

05/04/2000

`Study road closure plan'

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A THOROUGH study on the social and economic implications needs to be carried out before a decision is made to close part of the commercially-busy Jalan Bukit Bintang on weekends.

Representatives of 15 business establishments met last Saturday at the Melia Hotel in Jalan Imbi to discuss the implications that the closure of the stretch from the upper part of Jalan Bukit Bintang, from BB Plaza to the Jalan Pudu junction, will have on their business.

They added that they were not against the idea by the YTL Group to transform the area into a huge pedestrian mall to complement the Bintang Walk, a multi-million ringgit project.

However, they felt that instead of closing Jalan Bukit Bintang, the Council of Bukit Bintang Shopping Centres (CBBSC) should consider closing the side lanes of Lorong Walter Grenier.

They also resolved at the meeting to send a proposal on the matter to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, for his consideration.

They also felt that Kuala Lumpur City Hall should carry out a study on the impact that the closure of the road will have on the pedestrian mall.

Among those who attended the meeting were decision-makers from Century Hotel, Park Inn International Hotel, Corona Inn Hotel, Fairlane Hotel, Low Yat Plaza and Bukit Bintang Park Hawkers Association.

Ken Yeang, a master planner and architect, who was acting as facilitator, said the long and short-term implications on the business and properties along a 524-metre stretch to be closed from the JW Marriott Hotel to Lot 10 should be considered and studied.

He said the closure of the stretch from 10am on Saturday to 2am on Monday will result in traffic being diverted into Jalan Imbi, Jalan Utara, Jalan Barat, Jalan Sultan Ismail and other smaller roads.

He said a study by a transport planning and traffic management company, Perunding Trafik Klasik Sdn Bhd, showed that currently every hour during the peak hours about 3,580 cars use Jalan Bukit Bintang.

"The closure of this road will result in a large number of vehicles being shifted to adjacent roads, specifically Jalan Imbi," he said.

"The road currently accommodates a traffic volume of 1,550 cars an hour heading towards Jalan Raja Chulan, while another 1,680 cars head towards Jalan Hang Tuah.

"So you can imagine the additional traffic burden it would cause with the on-going monorail project already causing a massive traffic jam," he said.

Yeang added that Trafik Klasik had suggested that two additional lanes might be required at the midblock of Jalan Imbi.

He said this was not possible since there was no more land available for the additional lanes.

(END)