

Issues have been addressed, says MRT Corp CEO

MASS Rapid Transit Corporation Sdn Bhd (MRT Corp) has reiterated that public views were obtained for the Sungai Buloh-Kajang (SBK) line of the Klang Valley Mass Rapid Transit (KVMRT) project it is undertaking.

It said this following a memorandum it received on Thursday, and added that the issues raised in the memorandum had been addressed.

"The issues are not new. We have consistently responded to similar questions before. As far as MRT Corp is concerned, we have dutifully taken input from the public when deciding on the final alignment of the SBK Line.

This was done for three consecutive months, as required by law, and we received tremendous response from the public," said MRT Corp CEO Datuk Azhar Abdul Hamid.

For three months in 2011, the Railway Scheme of the SBK Line was displayed at seven public locations

— Kuala Lumpur City Hall, Petaling Jaya City Council, Selayang Municipal Council, Shah Alam City Council, Kajang Municipal Council, Bangsar LRT Station and Land Public Transport Commission office.

This display was in accordance with the requirement of Section 86 of the Land Public Transport Act 2010.

Between March and May 2011, it received no less than 6,000 responses, and the project approval rating was 91%.

Separately, more than 50 sessions were held with groups and communities along the alignment in conjunction with the public display period.

One session was held at Chin Woo Stadium, Jalan Hang Jebat, which is 200m from Jalan Sultan, on April 24, 2011 and 500 people attended.

"The result of these engagements is the 18 signed Points of Agreement (POA) we have now. Two other

property owners have agreed to be acquired, while another is finalising the POA for signing.

As of today, only Lok Ann Hotel, Kuala Lumpur Gospel Hall and Yan Keng Benevolent Dramatic Association have not signed this POA.

"Surely, if 18 property owners have put their trust in us and have continued discussions towards finalising the MA, this POA carries considerable weight," said Azhar, responding to claims that the POA favoured MRT Corp.

He also responded to claims that the social impact of the project was not considered, saying this was covered under the Detailed Environment Impact Assessment (DEIA).

"We commissioned a heritage study of the affected buildings in Jalan Sultan, and the National Heritage Department issued a report in April 2012 stating that the area was not a heritage site. The report

marked the buildings as "old" or "renovated".

"We have to draw the distinction between heritage and historical.

"MRT Corp, however, will support zoning of the area as a Heritage Zone. The history of this area should be protected as it documents the early days of the formation of Kuala Lumpur itself.

"If the area is gazetted as heritage, this will ensure historical buildings will not be easily renovated," he said.

"All MRT Corp wants to do is to build a tunnel below the buildings, leading to the underground station provisionally known as Pasar Seni Station.

"The buildings that are being taken down to build the station — Klang Bus Stand, Plaza Warisan and Plaza UO — were all built in the 1980s and some have outlived their usefulness," Azhar said.