

Presidential Election: More effective use of TV

Letter from Kwan Jin Yao

THE potential use of Web-based channels in the coming Presidential Election ("Presidential Election will include TV, online campaigning", July 9) will heighten engagement and communication during the campaign.

However, since television has been widely-promoted as the primary means for election candidates to pitch their cases, it would make sense for the broadcasts to be made facilitative of healthy off-air discourse.

The current suggestions issued by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) — ranging from static statement-speeches to the presentation of individual profiles — are pedantic and limited.

First, the number of joint interviews should be increased, so as to offer the

electorate more opportunities to evaluate each hopeful's abilities to perform under pressure and their suitability for the roles and responsibilities of the post.

Given the President's important role as Singapore's top diplomat, more television appearances or public speeches will help voters determine his oratorical capabilities, as well as his readiness to interact under changing circumstances.

Second, instead of adhering to the traditional concept of having moderators pose the questions, the broadcasters can explore the possibility of adopting a townhall-type session, in which the audience spontaneously airs its perspectives and queries.

Finally, the different sessions can be dedicated to exploring various issues of importance to the office.

URA will review railway development plans

Letter from Lee Seng Lai
Director, Land Operations (Private) Division,
Singapore Land Authority

and Tan See Nin
Director (Physical Planning),
Urban Redevelopment Authority

WE THANK Mr Damian Ng ("Why the need to develop our railway tracks?", July 6) and Mr S Valbir ("Link to waterfront city", July 6) for their letters on the former railway land.

As agreed with Malaysia, Singapore will disassemble and remove the railway tracks and ancillary structures and hand them over to Malaysia by Dec 31 this year.

However, in response to public interest, the Singapore Land Authority (SLA) has opened up the entire line of railway tracks from July 1 to July 17 for the public to experience the tracks.

After July 17, a 3km stretch of railway tracks from Rifle Range Road

to the Rail Mall will continue to be open to the public till July 31. In view of the extensive works and the need to meet the deadline, the SLA will have to start the removal works from July 18.

The Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) will comprehensively review and chart the development plans for the former railway lands and their surrounding areas. As part of its review, the URA will study the possibility of marrying development and greenery, such as applying innovative strategies to maintain a continuous green link along the rail corridor without affecting the development potential of the lands.

The URA welcomes feedback and ideas from the community in shaping

Why the need to develop our railway tracks?

Letter from Damian Ng

I AM sad to learn that the railway tracks will only be open until next Sunday (with exception of a stretch between Rifle Range Road and the Rail Mall until end of the month).

It was beautiful to see hundreds of people strolling along the tracks at the weekend, enjoying the newfound space. It is not often the public is given such freedom to roam in such a tranquil environment. Yet, it is being taken away from us almost immediately.

I understand Minister of State for National Development Tan Chuan-jin has said it would take years and extensive public engagement to develop a "green" corridor that some are calling for. But the corridor is perfect as it is. Why does it need developing? It offers us a unique piece of Singapore's past, fresh air, greenery, wildlife and a place to get away from it all. So why spoil it with "development" and why do we have to "wait years" to enjoy it again?

Of course, I accept that the parcels of land near Tanjong Pagar should be developed for commercial reasons but, please, leave us free to roam the tracks from Queenstown to at least the Rail Mall. Too much land has already been developed on our island — please allow us to enjoy this lovely strip of land. Don't fence it out.



■ LINK TO WATERFRONT CITY
Since the former Tanjong Pagar Railway Station will be preserved as a national monument, I suggest it be linked to the planned waterfront city across the station, by an underpass, overhead bridge or even a sky train.
It would be even better to site an MRT station there to optimise use of the land for residential and/or commercial purposes. This would also be convenient for visitors to the future waterfront city. LETTER FROM S VALBIR

JULY 6

the future development plans for the railway lands, and we thank Mr Valbir for his suggestions. Members of the public are invited to visit and provide their ideas at www.ura.gov.sg/railcorridor.

US 'NEAR DEFEATING AL QAEDA'

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Can underground tunnel provide flood relief?

Letter from Lim Poh Seng

I WAS very excited when my friend forwarded a video clip about a storm water management and road tunnel project in Kuala Lumpur to me. (www.youtube.com/watch?v=0W4xHweJRc0).

My friend mentioned that "Singapore should build a similar underground tunnel along the railway track land to resolve the flooding and the north-south traffic problems. There is no need to acquire private properties to build another CTE. As there are no buildings above the railway track land, the tunnel could be built with cut-and-fill method which is very much cheaper than tunnelling.

"The tunnel should have three tiers, similar to the KL tunnel. The lowest tier being the storm reservoir. The upper two tiers are for the expressways which can be shut to form another two more storm reservoirs temporarily. You could also have four tiers and the top tier could be an MRT track, never to be flooded if you want it running all the time.

"The KL tunnel serves to channel water away from flood prone areas when the need arises and functions as expressway normally. If need be, we could connect the end of the tunnel to a huge under-

ground reservoir, similar to that in Tokyo."

Since the railway track runs parallel to the three major reservoirs, pipes could be built to run the water to the existing reservoirs if they are not filled to capacity. Hence, water in any flood-prone areas in Singapore can be quickly channelled to the railway tunnel since it is located in the centre of Singapore.

Hence, we could have a permanent to-and-fro marathon track without affecting traffic every time we have a marathon or running event. The two roads below could serve as an emergency road to ferry emergency cases from any running event to the hospital.

Alternatively, we could link the railway track to a branch park connector to have a one-way 42km track marathon. It will really be a win-win scenario for everyone, besides building up a healthy society.

On a similar matter, two-tier expressways should always be considered since this saves land and provides shelter from the sun and the rain for the lower tier expressway.

If we can have a three-tier expressway, the lower tier can be turned into a sheltered running and bicycle track and for shops, too, if the human traffic becomes heavy.

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