

Make your voices heard, KLites

There's a surprisingly lacklustre response from city dwellers to Kuala Lumpur's latest 15-year development plans.

KUALA Lumpur residents are among the most vocal in the country when it comes to matters directly affecting them or impacting their neighbourhoods.

Just ask the 11 MPs who have constituencies in Kuala Lumpur – they have their hands full with demanding yet well-informed electorates.

And that is why it is surprising that the review period for the Kuala Lumpur Local Plan 2040 (KLLP2040) has received a rather lukewarm response from KLites.

The local plan outlines the proposed developments for specific sites in the city and is a component of the larger Kuala Lumpur Structure Plan 2040 (KLSP2040).

Now, they may be officious-sounding names, but these two documents – once gazetted in the first quarter of 2025 – will chart the development of our capital city for the next 15 years.

What it means in layman's terms is this: It gives the mayor the authority to implement any approved development plans within greater Kuala Lumpur.

If you wake up one morning and find that the small green reserve in front of your house is now a multi-storey carpark, don't blame anyone, because the development plans for your neighbour-

hood are in the KLLP2040.

That is why it is important for residents to know and understand the proposed developments taking place within their townships.

Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) has exhibited the plan at various locations throughout the city, accompanied by briefing sessions for residents seeking information about their neighbourhoods.

Some sessions with a capacity for 100 people saw fewer than 20 attending; many of these were professionals from the construction and real estate industry.

In fact, the council also indicated that there were poor turnouts at roadshows held at shopping centres, with only three people showing up in some venues.

Response has also been lacklustre despite efforts to engage community members through the National Unity Ministry for Rukun Tetangga members to attend.

DBKL has already extended the March 1 deadline twice, but any feedback opportunity will end on April 15.

However, despite the tepid response, I feel that DBKL should extend the review period for the KLLP2040 to allow residents more time to provide feedback.

The recent Chinese New Year celebrations, as well as the school

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On your side

holidays and Ramadan, could have played a factor in the lack of interest.

Another extension beyond Hari Raya to the end of May would enable more KLites to make their views heard.

This engagement period should be complemented with extensive publicity via television, radio, social media and print media to encourage community involvement, highlighting the plan's significant impact on daily life in and around the city.

Over the last few months, *StarMetro* has covered a wide range of issues concerning development plans that could significantly change the face of Kuala Lumpur.

This includes a proposed 70-storey condo complex in Bukit Pantai, the alienation of lands surrounding water retention ponds in

the city and the re-zoning of lands in gazetted heritage sites such as the historic Vivekananda Ashram in Brickfields, from mixed development to major commercial usage.

All the above are plans that thankfully have not come to fruition yet. But without objections and public feedback, these proposals will become a reality.

In Bukit Pantai, there has been pushback against the plan from Bangsar residents because the massive development will impact the already chaotic traffic situation there.

The redevelopment of water retention ponds will affect flood mitigation efforts because these ponds play a crucial role in preventing flash floods in the capital.

And the fate of the 120-year-old Vivekananda Ashram is once again in jeopardy, as the land on which the building is on is not recognised as a heritage site in the KLLP2040.

We have already seen what overdevelopment does to neighbourhoods like Bangsar and Mont Kiara, so it is imperative that Kuala Lumpur residents make their voices heard.

DBKL's urban planning should strike a balance between develop-

ment and environmental conservation.

Kuala Lumpur is already a well-developed city, so advocating a concept of a "green economy", which balances environmental sustainability and development projects, would be an ideal solution.

The recent news reports indicating that Kuala Lumpur MPs have asked the authorities to disclose all applications for development orders (DOs) to allow stakeholders to provide their input and ensure transparency is a step in the right direction.

Applications for DOs are reviewed and approved by a DBKL planning committee, which is chaired by the mayor, so it is important that these elected representatives be given a chance to provide input on upcoming development projects.

As was the case in Taman Tun Dr Ismail, residents found out about a controversial project only after the DO had been issued.

This led to a protracted legal suit between the residents, the developer and the local authority.

The end result was a win for the Taman Tun Dr Ismail community, but was one that left DBKL with a hefty penalty for the retraction of the DO.