

MRT: Imbi owners offer to trade land for surface rights guarantee
The Malaysian Insider
September 27, 2011
By Yow Hong Chieh

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 27 — Landowners in the city will propose handing over their properties to Putrajaya for the Klang Valley Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) project in exchange for a guarantee that ownership of surface land remains with them.

Bukit Bintang pro-tem committee secretary Colin Yong said some 10 landowners, whose lots have been gazetted for tunnelling work in Jalan Imbi, agreed in principle last Wednesday to extend the offer to the authorities to break the current impasse over land acquisition there.

File photo of business and landowners in Jalan Bukit Bintang protesting against the proposed MRT acquisition of their properties earlier this month.

"We got the consent from all the owners that we are willing to surrender the underground land as long as the surface land remains with us," he told The Malaysian Insider.

"They (the government) can save compensation for land acquisition. They only have to compensate for the underground stratum."

Yong, who runs the Jadi Batek Gallery on Jalan Inai, added that the committee will put the offer in writing and hand it over to new project owner MRT Co within the week.

Twenty lots in the capital's shopping district, Bukit Bintang, will be acquired for tunnelling works and an underground station, former project owner Syarikat Prasarana Negara Bhd (Prasarana) said last month.

Prasarana project development director Zulkifli Mohd Yusoff had said the lots in Jalan Bukit Bintang, Jalan Imbi, Jalan Jati, Jalan Inai, Jalan Kamuning, Jalan Kampung and Jalan Utara would be acquired under the Land Acquisition Act 1960.

They include two fast-food restaurants, a Porsche showroom, a batik gallery, a private club, offices and several residential properties.

But the land acquisition plans have come under fire from critics who point out that the government does not have to acquire the lots wholesale for tunnelling purposes as the National Land Code (NLC) 1965 allows for disposal of underground land.

In a letter to The Malaysian Insider earlier this month, Land Public Transport Commission (SPAD) chief executive Mohd Nur Kamal admitted that Putrajaya had decided to acquire both surface and underground land in the interest of expediency.

But he stressed in the same letter that the government was "in no position to make guarantees of the return of these properties", saying that the details were still being ironed out.

Five Bukit Bintang landowners have mounted a legal challenge against the government's acquisition plans while three Imbi landowners will find out next Friday if the High Court here will also grant them leave for judicial review.

Construction of the Sungai Buloh-Kajang (SBK) MRT line will begin in November and is scheduled to be completed by end 2016, with services commencing in January 2017.

The SBK line will cover a distance of 51km, of which 9.5km — including seven of the 31 stations — will be underground.

The Malaysian Insider

Hakcipta © 2011 The Malaysian Insider

Source:

<http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/mrt-imbi-owners-offer-to-trade-land-for-surface-rights-guarantee/>