

EASY WAY UP:
The ramp in the underpass linking Toa Payoh MRT station to Lorong 2 makes it easier for Madam Jamilah Abdullah to get around.



ST PHOTO: SAMUEL HE

New Toa Payoh ramp gives elderly more independence

By JESSICA LIM

THRICE-weekly grocery-shopping trips used to be an ordeal for Madam Tan Gui Hua.

The 62-year-old dreaded lugging heavy shopping bags up a flight of stairs to the Toa Payoh MRT station.

"I sometimes had to ask for

help or had to take a rest before I could continue," she said.

But now, a new ramp in the underpass linking the train station to Lorong 2 Toa Payoh has made her life easier.

The retiree, who lives near the MRT station, can now wheel her groceries home in a shopping trolley along the 30m-long tiled ramp, complete with grab bars.

The underpass was opened officially by Education Minister Ng Eng Hen yesterday.

The need for the \$160,000 ramp was conveyed to the Land Transport Authority (LTA) after "lots of feedback over the past two years from residents", said Mr A. Jeyaseelan, 46, an executive member of a local residents' committee.

The LTA approved the proposal, which is in line with plans to provide lifts, ramps, grab bars and wheelchair-friendly toilets in public areas and buildings by 2011.

"Toa Payoh is an old estate...As the flats have grown older, so have the residents.

"Now, elderly residents say that they have difficulty walking down the stairs," said Dr

Ng, who is an MP for Bishan-Toa Payoh GRC.

For Madam Premavathi John, who walks with a limp since an operation a year ago, the ramp is more than just a convenience. "With this ramp, people like us no longer have to rely on others for help. We can be independent again," said the 64-year-old mother of three.