

# More footpaths in Tampines will be wider soon

BY NICHOLAS YONG

FOOTWAYS in Tampines are being widened in an attempt to accommodate cyclists and pedestrians.

At least 600m of footpaths in the Tampines estate have already been expanded to as much as 2m and another 600m will be broadened by the end of March next year.

The move is part of the Tampines Town Council's efforts to try and assess if a 18-month-long pilot project to allow cycling on pedestrian footpaths in the neighbourhood will work.

In May last year, Tampines GRC Members of Parliament started a year-long trial of the pilot project. The trial period was extended by six months in August.

Based on feedback from residents and from a committee made up of representatives from the police, the Land Transport Authority and grassroots organisations, the town council decided to widen stretches of footpaths because they were too narrow to take both groups of users.

Further, the town council has been experimenting with putting up more safety features, such as signage and strips, to prevent cyclists from speeding along these footpaths.

They are also increasing the number of wardens, whose role is to provide advice and reminders to cyclists. If necessary, they may also report incidents of reckless cycling to the police. Forty-six more wardens will be deployed, bringing the total number to 236.

Tampines GRC MP Irene Ng, who spoke to reporters after handing out brochures on cycling safety with other MPs, including National Development Minister Mah Bow Tan, said another survey will be done after the extended trial ends next month.

The results of the trial and feedback from residents and the joint committee will be taken into account before a final decision is made, Ms Ng said.

The scheme has received a "quite positive" response so far, she said. "We are still educating that cyclists and pedestrians can share footways safely if both exercise their rights responsibly. There's no reason to feel threatened."



Cyclist Nuji Murtak "bumping into" Mr Mah Bow Tan and Ms Irene Ng along a footpath in Tampines yesterday. ST PHOTO: ASHLEIGH SIM

Ms Ng stressed that the scheme is not for the whole of Singapore, noting that other estates may lack the comprehensive system that Tampines has put in place.

Tampines has set aside \$1 million to build 2.3km of bike paths in the cycling-heavy areas, with a further 7km of paths which will link up with park connectors to other towns in the east.

Retiree Nuji Murtak, 75, who cycles to the market every day, thinks the scheme is a good idea. "Before, I had to use the main road. Now with this new scheme, it's safer for me. I am a safe rider and I don't disturb other pedestrians."

Fellow retiree Kar Ti Ni, 65, who has

been cycling for 10 years, also supports the scheme but remains mindful of safety. A long time Tampines resident, Madam Kar gets off and pushes her bike when she sees pedestrians ahead.

Since the trial was extended, enforcement blitzes by the Traffic Police have been carried out against errant cyclists there.

Even if the scheme to allow cyclists on footpaths is approved, cyclists still have to exercise caution.

Those caught riding without due regard for the safety of others are liable to face a composition fine of \$20. Reckless cyclists can also be jailed up to a year, or fined up to \$5,000 or both.

Last year, 340 summonses were issued to errant cyclists islandwide.