

Kuala Lumpur City Hall collaborates with NGOs to make streets safer for SK Danau Kota 2 pupils in Setapak >5

PUPILS at SK Danau Kota 2 in Setapak, Kuala Lumpur can get to school safer following work by the local authority and mobility advocacy groups to widen walking paths and reduce speeding around the facilities.

Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) collaborated with non-governmental organisations (NGO) Bike Commute Malaysia (BCMY) and Global Designing Cities Initiative (GDCI), under the Bloomberg Philanthropies Initiative for Global Road Safety, to consult the school and test new road flow designs in the area.

The latest round of ground work saw 30 volunteers, including BCMY community members, installing traffic barriers and painting walking paths.

The redesign of the one-way road, along the side of the primary school, narrowed the lane to reserve a safe waiting area for pupils as well as designating a drop-off and waiting zone, for parents, slightly away from the front gate.

Previously, the street, which was also used by residents from nearby apartments, was filled with parked cars making crossing the road difficult for pupils and reducing drivers' visibility.

The now narrowed lane reduces the crossing distance for pedestrians from 10.5m to 5.5m, lowering chances of a crash.

These traffic calming measures also lowered average vehicle speeds to 15 kph, in line with recommendations by World Health Organisation and Public Works Department (JKR) guidelines to set speed limits below 30 kph in areas where pedestrians and vehicles interact.

NGOs pilot project for safer school roads



The latest round of ground work saw 30 volunteers installing traffic barriers and painting walking paths outside the school in Setapak.

JKR's reasoning for this is to give drivers more time to react to unexpected actions by children on the road.

BCMY initiative director Justin Lee said, "We are testing out something new here, and it takes a collective approach to make this work.

"It has been incredible to collaborate with the school which has been extremely supportive and patient as we identify the best geometry in creating safer streets around the school."

SK Danau Kota 2 Parent-Teacher Association chairman Dr Khairul Awang applauded the joint project, saying it would bring many benefits to the

school and community, both from a safety perspective and give parents peace of mind about their children's well-being when going to school.

The school street transformation project in Setapak, which has neighbouring primary and secondary schools, was chosen by DBKL for its location in a high-density urban area that has more than 70% of students commuting from homes within 3km of schools.

Also, 35% and 26% of those secondary and primary school children, respectively, walked to school.

BCMY and GDCI initially engaged the school, community

and City Hall for a design consultation between July and December last year.

Following that, DBKL carried out two trial designs at the side entrance of the primary school using chalk, cones, traffic barriers and paint to temporarily modify the street.

Through this pilot project, BCMY and GDCI sought to demonstrate how street design plays a role in creating safe and beautiful streets that also lower driving speeds around schools.

The group aims to transform more streets around school zones in the country as well as turn the 30 kph speed limit around learning institutions

from an advisory limit into mandatory rule.

The goal is to make road safety features like narrowing street widths, raised crossings and refuge islands the norm in maintenance and upgrade works by the city.

Data from the Statistics Department shows that road deaths are the leading causes of death of children under 14 in Malaysia, with high speeds being the highest risk factor for deaths on streets.

BCMY is a grassroots NGO consisting of commuter cyclists and urbanists who advocate for safer street designs for low carbon mobility across Malaysia.