



PRESS STATEMENT

MRT CORP SUPPORTS THE PRESERVATION OF HERITAGE BUILDINGS IN JALAN SULTAN

No acquisition, no demolition position in line with Prime Minister's statement

Kuala Lumpur, 26 March 2012: Mass Rapid Transit Corporation Sdn Bhd (MRT Corp) would like to thank the Prime Minister YAB Dato' Sri Najib Tun Razak's for his recent statement expressing the Government's willingness to preserve Chinatown's unique heritage while proceeding with the MY Rapid Transit project without any change to the alignment.

Dato' Azhar Abdul Hamid, Chief Executive Officer of MRT Corp, said MRT Corp's position has always been in line with what the Prime Minister said and the company has been working hard towards the preservation of the shophouses of Jalan Sultan and Jalan Petaling. With the mutual agreement between the owners of the shophouses and MRT Corp, the shophouses will not be acquired nor demolished. At the same time, MRT Corp will be able to guarantee the safety of the MRT tunnel and the occupants of the shophouses during construction.

"This is exactly what MRT Corp has been stating all along. We would like reinforce our position to preserve the current environment and enhance the future of Chinatown so that many generations of locals and tourists alike can continue to experience the vibrancy and authenticity of this iconic area," said Dato' Azhar.

Dato' Azhar also thanks the Prime Minister for stating that the MRT alignment will remain the same as the one which he approved in June 2011. Dato' Azhar said any realignment will cause more social upheaval.

"Realigning to Jalan Tun Tan Cheng Lock will require at least 29 privately-owned buildings to be demolished for stations as opposed to only three buildings, which are government-owned, that are needed to build the Pasar Seni station for the current approved alignment," he said.

For the proposed Jalan Tun Tan Cheng Lock alignment, this major road will have to be partially closed during construction because the station has to be built beneath it. The current approved alignment beneath Jalan Sultan does not involve any major road closures.



The proposed realignment to Jalan Tun Tan Cheng Lock will also not allow for a seamless interchange between the MRT and the existing LRT at Pasar Seni station. “Thousands of future MRT and LRT users will suffer permanently as they will have to run across roads and walk in the hot sun just to change from the MRT to the LRT or vice-versa,” he said.

Dato’ Azhar said, “Do I want to choose an option where I have to demolish shophouses which are as much of a heritage value as those along Jalan Sultan, force the closure of a major road and force hundreds of thousands of MRT and LRT users to suffer forever with bad connectivity? Or do I choose an option where I can preserve the shophouses above while I tunnel below, and where only three government-owned buildings are demolished for the Pasar Seni station which will allow seamless transfer between the MRT and LRT?”

Dato’ Azhar said the physical and cultural landscape of Jalan Sultan will remain and MRT Corp looks forward to working toward a mutually acceptable solution with the shopowners to ensure the smooth and successful implementation of the MRT project. Furthermore, the socio-economic environment of Chinatown will improve tremendously with the MRT station.

Dato’ Azhar said MRT Corp reiterates the Prime Minister’s statement that the country needed and efficient and reliable form of public transport. “The MRT is very much needed so that the millions of Klang Valley residents can move around efficiently. The MRT is also needed for the country as it is the main enabler to accelerate the nation’s growth,” he said.

The MRT project is the nation’s largest public infrastructure project and is a key enabler to achieving the Greater KL goal and propelling Kuala Lumpur into the top 20 most liveable and economically vibrant cities in the world by 2020.

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