

# Punggol Digital District to have more jobs close to green, smart homes

Lester Wong

When it is ready in 2023, the Punggol Digital District will provide residents living nearby with more jobs that are close to their greener and smarter homes, while also offering greater convenience, Senior Minister Teo Chee Hean said yesterday.

Mr Teo was speaking at the ground-breaking ceremony for the 50ha district – about the size of 50 football fields – which will house a business park that is being developed by national industrial estate developer JTC.

The Housing Board homes in Punggol's Northshore District as well as Northshore Residences I and II are slated to be completed at the end of this year.

About 28,000 digital economy jobs are expected to be created in the digital district, including positions in artificial intelligence and cyber security.

"The entire Punggol Town with its housing precincts and the digital district will serve as a living lab for public agencies and companies to test new ways of living, working and delivering services," Mr Teo, who is also Coordinating Minister for National Security, said in his speech at Waterway Point mall in Punggol.

"Fundamentally, that is what a smart nation will be judged by – the improvements to the living experience of our people."

The digital district will be powered by a software platform called the Open Digital Platform that integrates various smart technologies such as robotics and the Internet of Things to gather information, including on transport conditions, energy and water consumption, noise and rainfall.

The real-time data provided by the Open Digital Platform can be used by public agencies, companies and students to test green technologies and sustainable urban solutions, among other things.

Buildings in the Punggol Digital District are expected to be about 30 per cent more energy efficient

compared with standard commercial buildings.

Mr Teo added that the use of data analytics will also allow for better planning and management of Punggol Town to deliver public services more effectively.

"For example, we can study foot-fall data to find the best places to locate community facilities and retail spaces that most conveniently serve our residents," he said.

The Economic Development Board said on Thursday that it expects more than 32,000 jobs to be created from the \$15.2 billion in investments it secured last year. Close to half of these jobs will be in the digital economy.

Mr Allen Lin, co-founder of retail video analytics start-up Trakomatic, was excited to hear about the Punggol Digital District and its digital platform.

"Technology evolves so quickly today, with consumers expecting applications of increasingly higher quality," he said.

"Plugging into such a platform could allow us to develop prototypes quickly using actual visitor and shopper behaviour data."

With the Singapore Institute of Technology's (SIT) new campus to be located in the district, the business park will also be the first in Singapore to pilot a flexible land-use arrangement aimed at fostering closer collaboration between students and businesses.

SIT's research labs and learning facilities could be located in JTC's business park buildings, while businesses' research and development facilities and start-up spaces could be housed on SIT's campus.

JTC said several of its business park buildings will be connected to the SIT campus via an elevated pedestrian walkway, similar to the one that links the IMM mall, the Devan Nair Institute for Employment and Employability and Ng Teng Fong General Hospital in Jurong East.

SIT is piloting various projects on this industry collaboration model on its current premises in Ang Mo Kio.

"This is so that when we eventu-



Artist's impressions (above and below) of the Punggol Digital District, where about 28,000 digital economy jobs are expected to be created. PHOTOS: JTC



ally move to Punggol, our students will find working with industry in real-world environments second nature," said Associate Professor

Steven Wong, SIT's director of projects in the provost's office.

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