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**Speech by Minister of State for National Development
Tan Chuan-Jin at the launch of “Journey of Possibilities” exhibition
and awards presentation on 30 Mar 2012**

Good evening. I am happy to join you this evening at the “Journey of Possibilities” awards presentation and exhibition launch.

A Journey of Possibilities

2. Since the former railway land was returned to Singapore last July, we have indeed embarked on a journey of possibilities – from opening up the entire stretch of 26km corridor for the public to enjoy, to intensive public engagement on suggestions and names for the corridor, and the organisation of this Ideas Competition, for which the winners will be announced today. There will be more possibilities to come, I am sure.

3. And it is not just the journey that matters, but also the company we keep. I am heartened that many people have joined us on this journey. This includes the Rail Corridor Consultation Group members comprising various interest groups; the more than 500 members of the public who have provided URA with interesting feedback and suggestions on their Rail Corridor website, some of which are showcased in this exhibition; students and design professionals who participated in the ‘Re-imagining the Rail Corridor’ exhibition organised by the Friends of the Rail

Corridor last year; and, not forgetting all of you here who have participated in the Ideas Competition.

4. I would also like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to members of the Rail Corridor Consultation Group. Virtually all of them took precious time off to participate in the judging of this competition. Since its inception, members of this group have provided valuable views and ideas, and I am very heartened by the positive and constructive partnership we have established over time.

Overwhelming response for Ideas Competition

5. We are delighted by the overwhelming response to the Ideas Competition. Since the competition was launched last November, URA received more than 200 submissions. Apart from practitioners such as architects and landscape architects, the competition attracted interest from our local schools, art schools and tertiary education institutions such as NUS, Temasek Polytechnic and Singapore Polytechnic. I was pleasantly surprised to learn that the Competition has also attracted participants from Australia, United Kingdom, Denmark and the Netherlands as well as student submissions from the Community College of Philadelphia in the United States. All your entries provide useful feedback and ideas, from which URA will distil the design principles and parameters that could form part of the brief for the Rail Corridor in future.

6. Today, we will be presenting prizes to 18 winning teams and individuals for their innovative ideas in addressing the issue that they have chosen, and recognising another 19 schemes which the judges felt were worthy of “honourable mentions” for their creativity and surprising qualities. My heartiest congratulations to all of you.

7. Here, I would like to share with you two interesting winning ideas.

8. The Tiger's Garden, one of the winning schemes, was an out-of-the-box idea by Keith Stead & team from Oculus Landscape Architecture Urban Design (Australia) that envisioned the entire Rail Corridor as an elevated walkway so that the land below can be returned to nature. This concept allows people to walk and jog seamlessly along the entire length of the Rail Corridor and yet be separated from the wilderness below them. Of course, the scheme also romanticised the re-introduction of tigers back into the Singapore landscape and in a sense the proposal went beyond NParks' concept of the City in a Garden to that of a City in a Jungle. It is unlikely that we will allow tigers to re-populate our forest. However, we are encouraged by the spirit of boldness in putting forth extraordinary ideas and unique possibilities that could very well be the hallmark of the Rail Corridor in future. It is not inconceivable that a raised walkway is one way of integrating future urban development with the Rail Corridor while minimising any impact on the natural environment.

9. Another winning scheme is the Singapore Green Corridor Festival that will turn the entire corridor into an event space for the arts. I think this is a great idea from Low Ai Ci, Alexandra Yang & Eunice Chuah of NUS, which has the potential to create a signature event that involves all communities along the Rail Corridor on the same day. This means all residents living near the corridor will have the unique opportunity to enjoy the arts and nature at the same time. It is an exciting way to build communities and memories together.

10. Many other commendable, interesting and exciting ideas are exhibited here. In fact, later this evening, the winners of the Ideas Competition will be sharing their

entries with you. I hope you will enjoy this process of sharing and learning as we collectively consider ways to deal with key issues and challenges for the Rail Corridor. These challenges include integrating biodiversity with our built development, and how the heritage of Rail Corridor can be celebrated in meaningful and thoughtful ways.

Conclusion

11. Our journey does not end with this exhibition. Over the coming months, URA plans to engage the community, schools and other agencies to organise more Rail Corridor activities. Do look out for them. Further down the road, URA is considering the launch of a Master Plan and Design competition for the Rail Corridor. In the meantime, do visit and experience the Rail Corridor with your family and friends.

12. Before I end, I would like to again congratulate the winners of the Ideas Competition and thank everyone who sent in their ideas. Thank you for joining us on this journey of possibilities. With this, I declare the “Journey of Possibilities” exhibition open. Thank you.

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