen like that and I think
00:28:49 --> 00:28:52: we were very fortunate that Moshe Safdie.
00:28:52 --> 00:28:56: Uh was very open to responding to these guidelines because
00:28:56 --> 00:28:58: Moshe is not just an architect,
00:28:58 --> 00:29:02: he's very much an urban planner and a city planet
00:29:02 --> 00:29:02: hot,
00:29:02 --> 00:29:05: so it's such a big development he almost looked at
00:29:05 --> 00:29:08: it like a mini city and he responded to the
00:29:08 --> 00:29:11: Bay and I think we worked well together to shape
00:29:11 --> 00:29:15: it throughout the project, even as he was designing it.
00:29:15 --> 00:29:17: And for that I I really appreciate it.
00:29:17 --> 00:29:20: Of course the other project is a Marina Bay Financial
00:29:20 --> 00:29:22: centre to this day these two.
00:29:22 --> 00:29:25: Projects are still the main projects fronting the bid and
00:29:25 --> 00:29:27: the Marina Bay Financial Centre.
00:29:27 --> 00:29:30: Of course, its presence is large,
00:29:30 --> 00:29:34: right? And but I suppose going forward,
00:29:34 --> 00:29:37: there's a lot more that can be done to increase
00:29:37 --> 00:29:38: the vibrancy.
00:29:38 --> 00:29:42: Marina Bay Sands, because of the mixed use I feel
00:29:42 --> 00:29:47: is bit more successful in activating the Waterfront Marina Bay
00:29:47 --> 00:29:49: Financial Centre.
00:29:49 --> 00:29:51: Still very much a financial center,
00:29:51 --> 00:29:53: so I think it would be good if we can
00:29:53 --> 00:29:56: find some way to bring in a lot more vibrancy
00:29:56 --> 00:30:01: in and around those developments across a prominent
today's and
00:30:01 --> 00:30:03: open space. And we do bring in a lot of
00:30:03 --> 00:30:03: events,
00:30:03 --> 00:30:07: but potentially I think more could be done.
00:30:07 --> 00:30:09: So two of them have activated the base,
00:30:09 --> 00:30:11: so that's good. But I really think more could be
00:30:11 --> 00:30:12: done.
00:30:13 --> 00:30:16: Yeah, I think it's it shows a really good example
00:30:16 --> 00:30:20: of kind of progression overtime and this long term term
00:30:21 --> 00:30:21: thinking.
00:30:21 --> 00:30:24: And it's something that, as we've touched on,
00:30:24 --> 00:30:28: there's been many points in the process where there's been
00:30:28 --> 00:30:32: a redirection and I guess to this notion of the.

00:30:32 --> 00:30:33: The vision for the future.

00:30:33 --> 00:30:37: So in the Asian cities that have been developed around

00:30:38 --> 00:30:39: around the region,

00:30:39 --> 00:30:44: a lot was done very quickly to get infrastructure in

00:30:44 --> 00:30:44: place.

00:30:44 --> 00:30:48: As you mentioned, to be able to attract others to

00:30:48 --> 00:30:51: be able to provide for economic growth.

00:30:51 --> 00:30:54: Jobs provide basic housing we didn't touch too much on

00:30:54 --> 00:30:55: your role,

00:30:55 --> 00:30:58: with with HDB today, but you know in terms of

00:30:58 --> 00:31:00: being able to to just house people so a lot

00:31:00 --> 00:31:02: of things were done very,

00:31:02 --> 00:31:07: very fastly. In fast in this rapid rapid urbanization,

00:31:07 --> 00:31:10: now you've moved on to the the center of livable

00:31:10 --> 00:31:12: cities and Lee Kuan Yew,

00:31:12 --> 00:31:16: Center of Innovation, Innovative Cities and it kind of

interested

00:31:17 --> 00:31:21: in your thoughts about the next evolution of Asian cities

00:31:21 --> 00:31:23: and and where you see that headed.

00:31:23 --> 00:31:24: Yeah,

00:31:24 --> 00:31:27: I think you touch on one of the challenges of

00:31:27 --> 00:31:28: Asian cities.

00:31:28 --> 00:31:29: We are always in a hurry,

00:31:29 --> 00:31:32: Scott, and being in a hurry sometimes is not a

00:31:32 --> 00:31:33: good thing.

00:31:33 --> 00:31:36: Right, and even if you are in a hurry because

00:31:36 --> 00:31:37: you tend to shortcut,

00:31:37 --> 00:31:40: you don't think through and you like that.

00:31:40 --> 00:31:43: Design excellence and the final thing says needed to make

00:31:43 --> 00:31:45: a development excellent.

00:31:45 --> 00:31:48: So I, I would urge that even as we have

00:31:48 --> 00:31:49: to go fast paced,

00:31:49 --> 00:31:54: you have to think through all the details in putting

00:31:54 --> 00:31:55: together a city.

00:31:55 --> 00:31:59: And I hope that is what everybody would do despite

00:31:59 --> 00:32:02: the the the pressure you know to build quickly but

00:32:02 --> 00:32:03: you don't.

00:32:03 --> 00:32:06: Want to build a lot of mediocre developments because it's

00:32:06 --> 00:32:08: going to be with you for decades now.

00:32:08 --> 00:32:12: Going forward. So what are the things that cities we

00:32:12 --> 00:32:14: think a need to think about?

00:32:14 --> 00:32:18: Uh, you know, with the pandemic everybody says OK,

00:32:18 --> 00:32:21: build back better and you want to move on to
00:32:21 --> 00:32:21: something else,
00:32:21 --> 00:32:26: but I actually think that in the case of particularly
00:32:26 --> 00:32:26: Asia,
00:32:26 --> 00:32:29: don't forget there are many basic things that have not
00:32:30 --> 00:32:30: been resolved.
00:32:30 --> 00:32:33: They are still the age old issues.
00:32:33 --> 00:32:38: Things like affordable housing, reliable basic amenities like
clean water,
00:32:38 --> 00:32:45: sanitation, electricity, waste management and these things
still remain and
00:32:45 --> 00:32:47: have to be solved.
00:32:47 --> 00:32:49: You cannot step away from it.
00:32:49 --> 00:32:53: But with the pandemic, what has add onto that layer?
00:32:53 --> 00:32:58: Particularly with a more mature cities and slightly better
developed
00:32:58 --> 00:32:58: cities,
00:32:58 --> 00:33:01: we know that many of the more mature and develop
00:33:01 --> 00:33:04: cities we are into the next stage whereby most of
00:33:04 --> 00:33:06: them are brownfield sites,
00:33:06 --> 00:33:09: so rejuvenation becomes a very important part.
00:33:09 --> 00:33:13: I would just quickly mention three I think brought trust
00:33:13 --> 00:33:16: we may want to think about as we move into
00:33:16 --> 00:33:19: the next phase of development for Asian cities,
00:33:19 --> 00:33:20: one is as I mentioned.
00:33:20 --> 00:33:23: We need to be more sustainable and resilient.
00:33:23 --> 00:33:27: The pandemic orders that right up and we have to
00:33:27 --> 00:33:32: think about sustainability and resilience in the way we plan
and develop.
00:33:32 --> 00:33:33: So rejuvenate rejuvenating and redeveloping aging
00:33:33 --> 00:33:39: infrastructure would be a
00:33:39 --> 00:33:40: priority.
00:33:40 --> 00:33:44: And of course where possible we should adapt existing
buildings
00:33:44 --> 00:33:44: for new use.
00:33:44 --> 00:33:48: The greenest building is the one that is already existing
00:33:48 --> 00:33:51: every time you pull that one and you build.
00:33:51 --> 00:33:52: Using a lot of resources,
00:33:52 --> 00:33:55: but the reality is that you still need to build
00:33:56 --> 00:33:59: new simply because many of the older buildings are not
00:33:59 --> 00:34:02: of good quality and they have they are no longer
00:34:02 --> 00:34:06: fit for purpose and have run their useful economic life.
00:34:06 --> 00:34:09: So where you do need to build new then I

00:34:09 --> 00:34:14: would say they provide opportunities to truly build a more
00:34:14 --> 00:34:17: low carbon world and to build greener so we have
00:34:17 --> 00:34:21: to think about more energy efficient use of buildings.
00:34:21 --> 00:34:23: The way we designed the buildings,
00:34:23 --> 00:34:27: greater vibrancy using the right materials,
00:34:27 --> 00:34:30: and construction methods that reduce embodied carbon.
00:34:30 --> 00:34:34: Because the construction industry has very high body
carbon.
00:34:34 --> 00:34:37: So if you have to build new then built green,
00:34:37 --> 00:34:40: I think the second thing to think about the second
00:34:40 --> 00:34:43: trust really is you need more human centric,
00:34:43 --> 00:34:48: equitable and healthier cities. We now need to look at
00:34:48 --> 00:34:51: cities not just as machines,
00:34:51 --> 00:34:53: right? Which are efficient, but they have to be human
00:34:53 --> 00:34:54: centric.
00:34:54 --> 00:34:55: We need to be more.
00:34:55 --> 00:34:57: Car light is a pedestrian friendly.
00:34:57 --> 00:35:01: Do we provide people with the basic amenities of affordable
00:35:01 --> 00:35:02: housing?
00:35:02 --> 00:35:06: Is a cyclist friendly, great public spaces for to encourage
00:35:07 --> 00:35:09: interaction and is it more equitable,
00:35:09 --> 00:35:11: right? And housing is a key.
00:35:11 --> 00:35:16: Giving access more equal access to affordable housing.
00:35:16 --> 00:35:21: Basic amenities. And recreational opportunities of that is
important,
00:35:21 --> 00:35:26: and most importantly, with the new ideas of digital is
00:35:26 --> 00:35:28: about reducing the digital divide.
00:35:28 --> 00:35:31: Let me just finish the broad thrust.
00:35:31 --> 00:35:35: I thought it's important we will have to build digital
00:35:35 --> 00:35:38: cities and we as a result we will move more
00:35:38 --> 00:35:42: towards being digital economies and digital societies.
00:35:42 --> 00:35:44: The pandemic has shown us that you don't have much
00:35:44 --> 00:35:45: of a choice.
00:35:45 --> 00:35:48: You're moving towards being a digital having.
00:35:48 --> 00:35:51: Did you take economies and digital societies?
00:35:51 --> 00:35:55: But what can we do with the right infrastructure?
00:35:55 --> 00:35:58: You have to put in the basic infrastructure that supports
00:35:58 --> 00:35:58: this,
00:35:58 --> 00:36:01: but how do we lessen the digital divide?
00:36:01 --> 00:36:04: What does it mean for the future of work and
00:36:04 --> 00:36:05: the future of society?
00:36:05 --> 00:36:07: These things need to be studied.
00:36:07 --> 00:36:11: The technology has moved faster than the sociology and I

00:36:11 --> 00:36:13: think we are behind time.

00:36:13 --> 00:36:17: Scott right, the technology overtake us but we haven't thought

00:36:17 --> 00:36:18: about the code.

00:36:18 --> 00:36:21: Ethics right? We haven't thought about many of these things,

00:36:21 --> 00:36:22: you know.

00:36:22 --> 00:36:25: Well, there's a definite link back into land.

00:36:25 --> 00:36:29: Use into building code and just in terms of that

00:36:29 --> 00:36:31: issue of affordable housing.

00:36:31 --> 00:36:36: Affordable housing is often small equity and housing in a

00:36:36 --> 00:36:37: lot of Asian cities.

00:36:37 --> 00:36:41: There's a lot of divide where the the poorer parts

00:36:41 --> 00:36:46: of the city are in places that are environmentally contaminated.

00:36:46 --> 00:36:48: You know they have other challenges to them.

00:36:48 --> 00:36:52: Very lack of mobility and lack of access to good

00:36:52 --> 00:36:53: employment.

00:36:53 --> 00:36:56: Those kind of balancing of issues.

00:36:56 --> 00:36:58: A lot of that does do come back to to

00:36:58 --> 00:36:59: the land use plan.

00:36:59 --> 00:37:03: The ability to create affordable housing and those types of

00:37:03 --> 00:37:07: issues which need both a strong government governance to it

00:37:07 --> 00:37:11: but also a strong connection to the private sector in

00:37:11 --> 00:37:14: terms of being able to implement overtime couldn't hang the

00:37:14 --> 00:37:17: other part that I did want to ask a little

00:37:17 --> 00:37:19: bit was that this next generation.

00:37:19 --> 00:37:22: Of urban visionaries and sort of tide in with the

00:37:22 --> 00:37:25: you had were the first Asian recipient for the Oly

00:37:25 --> 00:37:26: Nicholls Prize,

00:37:26 --> 00:37:29: which is visionaries in Urban Development,

00:37:29 --> 00:37:32: and I found it fascinating that you took the prize

00:37:32 --> 00:37:36: money which was \$100,000 and then donated that to the

00:37:36 --> 00:37:41: National University of Singapore to establish a scholarship for Singaporeans

00:37:41 --> 00:37:44: related to urban planning and that kind of shows.

00:37:44 --> 00:37:48: I think this connection to education and being able to

00:37:48 --> 00:37:50: train this this next group.

00:37:50 --> 00:37:52: To be able to handle the three thrusts that you

00:37:53 --> 00:37:56: mentioned in terms of the vision and the transformation of

00:37:56 --> 00:37:58: the next evolution of Asian cities.

00:37:58 --> 00:38:02: So what are some of the important aspects that this

00:38:02 --> 00:38:06: group of people really need to focus on in terms

00:38:06 --> 00:38:07: of skill set?

00:38:07 --> 00:38:11: So the encouragement is really to have a new generation

00:38:11 --> 00:38:16: of built professionals who care enough about cities about communities

00:38:16 --> 00:38:19: who want to devote a career you know to.

00:38:19 --> 00:38:23: Really make this world and this and people's lives better.

00:38:23 --> 00:38:24: We are facing a lot of challenges,

00:38:24 --> 00:38:26: right? Look at climate change.

00:38:26 --> 00:38:30: This is a huge, huge challenge that we're going to

00:38:30 --> 00:38:33: face and it's going to take a lot of effort

00:38:33 --> 00:38:37: by many many people involved in the built environment to

00:38:37 --> 00:38:42: really agree to move forward and to seriously take real

00:38:42 --> 00:38:43: action.

00:38:43 --> 00:38:45: So you need a whole generation of people to push

00:38:45 --> 00:38:46: this forward,

00:38:47 --> 00:38:50: and I think you need people that can integrate.

00:38:50 --> 00:38:54: That are good at bringing the diverse needs and the

00:38:54 --> 00:38:58: skill sets that disciplines the technical areas that are required

00:38:58 --> 00:39:01: to deal with some of these challenges.

00:39:01 --> 00:39:05: Absolutely Scott, I used to say that an urban planner

00:39:05 --> 00:39:06: is almost like a conductor.

00:39:06 --> 00:39:09: You know of an orchestra.

00:39:09 --> 00:39:11: You map out the plans and say OK,

00:39:11 --> 00:39:13: this is that piece of music that we all need

00:39:13 --> 00:39:14: to play and then yeah,

00:39:14 --> 00:39:17: lots of different players right?

00:39:17 --> 00:39:19: All the way from different architects,

00:39:19 --> 00:39:22: engineers, government. Officials, you know?

00:39:22 --> 00:39:23: And then you have the private sector.

00:39:23 --> 00:39:27: The real estate people and and then you have the

00:39:27 --> 00:39:29: the civil society groups,

00:39:29 --> 00:39:33: the community and you're trying to to play the music

00:39:33 --> 00:39:36: together so that you can get to that vision and

00:39:37 --> 00:39:37: aspiration.

00:39:37 --> 00:39:41: So you're right, you you need an integrator and

00:39:41 --> 00:39:44: I guess that's a good role for an institute like

00:39:44 --> 00:39:46: the Urban Land Institute,

00:39:46 --> 00:39:51: which brings together quite a wide range of people of

00:39:51 --> 00:39:52: stakeholders.

00:39:52 --> 00:39:55: Both on the technical side.

00:39:55 --> 00:39:59: Private public site. And with you know,

00:39:59 --> 00:40:03: voices of your lie. It's really around the mission of

00:40:03 --> 00:40:04: Urban Land Institute,
00:40:04 --> 00:40:08: which is shaped the future of the built environment for
00:40:08 --> 00:40:11: transformative impact in communities worldwide.
00:40:11 --> 00:40:15: What does this mission statement mean to you?
00:40:15 --> 00:40:15: Well,
00:40:15 --> 00:40:17: I I think that the mission of EU.
00:40:17 --> 00:40:20: L I really resonated with me and I suppose that's
00:40:20 --> 00:40:21: why I join,
00:40:21 --> 00:40:24: you know, as as a member and also to take
00:40:24 --> 00:40:26: part and help with this
00:40:26 --> 00:40:30: activities because. You know, as built professionals,
00:40:30 --> 00:40:33: we really want to contribute to making this a better
00:40:33 --> 00:40:37: world and we can do this collectively by sharing knowledge
00:40:37 --> 00:40:41: and best practices we need to collaborate and jointly push
00:40:41 --> 00:40:45: for ideas, solutions and policies that can really transform our
00:40:45 --> 00:40:48: environment and build communities.
00:40:48 --> 00:40:49: And I suppose this is
00:40:49 --> 00:40:51: what new ally is all about.
00:40:51 --> 00:40:54: Thank you very much, can hang for joining voices of
00:40:54 --> 00:40:55: your life.
00:40:55 --> 00:40:58: You're most welcome. It's been a pleasure having a
conversation.
00:40:58 --> 00:41:00: Thank you and thank you everyone for listening.
00:41:03 --> 00:41:04: You're probably
00:41:04 --> 00:41:08: listening to this podcast at the ULI Asia Pacific Reimagine
00:41:08 --> 00:41:10: and I hope you're enjoying this unique
00:41:10 --> 00:41:13: interactive event and find inspiration
00:41:13 --> 00:41:16: in reimagining conventional ideas about our city's
00:41:17 --> 00:41:19: business and life in the ever changing
00:41:19 --> 00:41:25: world of real estate. In the next step,
00:41:25 --> 00:41:28: so we'll be interviewing Benjamin Shaw who's the CEO of
00:41:29 --> 00:41:30: Grosvenor Asia Pacific.

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