

Gridlock chaos as infrastructure fails, choking Jalan Kelang Lama

TRAFFIC along Jalan Kelang Lama in Kuala Lumpur has plummeted from a manageable Grade B to a failing Grade F in recent years.

Happy Garden Residents Association honorary secretary Evelyne Low said she would be spending over 40 minutes on a drive that once took her just eight minutes after passing the MidValley Megamall stretch.

"I worry that, with the upcoming Urban Renewal Bill, unchecked redevelopment will push congestion to breaking point, unless proper traffic studies are matched with an integrated transport and dispersal plan plus real fixes on the ground for the bottlenecks we have been living with for years."

Low said public transport and supporting infrastructure must move in tandem.

"The MRT Kuchai station carpark is packed to the brim and cars are spilling onto the roadside."

"We keep telling people to use public transport, but the stations don't have the facilities to support that shift."

"If we cannot even provide enough parking for commuters, how do we expect them to leave their cars and take the train?"

Fairview Mansion Apartment chairman Daniel Charles recalled one of the worst gridlocks was an 800m-crawl from Jalan Gembira to Jalan Kelang Lama junction, near the former Plaza OUG site, that took 40 minutes.

He blamed the chaos on utility contractors working near 4th Mile Jalan Kelang Lama, who failed to complete their digging works the night before and had to continue the next morning, causing massive jams across



The park-and-ride at Kuchai MRT station is fully packed with cars spilling onto outside lanes.

both main and inner roads.

"Jalan Kelang Lama has been widened repeatedly since the 1980s, often without proper planning."

"With every widening, the carriageway shifted further out, leaving many of the original utility cables buried in what is now the middle of the road," said Charles.

"When contractors start digging and fail to finish on time, the entire stretch grinds to a halt the next morning," he noted.

Charles said that lack of enforcement at key junctions, narrow feeder roads and poor coordination between agencies, coupled with a public transport network without a last-mile connectivity, have turned the corridor into a daily nightmare.

"There is no proper traffic dispersal plan, no integrated transport and no enforcement – it is a recipe for gridlock," he said.

He pointed out several critical hotspots – from the 3rd Mile Square area to the junctions of

Taman Desa, Kuchai Lama, Pearl Point, Jalan Gembira and Jalan Puchong, heading towards Taman Sentosa and Taman Kanagapuram in Petaling Jaya that urgently needed better traffic control.

Any future redevelopment, he said, must come with a proper traffic management plan or risk paralysing the entire corridor.

Seputeh People's Representative Council (MPPWP) Zone 6 chairman Alvin T. Ariaratnam agreed with Charles, adding that with the number of new developments sprouting along the corridor, the junctions urgently needed traffic wardens to ensure the vehicles kept moving.

"If we can have at least two officers at each spot from 7am to 9am, it will make a world of difference in easing the bottlenecks," he said, adding what was missing was proper planning backed by data.

"We need better maps and stronger traffic and environmental studies – everything



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Wong dreads leaving home before 9am, due to unbearable traffic congestion.

from Traffic Impact Assessments to drainage reports," said Alvin.

"The condominium where I live, borders Puchong and Kuala Lumpur. We are caught in a daily gridlock because of poor planning. Everyone's suffering from it," he added.

Taman Desa Residents Association chairman Wong Chan Choy dreads leaving home before 9am, as traffic congestion around his neighbourhood has become unbearable.

"It literally saps my energy being stuck in traffic every morning," he said.

He said worsening congestion along Jalan Kelang Lama stemmed from years of unchecked development and poor planning.

"Everywhere you look, there is a new high-rise coming up. There are more land banks earmarked for development."

"The problem is, everything is being done for the present, just build, sell and move on, with no thought for the future."

"The carrying capacity of the roads and infrastructure is already stretched. If we



Charles recalls taking 40 minutes to drive an 800m-stretch from Jalan Gembira to Jalan Mega Mendung.

don't plan, the gridlock will only get worse," he reiterated.

Wong said there must be clear benchmarks before high-density projects are approved.

"Developers shouldn't be allowed to just build and move on. There must be checks to ensure infrastructure, roads, drainage and utilities can actually cope. Otherwise, the city will choke before renewal even begins," he said. — By BAVANI M

renewal zones under the Bill, critical studies could slip through the cracks.

"These studies should be made public and displayed alongside redevelopment proposals, allowing people to review them."

"Each proposal in the Bill should have a technical checklist verifying that all studies, traffic, environmental, infrastructure and design simulations are completed before work starts," said Anand.

He called for urban simulation tools to show how proposed density levels would look and feel.

"For instance, show what a plot ratio of six looks like compared to 10. These visualisations help people understand the real impact on traffic flow, shadows (sunlight loss when a building goes up) and open spaces," he said.

Future planning, Anand stressed, must be holistic.

"It is not just about bigger buildings."

"Where are the bus stops, pedestrian links and shaded walkways?"

"Why build 1,000 parking bays beside an MRT station?"

"Drawings should clearly show both existing and new elements."

"Renewal must be about creating cities that function, not just ones that look modern."



Anand calls for studies to be made public and displayed alongside redevelopment proposals.

Using density to build better

Malaysian Land Public Transport Fans representative Zac Cheong said Kuala Lumpur's existing urban rail network – comprising MRT, LRT, monorail and commuter lines – offered a strong base for renewal.

"The Urban Renewal Bill's density vision is what's needed to justify the next wave of infrastructure investment."

"We shouldn't treat current capacity as a ceiling, but as a foundation," he opined.

"Concentrating growth around transit hubs is the most sustainable model because it supports frequent, reliable public transport," he said.

Cheong said development benchmarks should shift from car-centric measures to "people-moving capacity".

"Instead of counting cars per household, we should measure



Goh says any form of renewal will create social, traffic and property challenges.

how many residents commute without one.

"Success should be defined by public transport usage and proximity to amenities within a short walk," he said.

He warned that infrastructure delays could erode public confidence.

"If residents face overcrowded trains and congested streets without visible improvements, they will lose faith in sustainable density."

"That is not a reason to stop development – it is a reason to plan it better, tying project approvals to infrastructure delivery."

"Developers should help improve the wider public realm, parks, shaded walkways and open spaces while ensuring tall buildings engage the street with active, people-friendly ground floors," said Cheong.



Rosli says local authorities must tighten controls on plot ratios and vehicle use.



Cheong says developers should improve parks, shaded walkways and open spaces.



Gridlock near the Pearl Point-Jalan Kelang Lama corridor, where evening congestion stretches past commercial blocks and spills onto residential roads nearby.