

Hard decisions in city planning, says minister

The Straits Times, 25 January 2022

As a city state with only 720 sq km of land on which to fit all the elements of a nation and society, Singapore will always face intensely difficult trade-offs, National Development Minister Desmond Lee said yesterday.

That is why Singapore city planning is not just a technical or infrastructural exercise, but a socio-political process.

In an address at the Singapore Perspectives 2022 conference organised by the Institute of Policy Studies, Mr Lee said the choices the nation makes will define the society it becomes.

For four days over three weeks, urban thinkers, practitioners and researchers discussed how Singapore can continue to succeed as a global city and city state in the 21st century.

Mr Lee said trust, stewardship and collective action are key to achieving the vision of a future Singapore that is diverse, inclusive, connected to the world, in harmony with nature and rooted in heritage.

He added that city planning involves hard decisions, and sometimes no perfect solutions can be found, so people must trust that decisions are made in the best collective interest, after considering all perspectives.