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Plot ratio increase in Subang Jaya on hold

MPSJ to study traffic after LRT extension is complete before deciding on development

story by
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THE Subang Jaya Municipal Council (MPSJ) will put the plot ratio increase for transit-oriented development (TOD) on hold until the Kelana Jaya LRT extension project is completed.

Subang Jaya assemblyman Hannah Yeoh said the council had decided to study the traffic congestion after the LRT extension was operational before considering the 1:8 plot ratio increase for the township.

"MPSJ president Datuk Nor Hisham Dahlan said the council would wait to see if the traffic situation improves because of the public transportation, so it is not blanket approval for every commercial development near an LRT station," she added.

Yeoh said the plot ratio increase from 1:4 to 1:8 for TODs was an approved guideline by the state planning committee (SPC) but it had not been endorsed by the MPSJ's full board yet.

She added that the guideline will allow TODs 400m away from LRT stations.

Yeoh said she and her fellow assemblymen were surprised that the SPC had not informed them about the new guidelines that were endorsed a while ago.

"We have asked the SPC to organise a briefing for the assemblymen in areas affected by the new guidelines.

"We are also unclear on the details now," she added.

Yeoh said this at a press conference to clarify the matter after news broke that MPSJ would be using the increased plot ratio for future TOD applications.

The council had already received several applications for this purpose but these will be subjected to the current ratio for now.

Yeoh said she was not against the plot ratio increase for TOD but in Subang Jaya, it must be for the right target group including the poor and those who would use the public transportation.

"It is very unlikely that affluent people will use the public transportation system, so it would defeat the purpose," she stressed.

Also present were Puchong MP Gobind Singh Deo and Kinrara assemblyman Ng Sze Han.

Gobind, however, said he and the residents of Puchong were against the plot ratio increase as Puchong was not ready for it.

He wanted a blueprint to resolve traffic problems in Selangor instead.

"The MRT and LRT service in itself does not resolve the traffic problems, the issue is connectivity since most people live very far from the LRT or MRT.

"There are still areas of grave concern and speaking about increasing plot ratio at this stage is unacceptable," he said.

He hoped the state would shelve the idea for now and deal with the immediate problem, which is traffic congestion.

Ng concurred with Gobind's ideas and said he would raise the issue in the Selangor State assembly soon.

He cited Singapore as a perfect example as a TOD city that had a 1:2.8 ratio for most residential areas while only the central business district (CBD) had a 1:8 ratio.

"Subang and Puchong are not CBD areas – these are residential areas. TODs need to be redefined.

"What is the definition now, does it mean if we had a single LRT line, the area can be considered TOD friendly?" he asked.

He said TOD cities such as Melbourne or Sydney in Australia were accessible but the same could not be said about Puchong or Subang.

Besides traffic, he said, there were many other issues to consider including schools, which are severely lacking in Puchong.

"In these kinds of developments, I do not see any of these facilities including schools, places of worship or even hospitals.

"So by allowing luxury developments, we are not solving the problem of the urban poor," Ng added.

Puchong MCA chairman Datuk Wong Hock Aun said the increase in the plot ratio would only worsen the current scenario especially in Puchong.

"Proper studies should be conducted including a traffic impact assessment and environmental impact assessment before it is approved," he added.

A Puchong resident for over 60 years, Wong said the place had rapidly grown and today was well known for its congestion especially along the upcoming LRT line project.

He said the situation would be aggravated if the population continued to increase at a great speed.