



In addition to Warung Cherry, other food stalls are also operating under the Penchala Link flyover in Kuala Lumpur.
— Photos: GRACE CHEN and IZZRAFIQ ALIAS/The Star



Open Bars is an outdoor gym below a link bridge at Jalan Kampung Pasir in Kuala Lumpur.

Optimising space beneath overpass

Stakeholders say more efforts, planning needed to transform areas under flyovers into community spaces



Jejak Pahlawan at Bulatan Dato Onn under the Jalan Kinabalu flyover also doubles up as an event space.

In September 2024, Cheras MP Tan Kok Wai confirmed that soil testing to build the structure for the mechanical parking bays was completed with the results submitted to DBKL.

The latest update from Tan is that the RM6.5mil project is awaiting approval from the Economy Ministry.

Open-air gym

Almost hidden by tall *lalang* and located under the elevated link bridge connecting Jalan Kelang Lama to the New Pantai

Expressway in Jalan Kampung Pasir is a community gym called "Open Bars".

Built in 2020, it is situated between the banks of Sungai Klang and IWK Eco Park@Pantai Dalam.

Park Games Equipment chief executive officer Eugene Tan, who installed the exercise bars for this community-funded project, said they wanted to give youths in the area a place to work out.

"The idea came from a school friend. We wanted to build the strongest, most durable outdoor

bars that could cater to everyone, from beginners to world-class athletes.

"Finding the right location was a challenge. We didn't have a specific spot in mind."

"Following discussions with the team behind Kebun Kebun Kerinchi, we noticed the space under the link bridge."

"There was ample room and the overhead structure provided natural shade from the sun and rain, making it ideal for year-round use."

"Many people use the equipment daily, especially in the



Abd Rauf says he has received verbal assurances that he can operate from underneath Penchala Link in Kuala Lumpur.



The carpark under Jalan Yew-Jalan Sungai Besi flyover has become a site for rubbish and abandoned cars.

Lumpur Local Draft Plan 2040 (PTKL2040) to allow placemaking under flyovers was subject to land-use zoning.

Operation of activities under flyovers is subject to approval from DBKL which will look at factors involving safety risks, pollution and whether it will cause disturbance to road users, she said in a statement to *StarMetro*.

If the activities can add value such as community facilities, creative or green spaces then it can be considered, on a temporary basis.

However, if the activity is permanent in nature, then approval for the Development Order must be obtained.

"In general, permitted activities include community gardens, pocket parks, public recreation space, playgrounds, paths for pedestrians and micromobility vehicles, nurseries and parking lots."

In addition, the Kuala Lumpur Structure Plan 2040 (PSKL2040) has set policies towards a "City for All".

PSKL2040 also encourages the sharing of river, road and rail reserves, right of way routes and other potential spaces for appropriate temporary activities to optimise land use.

This initiative has identified

road reserves to be used as recreation spaces and public parks as well as spaces under LRT lines and highways as suitable to be used for vehicle parking.

Ideally, placemaking efforts should be located near residential and commercial areas. The area must have good access through local roads and subject to related agency approvals.

"Currently, the limited use of spaces under flyovers, either for community or commercial purposes, is related to safety issues such as structural integrity and a particular location being too close to a high-speed traffic route," she said.

In addition, it is also associated with negative implications like noise disturbance to surrounding residential areas, traffic congestion and issues such as which parties will take responsibility for the maintenance of the space in question.

Siti Hanim noted that what was needed to encourage placemaking under flyovers was a set of proposed guidelines which should be supported with the creation of a database to record the identified reserves, a local centre to coordinate permits and for the local community to be involved.

"After the highway came up, we were operating near the traffic lights when we were told to move.

"That was when I moved our stall under the flyover 18 years ago," said Abd Rauf.

During its heyday, there was

karaoke there at night.

In addition to staircases leading from the road to his stall under the flyover, a concrete cashier counter fashioned in the shape of a half-cut cherry was also constructed.

The father of five said he had been given verbal assurances that he would be allowed to continue operating at the site, as long as he did not dirty the area.

"In 2012, I wrote to the Malaysian Highway Authority (LLM) seeking permission to activate water and electricity meters here but that request was not entertained."

After so many years of operating beneath the flyover, Abd Rauf hopes he can be granted a licence to start a food court.

"At the moment, my business is in limbo as I cannot move forward," he said.

Utilisation of space

Communications Minister Fahmi Fadil, who is also Youth and Sports Minister

Hannah Yeoh, who is also Segambut MP, said safety remained the top priority in the use of spaces under flyovers.

"Any proposed use must ensure that the structural integrity of the flyover is not compromised."

"Community engagement is essential to identify activities that best serve the local population while maintaining safety and accessibility," she said.

DBKL Infrastructure Planning Department director Siti Hanim Abd Rahman said the Kuala

Lembah Pantai MP, said with the right planning, spaces situated below flyovers could serve the local community.

"Some of these spaces are underused. But there are various regulations that need to be met, particularly from the local council, LLM and highway concessionaires."

"This needs cooperation and proper planning on what kind of activities might be more suited for these types of spaces," he said.

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