

## Seoul, South Korea conferred Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize 2018

**Singapore, 16 March 2018** – Seoul, the capital city of South Korea, has clinched the Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize 2018.

Through a combination of visionary leadership and active engagement of its citizens, Seoul has flourished to become an inclusive, creative and sustainable city with a high quality of life.

“Seoul once appeared as a city drowning in problems beyond solutions. Amazingly, strong creative leadership, building on deep citizen engagement and data-driven solutions, managed to turn things around. This mega city now leads the way in delivering inclusive, dynamic and forward-looking urban solutions. It is a truly worthy recipient of the Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize,” said Nominating Committee Chairman Professor Kishore Mahbubani.

The Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize honours outstanding achievements and contributions to the creations of liveable, vibrant and sustainable urban communities around the world. The biennial international award has been jointly organised by the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) and Centre for Liveable Cities (CLC) since 2010.

Seoul has exhibited several model strategies in creating a distinctive and delightful home for its citizens:

- a) **Bold leadership with innovative solutions.** Post-democratisation in the 1990s, Seoul faced the challenges of rapid urbanisation. These included an increasingly resistant and vocal populace, a drastic increase in the number of cars and resulting environmental degradation. Bold leadership to implement catalytic projects, such as the Dongdaemun Area Regeneration to shift Seoul’s focus from traditional manufacturing to design, led to benefits for the entire city.
- b) **Good communication with citizens and stakeholders.** City leaders also engaged and negotiated with stakeholders representing different interests, and formulated a set of conflict management strategies. The government introduced a team of negotiators for urban development projects, to engage citizens on the city’s vision. The Seoul Master Plan 2030 went further to make citizen participation the norm of all plans, and prioritised bottom-up processes.
- c) **Decisive shift to people-centric spaces, away from car-oriented transportation.** Seoul utilised big data to help citizens make a seamless and convenient transition to public transport. Elevated highways and main roads were reclaimed to become prominent public spaces. For instance, an elevated

highway was removed to restore a stream and create a natural recreational haven at Cheonggyecheon, and a formerly congested area at Yonsei-ro was pedestrianised.

- d) **Creative rejuvenation of modern heritage.** Seoul seeks innovative ways to repurpose its heritage buildings, a practice also known in the city as “development without demolition”. For example, Makercity Sewoon is a cluster of seven commercial superblocks built in the 1970s, which were rehabilitated through the sensitive introduction of new uses and interventions.

For more details on these strategies, please see **Annex A**.

"I would like to attribute the glory of receiving this award to the citizens of Seoul. I believe that this award is a recognition of the citizens of Seoul's retrospection of the past and insight into the future in order to make Seoul a 'meta-polis'<sup>1</sup>," said Seoul's Mayor Park Won Soon.

In addition to Seoul, four Special Mention cities were also awarded for their best practices in city management:

1. Hamburg, Germany
2. Kazan, Russian Federation
3. Surabaya, Indonesia
4. Tokyo, Japan

For more details on these cities, please see **Annex B**.

### **Prize Lecture and Award Ceremony at World Cities Summit 2018**

Seoul will be invited to give the Prize Lecture on 9 July 2018 at the upcoming World Cities Summit, which will be held at Marina Bay Sands over 8-12 July 2018. It will also receive the Prize at the Lee Kuan Yew Prize Award Ceremony and Banquet on 9 July 2018 during the summit. The prize comprises an award certificate, a gold medallion and a cash prize of S\$300,000, sponsored by Keppel Corporation.

Chief Executive Officer of Keppel Corporation Loh Chin Hua said: “Congratulations to the city of Seoul for its visionary leadership and active citizen engagement that have come together to make Seoul the vibrant, people-centric and innovative city it is today. Keppel shares the same commitment to building smart and highly liveable cities,

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<sup>1</sup> The term “meta-polis” refers to the transformation of cities’ objectives from growth and expansion, to relationships and connectivity, which the cities would target in a self-reflective and sustainable way. It is a new term coined by French sociologist Francois Ascher.

through our solutions for sustainable urbanisation and looks forward to deepening our collaboration with Seoul.”

Representatives of the four Special Mention cities will also share from their experiences at a dedicated Prize Forum at the summit.

For more on the Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize, please visit [www.leekuaneyeworldcityprize.com.sg](http://www.leekuaneyeworldcityprize.com.sg)

**To download high resolution images and Laureate City video, please go to:**  
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## **Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize 2018 Laureate**

### **Jury Citation on Seoul, South Korea**

Seoul is recognised as the role model for megacities with a will to change. With a leadership that dares to take bold decisions and a government that devises innovative problem-solving methods, the city has successfully turned itself around from a highly bureaucratic top-down city with rising tensions between the government and its people, into the inclusive, socially stable, and highly innovative city of today. As shown in Seoul's successful and impactful high quality projects to repurpose urban infrastructure, the city has proven itself as an excellent example where leadership, commitment to citizen engagement, data-supported problem-solving decisions, and creative designs can transform the built environment, add vibrancy and improve quality of life.

Like many other cities that experienced a very fast pace of urbanisation, Seoul found itself confronting many urban challenges at its peak. Following the city's democratisation in the 1990s, the government faced increasing resistance from a citizenry which had been largely left out of development decisions in the past, which could have brought the city's developments to a screeching halt. Moreover, Seoul was burdened at that time with the task of providing for a burgeoning car-based society, which in turn led to other issues such as environmental degradation.

The city recognised that its relentless pursuit of economic success over a relatively short period of time was at the expense of quality of life, which could make the city lose its appeal quickly. Seoul overcame this through its election of successive visionary leaders in the 2000s who demonstrated strong political will to take on these challenges, and displayed foresight to implement a series of catalytic projects – such as Dongdaemun Area Regeneration to shift Seoul's focus from traditional manufacturing to design – that would bring about benefits for the entire city. The city leaders understood that proper communication under the new circumstances was the

way forward to achieve buy-in from both the people and stakeholders. Through rigorous engagement and negotiation with conflicting parties representing various interests including traffic disturbance, business losses, and historic restoration, the city formulated a set of conflict management strategies, which eventually led to a dedicated team of negotiators within the Seoul Metropolitan Government today and became the city's "modus operandi" in urban development projects. These strategies help the city achieve impactful and effective results, and in turn win over even the most reluctant citizens over time, and align their aspirations with the city's vision.

The Seoul Master Plan 2030 is a highly remarkable turning point in the city's planning processes. Under the inspiring leadership of Mayor Park Won-soon, the city made the bold move to make citizen participation the norm of all plans, and bottom-up processes its primary focus. Ground-up processes are incorporated in day-to-day operations under the Community Governance Project where residents are given a say over local issues that affect their communities directly. Citizens can also decide the use of up to 5 percent of the entire city budget (or 55.5 million KRW) under the Public Participatory Budget System. Through regular monitoring and publishing of results in the press, and its exemplary use of big data in its decision-making to focus even on minute details, the city has ensured utmost transparency to its citizenry; no one is left out. The city not only managed to build trust with the citizens, but also assured them that engagement is not merely a token gesture, but one that will truly shape and reshape the future of the city.

Seoul, particularly in its urban core areas, demonstrates boldness in shifting away from car-oriented transportation to people-centric spaces, a challenge that many cities are struggling with today. Seoul recognises that the transition from private cars to mass transit is not an overnight task and tackles this through a comprehensive set of measures and the use of big data, to make public transport as seamless and convenient as possible. Most notably, through the reclamation of public spaces for people from cars, such as the removal of an elevated highway to restore the former stream at Cheonggyecheon, the pedestrianisation of Yonsei-ro, and the conversion of the Seoul Station Overpass into Seoulllo 7017 – a 1 kilometre-long lushly planted

elevated walkway with pockets of activities along the way, the city sends a strong signal that the future of the city is one where people come first, not cars.

As megacities continue to mature and age, deterioration of its urban infrastructure is inevitable. Seoul is highly innovative in its approach to rejuvenate its modern heritage and is constantly seeking creative ways to inject vibrancy and a breath of fresh air into its urban environment, which the city termed as “development without demolition”. The projects Makercity Sewoon – a rehabilitation of seven commercial superblocks built in the 1970s through the sensitive insertion of new interventions and uses, and Mapo Culture Depot – a conversion of disused oil tanks into a cultural venue and public space, offer new perspectives in repurposing infrastructure while preserving collective memories of the people.

As cities become larger and more difficult to manage, achieving social sustainability may be a much bigger challenge than extending economic and environmental sustainability. Should Seoul not have taken the bold and unusual step to make its citizens the creators of their own city plan, it could have further aggravated the already built-up tensions between the people and the government, and orchestrated its own decline. By turning the people into active participants of the city’s development, Seoul demonstrated that a truly bottom-up city is possible, where the citizens own their shared city.

## **Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize 2018 Special Mentions**

### **Jury Citations**

#### **Hamburg, Germany**

Hamburg is recognised as an extraordinary port city that has overcome planning challenges to become an attractive and welcoming city of opportunities for a population that now includes a growing number of immigrants. It has very effectively evolved from previous conventional practice of urban expansion on the fringe through the successful implementation of its inner city densification strategy to cater to increased demand for housing and urban mobility from its growing population. The new HafenCity is an excellent demonstration of this strategy. The former underused harbour and industrial space located next to the historical Speicherstadt warehouse district has been transformed from a dilapidated area into a dynamic mix-use district of urban housing, workplaces and recreation areas. Recognising that built heritage is an important aspect that adds to the quality of life in an ever-changing environment, the city placed great emphasis on the urban design of the new district to relate to the old city, and to align vistas with the spires of the old churches while also sensitively providing protection against flooding and rising waters.

First Mayor Olaf Scholz is instrumental in the city's drive towards affordable housing for different segments of the population, and the creation of an especially attractive city for the young. Major residential development projects consist of three equal parts: one-third social housing, one-third condominiums, and one-third privately-funded rental housing. In Altona, a soon-to-be defunct rail yard is making way for new housing, simultaneously enhancing intercity train service while also linking neighbourhoods that had previously been divided by the rail lines.

Hamburg's strategy of inclusiveness is exemplary. The city's culture of cooperation is characterised by public-private partnerships realising many housing and transportation projects, and complemented by a citizen participation process that

acknowledges its people as key stakeholders and drivers of change. Extensive communication with citizens, involving even young children, from the very early stages of planning have devised holistic solutions that bring about greater benefits; for instance, the Autobahndeckel evolved from conventional traffic noise protection walls to landscaped decks that goes beyond its original purpose to reconnect existing parks while adding new gardens spaces for the city's inhabitants. Hamburg's inclusiveness extends to its immigrants and refugees. Under a comprehensive integration programme launched in 2013, newcomers are given the best possible support to overcome the barriers that normally impede their assimilation. This allows them to become positive contributors as quickly as possible, with the potential to achieve German citizenship.

Hamburg is also commendable for its push towards sustainable urban development through the ongoing conversion of its transportation system to one based on renewable energy and its innovative initiative "switch", which intend to reduce private car usage through the introduction of alternative mobility options at key transportation nodes.

With excellent urban initiatives creating a conducive environment for its inhabitants and imbuing the city with an uplifting spirit, Hamburg stands out as an exemplary model for other cities who are looking for ways to enhance economic competitiveness through education, workforce support, and high quality of life.

## **Kazan, Russian Federation**

Kazan is recognised for its impressive turnaround from a formerly drab city with youth criminal gang and poor public health problems into a healthy city now known for sports and social and religious harmony. Under the highly commendable leadership of Mayor Ilсур Metshin, the city recognises that its people are the city's most valuable asset and has invested strategically in sports, medicine, nutrition, and family life to improve Kazan's overall quality of life.

The city has leveraged international sporting events such as the 2013 Summer Universiade to brand itself as the sporting capital of Russia, and has constructed a range of sporting infrastructure, which benefited its people after the events as part of the city's push for wider adoption of sports and wellbeing. The Department of Food and Social Catering of Kazan – the largest food industry operator in the Republic of Tatarstan – caters meals for some 265,000 people including schools and hospitals, ensuring good nutrition to its people. The Kazan Family Centre is an institution that promotes family life by celebrating marriage life and multiple births, and organises social activities for families. Through these initiatives, the city has seen dramatic improvements in the city's quality of life: over the last 10 years, the lifespan of its residents increased by 9 years, birth-rates increased by 2 times, abortion rates decreased by 40 percent, and crime rates decreased by 2 times.

Kazan is also commendable for taking the lead among Russian cities in embracing innovation. The city capitalises on its youth, as seen in its young leadership, and is committed to bringing new ideas that could catalyse positive change. Kazan is one of the host cities for the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia, as well as the host for the 2019 WorldSkills Competition. These events provide the impetus for infrastructural upgrades and urban development that will benefit the everyday life of its residents. The development of the embankment of the Kaban Lake and the rehabilitation of Lebyazhye Lake are also positive examples to show how Kazan creatively improves the city through landscaping, while providing new recreational areas and opportunities for the people.

Kazan is highly remarkable as a city of diverse cultures, comprising 115 different nationalities, 36 national cultural organisations, 180 religious communities, and 9,000 foreign students. Most notably, the city's population is made up of approximately 50 percent orthodox Christians and 50 percent Muslims living in peaceful co-existence. The friendship and respect for one another's individual beliefs demonstrated amongst the Kazan people makes it a model city of respect for ethnic and religious diversity, and sends a powerful message to the rest of the world that civil, racial and religious harmony is achievable and sustainable.

## Surabaya, Indonesia

Surabaya is an emerging city that is commended for its strong appreciation of culture and for taking a bold urban development strategy to preserve and develop its kampung neighbourhoods, instead of displacing them, while also experiencing rapid economic growth. The comprehensive 'Kampung Improvement Programme' successfully brought together strong community support and participation from the citizens to collaborate closely with the local government in transforming the kampungs into clean, conducive, and productive environments. The initiative is also an inspiring model for alleviating poverty through which the city provided professional training to improve the villagers' in-house production of food and crafts for sale, made available cheap credit by the national government, and prepared the market to absorb the products. The 'Kampung Unggulan' (Prominent Kampung) and 'Pahlawan Ekonomi' (Economy Hero) programmes, and community-based waste management measures such as recycling, composting and waste bank helped to formalise and improve the economic status of the lower income settlements, transforming their subsistence economy into urban economy, while also promoting home-based entrepreneurship.

Mayor Tri Rismaharini is instrumental in the city's achievements and transformation. She is widely acknowledged for her inclusive and people-centric urban development approach to advance Surabaya from an unattractive city into a clean and green thriving metropolis with improved quality of life. Surabaya has successfully mustered many innovative ground-up initiatives by harnessing businesses and citizens to make modest attempts at improving the environment, creating jobs and managing urban waste. The city government has placed great importance on citizenry participation and building trust and worked closely with the local universities in seeking policy advice and implementation of its initiatives.

Surabaya's strong drive to promote greening in the city deserves praise. The city constantly seeks innovative and creative ways despite limited resources to achieve its vision, exemplified by partnering with the private sector in the development and maintenance of green spaces and environmental improvement works. Today there are

about 100 active parks in Surabaya, and the green open space has reached more than 20 percent of the city area.

Surabaya's efforts to promote inclusive learning and develop the young population are exemplary. With 35 percent of the city's annual budget allocated for education, the city has improved the literacy level of the community through providing free education for the under-privileged, setting up reading corners and mobile libraries across the city and in the parks, and offering free computer classes and foreign language training to its residents.

The involvement and commitment of both the people and the Mayor working closely together for a better quality of life, is clearly felt through the palpable vibrancy of the kampungs. Surabaya has distinguished itself as a forward-looking emerging city and is an inspiration to other cities in developing economies which are looking to learn from a well-managed city now characterised by economic growth, social harmony, and environmental sustainability.

## Tokyo, Japan

Tokyo is recognised as an exemplary megacity that works. Everything across the city is well managed despite its large and seemingly ungovernable size. Through the conscientious implementation of the city's urban blueprint first developed in 2001 and updated in 2016, Tokyo has transformed from its low period of the 90s following the burst of Japan's economic bubble to the highly efficient, liveable, and vibrant city one experiences today. The credit for the achievements goes to both the government, as well as the enlightened private sector who took it upon themselves to contribute towards the greater good for citizens as part of their larger social responsibility.

Tokyo displayed prescient foresight in recognising that good public infrastructure is critical to support the growing metropolis and that it epitomises the Japanese concept of "kaizen" through its long-term provision of, and continuous investment in, its public transportation network over 60 years to ensure its contemporary efficiency and success. The results are evident: in most parts of central Tokyo, it only takes 5 to 10 minutes on foot to reach the nearest train station, while the city's train modal share within its 23 Special Wards is at an impressive 48 percent - higher than any other city in the world. At the same time, despite its growing population, the city reduced its train congestion rate from 221 percent in 1975 to 164 percent in 2015.

Tokyo is highly commendable for its exceptional public-private partnership model over the long term which has produced huge successes for the city. The city overcomes its governance and budget limitations by leveraging the enlightened private sector with the capability and talents to deliver high quality urban development projects. A case-in-point is the remarkable transformation of the Otemachi-Marunouchi-Yurakucho (OMY) District, one of many business centres to increase Tokyo's economic vitality under the city's long-term vision. Accommodating ground-up initiatives and exercising flexibility in plans, has helped the city achieve an outstanding outcome in urban development: the OMY District has been transformed from a sombre strictly suit-and-tie business environment into a vibrant, far more casual and inclusive environment that caters to a wide range of users.

As Tokyo moves towards hosting the Tokyo Summer Olympics 2020, it has in place a planned vision for the future toward which the city is working. Under the Action Plan 2020, the city focuses on three aspects: “Safe City”, “Diverse City”, and “Smart City” to make the city resilient, accommodating, and open to broader collaborations to meet future challenges. Governor Yuriko Koike is an inspiration for her leadership, as seen in her drive for inclusiveness by focusing and capitalising on the planning for Paralympic Games, to step up the city’s barrier-free efforts. In doing so, Tokyo is preparing itself for the future as its population ages, an initiative from which other cities facing similar aging issues can learn.