ABSTRACT

Through the years, the residential population in Chinatown has dropped sharply, especially the younger people, leading to an ageing population, lost in vitality and decline in businesses that require a sustaining local residential population to survive in the long run. The Singapore Tourism Board (STB) had embarked on a $97.5 million plan since 1998 to revitalise Chinatown and increase its number of residents. Besides the involvement of the public and private sectors, there is also public participation through channels like forums.

This study aims to investigate the social, physical and economic issues concerning residential development in Chinatown, the STB’s plan to increase residents in Chinatown, the public’s responses to it and perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of Chinatown by conducting a survey.

The survey had found that most people supported the STB’s plan and most residents would not shift from Chinatown. Most residents chose to stay in Chinatown because of its central location and good accessibility. Overall, the interviewees perceived Chinatown as more attractive than unattractive. Its
greatest strengths are "rich culture and heritage", "good accessibility" and "central location". Its main weaknesses are "high level of pollution and congestion", "imbalance in age groups" and "disorganised roads and streets".

Finally, the interviewees were found to be rather practical when asked to grade on an overall basis the importance of several attributes of Chinatown, as attributes like "accessibility" and "security" are the most important and graded higher than "landscaping" and "street activities".