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# 'Planter boxes on walkway a bane'

## DBKL's 'win-win' solution to placate eateries in Jalan Bukit Bintang under fire from public

THE sight of planter boxes in front of eateries along Jalan Bukit Bintang's pedestrian walkway to allow space for outdoor seating has upset some members of the public.

They say the move by Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL), whom they had hoped would order the premises to remove any and all obstructions on the walkway, had set a bad precedent.

In several photos shared by DBKL on its social media page, the immediate area in front of the food and beverage premises was enclosed with the planter boxes, with pedestrians seen walking along outside it.

"Pedestrians say the tables and chairs were blocking their access, while the restaurant claimed it had limited space for customers.

"By placing the boxes, the public can now walk there while the operators still have some space for their tables and chairs," said DBKL in the post.

A DBKL spokesperson told *StarMetro* that the eatery operators were also tasked with maintaining the planter boxes.

Social media user Mazlan Mohamad questioned DBKL's commitment in upholding rules and regulations in the capital city.

He said as the local authority, DBKL must strictly enforce the law and not accommodate businesses that failed to comply with the rules.

"This will set a bad precedent. More premises might follow suit and break the rules," he said.

Under the Street, Drainage and Building Act 1974, the placing of wares on a public walkway that could hinder access is prohibited.

Another social media user Mohd. Faizal Abu Bakar said DBKL's placement of planter boxes gave an impression of double standards among city folk.



DBKL has placed planter boxes on the pedestrian walkway along Jalan Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur, to make space for eateries to place tables and chairs.

"Would the authority be this lenient if the issue took place in low-cost housing areas?" he questioned.

*StarMetro* had in June last year, carried a report about an eatery in Bukit Jalil blocking the walkway in front of its premises with potted plants, ostensibly to protect patrons against snatch thefts.

Following complaints, DBKL gave the coffeeshop owner one week to remove the obstructions.

The owner was also issued notices by City Hall enforcement person-

nel for obstruction and told to remove the pots

Several experts also weighed in on this issue.

Local government expert Derek Fernandez said the placement of wares on public walkways should be strictly prohibited under normal circumstances.

However, he said many local authorities, including in Selangor, had relaxed this ruling during the Covid-19 pandemic as many eateries had struggled financially.

These premises had to place the

tables and chairs far apart to ensure physical distancing, which affected profits, he pointed out.

Community activist Yee Poh Ping said that DBKL could place planter boxes on walkways that have sufficient space.

"Five-foot ways such as the ones in Bukit Bintang and Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman are wide enough to accommodate these boxes.

"This will allow customers to dine in more comfortably, and allow these eateries to attract more people," he said.