

Headline	Residents debate if Klang is city ready		
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Klang Municipal Council is expected to have a bigger workforce once it becomes a city council.

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NEXT month, Klang will be proclaimed a city by Selangor Ruler Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah. This will make it Selangor's fourth city after Shah Alam, Petaling Jaya and Subang Jaya. Klang is expected to be proclaimed a royal city on Feb 5.

Most Klang residents are excited and happy about the status upgrade, with many saying that it is timely.

However, some sceptics are doubtful if the town's custodian, Klang Municipal Council (MPK), is capable of managing a city.

In a December interview with *The Star*, Sultan Sharafuddin said there had been requests for Klang to be upgraded a long time ago, but His Royal Highness had not agreed to it because the town did not meet the mark with its cleanliness and flooding issues.

Some Klang residents are also not confident that MPK had what it took to transform Klang to live up to city status.

They alleged that while the urban and visible parts of Klang looked nice, many hidden, sub-urban areas were "in a shocking mess".

Taman Melawis resident Kumaraesingam Balasingam alleged that this was because MPK had not supervised the performance of its appointed contractors.

"Many Klang roads, especially in the 'hidden' parts of Port Klang, are riddled with potholes. The drains are not cleaned, the grass has not been cut, trees have not been pruned and faulty street lights not repaired," he said.

Social activist Mikhael Iskhandhaar called on MPK to be restructured before Klang is proclaimed a city.

"Most of MPK's current heads of department must be transferred out to make way for new people with new ideas and a new work culture," said Mikhael.

"If the current lot is allowed to continue to run Klang, the positive changes that people are hoping for will never happen."

The Taman Sentosa resident created waves recently when he and some friends patched up 10

# Residents debate if Klang is city ready

## Sceptics doubtful that municipal council is up to the mark as town's many issues persist



Residents complain that less visible areas like Jalan Kem in Port Klang have potholes and rubbish. — Photos: KK SHAM/The Star

potholes in their residential area.

Mikhael had said that the cost of patching the 10 potholes with good quality tar and precise compacting was only RM1,300, and asked why repairs by MPK contractors was of poor quality.

Another Klang resident, Prakash Batumalai, who lived in Lorong Mastika, said MPK must initiate long-term solutions to function as a city council.

"If it rains for an hour, water gets into my house from the toilet and backyard drains.

"I have complained to MPK several times. Sometimes they just clean the drains as a temporary measure, sometimes they do not even show up," added Prakash.

Caryn Wong's biggest grouse was how MPK gave a landowner approval to build a rubbish disposal area and TNB power station opposite the front gate of her home in Lorong Mempelam, near Persiaran Raja Muda Musa.

She said MPK officers visited the site after receiving several complaints and when the issue

was raised with assemblyman Tony Leong.

She claimed that the officers did not even enter the area to check, but just stood outside the tall zinc hoarding.

"MPK should do a site inspection before issuing any approvals to ensure the building of structures in old housing areas do not inconvenience residents," added Wong.

Selangor local government and tourism committee chairman Datuk Ng Suee Lim concurred that MPK should inspect



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Mohammed Khusrin says MPK should be given a year to bring change to Klang.



Noraini says MPK staff need to work harder and tackle issues.



Ng says MPK must put in effort to earn its city council status.

affected areas before approving building projects.

"MPK must ensure all applications are properly scrutinised and the area is duly inspected to prevent any negative impact as this could tarnish the council's image and inconvenience residents," said Ng.

He said there was still room for improvement with regard to the council's performance and hence, MPK must put in the



Mikhael says MPK's department heads need to be transferred out if Klang residents are to see positive change.

**"Many Klang roads are riddled with potholes, drains are not cleaned, the grass has not been cut, trees have not been pruned and faulty street lights not repaired."**

Kumaraesinggam Balasingam

effort to earn its city council status.

Ng added that Klang residents must also cooperate with MPK to ensure the town's cleanliness was maintained.

"People must not throw rubbish indiscriminately and expect MPK to keep Klang clean. There must be a change in mentality."

Ng said because Klang had many industrial areas and factories, many foreign workers lived there.

"Educating foreigners on rubbish disposal and to keep their environment clean is another big challenge for MPK."

Datuk Mohammed Khusrin Munawi, who is the Orang Besar Daerah Klang, asked MPK be given at least a year after becoming a city, to bring about changes.

"Many plans costing several millions have been drafted and

will be implemented soon to improve Klang."

MPK, he said, received good income and had ample funds in its coffers to see the plans through.

After the proclamation, MPK would have a bigger workforce to help put all plans in place to transform Klang, he added.

Klang district officer Shahman Jalaludin said rubbish and flooding problems would always exist but he was confident MPK would do its best to resolve them.

"MPK is prepared to take the necessary measures to counter all issues it faces and to upgrade its services to serve the people better once it is a city council," said Shahman.

Selangor Town and Country Planning Department director Khairulzaman Ibrahim said among issues that must be addressed was the beautification



Rubbish dumped at a back lane in Persiaran Raja Muda Musa, Port Klang.

of Sungai Klang.

"It is the norm in many cities in the world to develop the banks of their major rivers.

"The land along Sungai Klang needs to be developed into recreational areas and have small commercial outlets," he said.

Khairulzaman added that some of Klang's rundown buildings must also be given a facelift to keep to a city's image.

"Many of these buildings are privately owned and therefore there has to be cooperation between MPK and the owners to give these structures a facelift within the ambit of urban regeneration guidelines," he said.

Newly appointed Klang mayor Datin Paduka Noraini Roslan agreed there was room for improvement.

"The staff also has to work harder and to tackle matters such as cleanliness with cooperation of all parties," she said.

Klang is steeped in history. Bronze Age artefacts have been found in the royal town, indicat-

ing it had been populated since prehistoric times.

Being the location of the country's first port (Port Swettenham), Klang was a conduit for many Chinese and Indian immigrants who arrived in search of a better future in the early 1900s.

Although the town took shape in the 1800s, some believe that Klang had existed almost 2,000 years ago.

It used to be the economic centre during the colonial era and was Selangor's capital from 1974 to 1977 before the state administration was relocated to Shah Alam.

MPK began as the Klang Health Board in 1890 and the district's first borders were drawn up in 1895.

The Klang Health Board became the Klang Town Board in 1945 and eventually became the Klang Town Council in 1954.

It became the Klang District Council in 1971 before becoming the Klang Municipal Council in 1977.