

KL will thrive with more affordable housing, car-free lifestyle

OUR capital city of Kuala Lumpur needs revitalising. To ensure that the city continues to thrive, we need a new living approach: one built on medium-density, affordable housing and commitment to a walkable, car-free lifestyle.

In this regard, Kuala Lumpur isn't short of potential. Our public transport — from the bus networks to light rail transit (LRT), monorail to mass rapid transit lines — offers a strong foundation.

Likewise, bustling districts like Kampung Baru, Petaling Street, Chow Kit, Imbi, Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman and Masjid India, and charming parks like the Perdana Botanical Gardens hint at a vibrant and walkable core waiting to be embraced.

Perhaps a more sustainable approach would be to prioritise the use of existing infrastructure. A significant number of vacant lots, particularly large open-air carparks, exist in the city centre.

Kuala Lumpur City Hall could capitalise on these by developing mixed-use, five-storey residential buildings with ground-floor retail and food outlets.

These developments should be located near public transport hubs, and designed to promote pedestrian access, eliminating the need for extensive parking facilities.

Furthermore, spare a thought for revitalising the city's architectural heritage as well. City Hall could partner with local architects to transform

underutilised shophouses and apartment buildings into contemporary and attractive living spaces.

This isn't a new approach as the "Kuala Lumpur City Hall Urban Housing" concept, piloted in 2019 in Jalan TAR, demonstrates a model for affordable, inner-city living.

This initiative transformed a building into micro-apartments with shared amenities, offering a sustainable and cost-effective solution for young professionals.

This car-free walkable city lifestyle fosters a sense of community and convenience. Imagine your morning routine transformed — a quick stroll to your favourite mamak restaurant, a leisurely walk to the office or LRT station and grocery

shopping is a breeze — all just minutes from your doorstep.

Forget the hassle of traffic and parking; a walkable lifestyle puts everything you need within easy reach, allowing you to reclaim your time and energy.

This shift necessitates a bold move: reducing parking spaces. Reallocating this wasted land can create affordable homes, green spaces, pedestrian walkways and cycling paths.

This is about health. Studies consistently link walkable cities to lower obesity rates, a major health concern in Malaysia.

But achieving this vision depends on affordability. By having City Hall directly involved in building and managing these quality mid-rise

apartments, city living opens up to all strata of society, not just the wealthy and expatriates.

This will make downtown living a realistic option for everyone. For those tired of the car-dependent lifestyle of the past decades, this is the solution to a sustainable and convenient life.

This isn't just about creating a more livable Kuala Lumpur; it's about creating a sustainable one. Less reliance on cars translates into less air and noise pollution, lower carbon emission and a cleaner, friendlier city.

It's a win for the environment, for public health and for the city's economic vitality.

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