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STAKEHOLDERS in Brickfields want Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) to include them in any discussion that involves new developments in the township.

Regardless of whether the project involves the construction of skyscrapers or a foot bridge, they say their input is vital in the decision-making process before a development order is issued.

"Anything new in the township has a direct impact on the residents' quality of life," said Malaysian Association for the Blind (MAB) chief executive officer Datuk George Thomas.

He cited as example the requirement to provide the disabled (OKU) with facilities in buildings, which are outlined by the Uniform Building (Amendment) Bylaws 1991.

This bylaw comes under the Street, Drainage and Building Act 1974, which was not always complied with, he noted.

"The bylaws emphasise the need for such facilities in alignment with the Malaysian Standard MS1184, which sets universal accessibility standards for public structures," said Thomas.

"But even if the plans include the facilities, there is poor monitoring by the local authority to ensure that the developer complies with the requirement.

"We have about 180 visually impaired individuals residing in Brickfields, along with some 300 others who work in the area, whose lives are constantly in peril, not only because of some buildings' non-compliance with MS1184 guidelines, but also the presence of various physical obstructions in many places," he added.

National Council for the Blind (NCBM) consultant Moses Choo agreed with Thomas, saying that

'Include us in Brickfields development decisions'

Stakeholders say new projects directly affect their quality of life



George says the presence of various physical obstructions in Brickfields puts the visually impaired in danger.

based on his past experience in dealing with agencies like DBKL, it was never easy getting his ideas heard even when he was part of the people with disabilities committee under the Women, Family and Community Development Ministry.

"Even now, with the city embracing digitalisation, many things are being done without consulting the blind.

"When we go to a website, we cannot read it because the authorities did not follow international guidelines and standards," said Choo.

"They must follow the guidelines for web accessibility," he said.

Thomas and Choo spoke to *StarMetro* on the sidelines at an engagement session with Brickfields stakeholders.



Naidu (third from left) with LA21 Safe City KL coordinator A. Ghani Mohamed (second from left) having a discussion on Brickfields' future development with DBKL officials and participants of the session.

Some 80 people, comprising residents, business owners and non-governmental organisation (NGOs) representatives, turned up for the session that was organised by Local Agenda 21 (LA21) Safe City Kuala Lumpur to gather feedback from stakeholders on their aspirations for the neighbourhood.

Residents also pushed for the authorities to make Brickfields a disabled-friendly town and wanted the authorities to stop issuing

licences to roadside stalls which obstructed public walkways.

A resident, Dr Jaya Bushani said there were many projects in the area where no feedback was obtained from the community, like the bridge in front of MAB building which was ultimately demolished after it became a white elephant.

"Roadside stalls blocking side and back lanes, and endangering the disabled community should not be allowed to operate," she

said, adding that stakeholders should be consulted before DBKL issued more licences to roadside traders.

Meanwhile, Brickfields Rukun Tetangga (RT) chairman SKK Naidu said the RT had prepared a memorandum to be presented to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim requesting for Brickfields to be made a "Mesra OKU" city.

"We hope to meet him soon in Parliament," Naidu added.