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Prioritise sustainability, liveability in mulling planning approval

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I WISH to thank *StarMetro* for highlighting the concerns expressed by residents, following the recent stakeholder engagement session organised by Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) on June 24.

Public reporting of planning issues such as these is important, because they affect not only nearby residents but also the future development of Kuala Lumpur.

While traffic congestion understandably featured prominently, it represents only one aspect of a much broader discussion.

The proposed development comprises almost 1,500 serviced apartment units, together with retail components on a site opposite Pantai Hospital Kuala Lumpur and adjacent to the headquarters of Tenaga Nasional Bhd (TNB).

During the engagement session, residents' associations, institutional stakeholders and members of the public raised concerns that extended well beyond traffic.

Among issues discussed were the cumulative impact of past, existing and multiple planned major developments for the Bukit Pantai and Bangsar corridor.

This included emergency access to Pantai Hospital, infrastructure capacity, drainage, environmental sustainability, preservation of green spaces and whether the scale of the proposal is consistent with the long-term planning objectives of the



Residents voicing their concerns during a stakeholders engagement session with DBKL and developer. — Filepic

Kuala Lumpur Structure Plan 2040 and the Kuala Lumpur Local Plan 2040.

Perhaps the most important question is not whether Kuala Lumpur should continue to develop, as cities must grow and evolve.

Rather, it is whether development is taking place at an appropriate scale, in appropriate locations, and with infrastructure that can safely and sustainably support both existing and future communities.

Modern urban planning

increasingly requires consideration not only of individual projects but also of their cumulative effect on a neighbourhood's carrying capacity and liveability.

This is particularly relevant in Bukit Pantai and Bangsar, where several significant developments are proposed or planned within the same corridor.

Population density should also be treated as a planning and approval issue.

Bangsar and the surrounding corridor already face significant density pressure, with existing

high-rise residences and further supply from developments such as Bangsar Hill Park and SP Setia's Federal Hill project.

Adding more serviced apartments in the same corridor would add materially to population load, traffic movements, infrastructure demand and pressure on neighbourhood liveability.

One encouraging aspect of the recent engagement session was the quality of public participation.

Residents came well prepared,



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raised thoughtful questions and provided considered responses to matters put forward by DBKL and the developer.

Equally significant was the participation of TNB, reflecting the wider public interest in the proposal.

We hope concerns raised will be carefully considered, and any decision will be based not only on technical compliance, but also on whether it serves the long-term public interest and advances the broader vision of a sustainable, liveable and inclusive Kuala Lumpur.

Public participation should never be regarded as a procedural formality.

It is an essential part of good planning and an opportunity to arrive at better decisions for the benefit of the whole community.

DR VINOD JOSHI OBE
Bukit Pantai Residents
Coalition