

City Hall to close part of road despite protests

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KUALA LUMPUR: City Hall will go ahead and close part of Jalan Bukit Bintang from J. W. Marriot Hotel to Lot 10 for the weekend pedestrian mall despite objections from motorists and the business community operating there.

However, it still comes as a relief as the authority had announced on Jan 15 that the stretch from Sungei Wang Plaza to the Pudu Junction would also be closed but due to the protests, it has shelved the plan for the moment.

If the plan had been implemented, the entire stretch of Jalan Bukit Bintang would have been inaccessible to motorists.

City Hall director-general Datuk Ruslin Hasan said the road would be closed as usual from 4pm today to 2am on Monday for the street mall that kicked off on New Year's Eve.

"At the moment, we are receiving feedback which are both positive and negative, so we have to wait and see how it goes," he said.

To smoothen the traffic flow, the Urban Traffic Management Department had implemented several strategies like additional signage to inform motorists about the road closure before they reach J. W. Marriot from a right turn along Jalan Raja Chulan.

"We are also deploying more police and enforcement officers to the scene to direct traffic and manage the situation," he explained.

"There are also more signs leading to the parking lots in the area.

"One of the main com-

plaints by those who are against the project is lack of parking space but in fact, there are adequate car parks.

"However, sometimes the signs are not visible enough," Ruslin added.

On traffic congestion at Jalan Alor, Jalan Imbi and Jalan Pudu as a result of the closure, he said City Hall was carrying out a study on this.

"We understand there is some effect on the traffic situation on roads adjacent to Bukit Bintang and we will also look for ways and means to improve any bottle necks around the area," he said.

"However, it is too early to say anything as we are still considering re-routing the traffic or make some adjustments on the present traffic system," he added.

On the protests and signature campaigns by the business community and a possible protest campaign at the Bintang walk this afternoon, Ruslin said: "I don't know why they should protest, there is no reason to."

"It must also be understood that when something new is introduced, people tend to jump quickly and say it isn't good. But we have to look at the details to see if there is any truth in their claims" he said.

Since the mall plan was executed, the public have joined forces to protest and on Jan 21, business operators and individuals affected said they would hand over a memorandum to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and the Datuk Bandar Col Datuk Mohamad Shaid Mohd Taufek soon.