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KUALA LUMPUR residents are calling for the government to build an urban park at the 197ha Bandar Malaysia site, envisioning a green space on par with New York City's Central Park or London's Hyde Park.

This renewed appeal follows the termination of a proposed theme park project at the site, and recent reports of KLCC Property Holdings, a company linked to government interests through major shareholder PETRONAS, acquiring the land for future development.

Stakeholders want a large-scale green space that would benefit communities across all income groups, particularly the B40 and M40 segments, at the former Royal Malaysia Air Force (TUDM) Sungai Besi airbase.

They said it is not too late to create the urban oasis to improve quality of life while optimising land use for community-focused projects.

"Kuala Lumpur deserves its own Hyde Park," said Save Kuala Lumpur (SKL) chairman Datuk M. Ali.

"We want a vibrant urban sanctuary filled with trees, lakes and public amenities."

Kuala Lumpur Residents Action for Sustainable Development Association chairman Tan Booi Charn shared the sentiment.

"Imagine how wonderful it

# 'No to development in Bandar Malaysia'

## Stakeholders want KL's own 'Central Park' on site of old Sungai Besi airbase



would be to create a space like New York's Central Park – full of nature, trees, lakes and a balanced ecosystem," she said.

Seputeh MP Teresa Kok, whose constituency encompasses

Bandar Malaysia, added that since the Federal Government's project includes plans for condominiums, hotels, malls and residential developments, it was even more necessary to allocate

space for a public park.

"Their requests are justified, especially as a lot of land originally intended for parks has been lost to housing projects," she said.

When contacted, Kuala Lumpur mayor Datuk Seri Maimunah Mohd Sharif emphasised that the Bandar Malaysia land presented a unique opportunity for Kuala Lumpur to develop into a more liveable city.

She said its vast size allowed for the implementation of key principles of sustainable urban planning, including green city concepts.

"When the project moves forward, we will ensure developers strictly adhere to guidelines on land use, density, zoning, facilities and open spaces," said Maimunah.

It was recently revealed that Singapore-listed Sim Leisure Group Ltd terminated its agreement with Bandar Malaysia Sdn Bhd (BMSB) to develop an escape adventure park on the site.

Last month, *StarMetro* reported that Bandar Malaysia was considering leasing part of the former airbase to a theme park operator for 15 years to prevent the site from remaining idle, according to Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL).

However, the proposal drew criticism from residents concerned about potential traffic congestion and impact on the environment.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim had previously stated that the land should be optimally utilised for community-focused projects.

The plan to turn Bandar Malaysia into a theme park has been cancelled. — Filepic