

# New covered walkways to hit 200km mark

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Last 150m stretch of added pathways under Walk2Ride scheme to be completed on Wed

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**Rachel Au-Yong**  
Housing Correspondent

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An ambitious programme to provide more covered walkways here will achieve a major milestone on Wednesday with the completion of 200km worth of new paths.

These pathways, which cost \$300 million to build, are more than four times the 46km worth of walkways built before the launch of the Walk2Ride programme in 2013.

The last 150m stretch of the 200km of added walkways will be completed outside Tekka Centre in Little India on Wednesday. A ceremony to be attended by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong will be held to mark the occasion.

In a Facebook post yesterday, Transport Minister Khaw Boon Wan said: “We know that safe, comfortable walkways are necessary to get Singaporeans to #WalkCycleRide and make Singapore car-lite. And in our tropical weather, they have to be sheltered too.”

Launched in 2013, Walk2Ride sought to link commuters from MRT stations to residences and amenities such as schools and

healthcare facilities within a 400m radius, as well as to bus interchanges, LRT stations and some bus stops within a 200m radius.

Before this, sheltered walkways were provided from transport nodes to schools and healthcare facilities only within a 200m radius. They were also provided within residential estates by town councils.

The Land Transport Authority (LTA) said it will continue to add to the network of sheltered walkways.

To minimise inconvenience to residents, as well as ensure the durability of the walkways, the LTA had prefabricated all materials off-site to speed up the installation process.

The walkways were also standardised to allow modifications later. They were made with galvanised steel and aluminium, which the LTA said are more durable and cheaper to maintain.

In addition, the walkways are supported on one post – as opposed to two – to maximise the space for commuters.

For Fajar Secondary School vice-principal Guineve Yeo, the sheltered walkways put up at the start of the year near the school in Bukit

Panjang have had a noticeable impact on her students: fewer are late now. “Even when it’s rainy, they can come to school on time,” she said. “They don’t have to wait out a storm at an HDB void deck or MRT station.”

In addition to connected walkways in the neighbourhood, the LTA “filled in” a 6m-gap between an existing walkway and the school’s.

Another beneficiary is full-time national serviceman Ferdinand Ezekial Francis, 21, who can now make his way to South View LRT station from his Bukit Panjang Housing Board flat come rain or shine.

“I don’t carry an umbrella, so the walkway has been good.”

Asked about the Walk2Ride programme, Nee Soon GRC MP Lee Bee Wah, who had in March last year raised in Parliament the case of a walkway ending 10m short of Khatib MRT station, said: “All *gao dim* (taken care of) already.”

But she hoped the authorities can move on to a second phase of the programme.

“If we want to encourage residents to walk more, the Government can consider a Walk2Ride extension beyond the 400m radius to even 1km, for some areas.”

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rachelay@sph.com.sg

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