

New Bencoolen Street unveiled

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The hoardings around Bencoolen Street have come down, giving the public a glimpse of some of its new pedestrian-friendly features.

These include a wider pedestrian walkway and a dedicated cycling path, in addition to the 125 bicycle parking spaces that will line the street, announced last year as part of Singapore's car-lite drive.

These were carved from two of the four lanes that previously made up the 450m stretch of road. A third lane now acts as a dedicated bus lane.

Parts of the pavement remain closed to the public but are expected to open soon.

The stretch was closed for more than five years due to construction of the Bencoolen MRT station, which is scheduled to open later this year as part of the third phase of the Downtown Line.

Students from the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (Nafa) in Bencoolen Street welcomed the wider pathway.

"It's much more spacious now," said Ms Wahyu Rosli, 22, an advertising student.

Fine arts student Dillon Tan, 20, agreed, but said the bus lane could



New features in Bencoolen Street include a wider pedestrian walkway and a cycling path as part of Singapore's car-lite drive. ST PHOTO: ALPHONSUS CHERN

be inconvenient as taxis will not be able to stop there.

The street will soon also feature benches designed by Nafa students and alumni, as part of a collaboration with the Land Transport Authority and the Urban Redevelopment Authority, to add "a touch of creativity to the streetscape".

Firms in the area hope that business, which saw a decline over the past few years because of construction work, will pick up.

However, one hotel manager,

who declined to be named, said that having only one lane open to traffic could make it inconvenient for tour buses to stop there.

Ms Mazlina Muhammad, 45, who owns a travel agency, also sold snacks and drinks to earn extra income when construction began.

She said: "Tourists were turned away by the noise. Now that it's coming to an end, I'm hopeful that things will pick up."

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