



PINGGIR ZAABA RESIDENTS FULLY AWARE NEGOTIATIONS FOR BUY-OUT WERE ON VOLUNTARY BASIS

KUALA LUMPUR, 28 August 2012: Mass Rapid Transit Corporation Sdn Bhd (MRT Corp) would like to make a formal response to allegations that it has misled a group of residents on Pinggir Zaaba in Taman Tun Dr Ismail (TTDI), Kuala Lumpur about a plan to acquire their houses. MRT Corp's intention is to clear the air about the facts related to this issue.

Background

1. The issue in TTDI originally included a larger group of residents. The original opposition involved 139 residents on Pinggir Zaaba (69 owners) and Medan Burhanuddin Helmi (70 owners).
2. The original group had sought one of three things:
 - a) realignment of the line;
 - b) build the line underground, or
 - c) relocation of residents.
3. For relocation, the group sought a one-for-one swap with replacement houses built on a 25 acre site called Taman Rimba, at the border of Bukit Kiara and TTDI. The government however rejected the idea, as it was unprecedented, and also due to the fact that Taman Rimba was a green lung.
4. No less than 14 meetings were held between the group and the government before MRT Corp was formed in September 2011.

Post-MRT Corp's Formation

1. MRT Corp took over management of the project in October 2011, and CEO Dato' Azhar Abdul Hamid decided to only engage the 25 property owners on Pinggir Zaaba, as they were closest to the alignment. This is purely on a voluntary and goodwill basis.
2. The group of 25 owners had said that their homes would be "unliveable" due to the construction and future presence of an MRT line 15 metres in front of their houses.
3. Houses along Medan Burhanuddin Helmi are actually 74 metres away from the alignment. It also has the Lebuhraya Damansara-Puchong (LDP) separating the houses from the MRT track.



4. A further 44 houses along Pinggir Zaaba, part of the original group, is more than 22 metres away from the alignment.
5. MRT Corp does not have any legal obligation to acquire the properties, as they are beyond the 6-metre Railway Protection Zone specified under the law. However, on a voluntary and goodwill basis, MRT Corp agreed to explore ways to address concerns of the group, subject to the approval of the government, who is funding the project.
6. MRT Corp's mandate does not include the right to acquire properties. All compensation which does not involve mandatory land acquisition must be referred to the Special Compensation Committee (SCC).
7. The SCC's main scope is defined as follows:

“to review and approve, if it deems fit, any sum of special compensations proposed by Mass Rapid Transit Corporation Sdn. Bhd. in the event that lands required for the Klang Valley Mass Rapid Transit Project are not advisable or suitable to be acquired under the Land Acquisition Act 1960 and any other special compensation as determined by the Committee to be paid to the land owner(s) or any other person directly affected by the MRT Project.”

8. Residents were more than aware that SCC had the final say, and various email communications were made to target a specific date of the SCC meeting.
9. The group's appointed representative; Encik Saleh Mohamad had even offered to write the paper, during a meeting with MRT Corp, with Dato' Azhar himself present, on 13 June, at the MRT Corp headquarters.
10. MRT Corp and the residents agreed to have the properties valued to present a financial value to the SCC for their consideration. Both parties met several times to agree on the basis of valuation and other financial considerations that the residents demanded such as moving out costs and hardship costs.
11. Pinggir Zaaba residents wanted to be paid a premium for their houses, ie that the valuation of the houses be made based on property values on Taman Zaaba, two streets further away from Pinggir Zaaba.

Technical Changes Made/Being Made to Mitigate Concerns

1. Being sensitive to the concerns of the residents, several technical changes were made to the design of the viaduct, especially where it passes in front of the houses.
2. The design was amended with special spans which are wider, reducing the number of pillars required in front of the 25 houses.



3. There will be 3 pillars along Pinggir Zaaba. The pillars have been specifically located in front of service lanes between the rows of houses. This ensures that no house façade directly faces a pillar.
4. During construction, hoardings will be put up to protect Pinggir Zaaba from work debris. MRT Corp is studying the installation of vertical nettings above the aluminum hoardings to further minimize dust movement towards the houses.
5. Access to the work area is exclusively from LDP, and not from Pinggir Zaaba side. Construction vehicles cannot be parked along Pinggir Zaaba once aluminum hoardings have been put up along the work area. Workers are also not allowed to loiter along Pinggir Zaaba.
6. Usage of Pinggir Zaaba as a residential street will relatively be minimally changed, and access by emergency services vehicles such as fire and rescue should not be an issue.
7. We have proposed to the residents to temporarily make Pinggir Zaaba a one-way street, towards Jln Leong Yew Koh (subject to approval of authorities).
8. Trees that are cut to accommodate access to the work area will be replaced with semi-mature trees once work at the site is completed.
9. MRT Corp will assess the need to install sound deflectors on the completed viaduct, to deflect sound away from the houses.

Other Matters

1. Pinggir Zaaba residents claim that the alignment was moved from Damansara Utama to Pinggir Zaaba. We can confirm the alignment passing TTDI has remained the same from the time it was first proposed as a railway scheme in 2010.
2. The reason the alignment moves away from the Damansara Utama side towards Pinggir Zaaba is to avoid having to align above the Damansara-TTDI Interchange on the LDP.
3. MRT Corp had received a letter from the residents' appointed lawyers, Abdul Raman Saad & Associates (ARSA) on 16 August 2012. The letter stated that the residents were looking to have issues "resolved amicably", and that ARSA would be contacting MRT Corp in the near future.
4. MRT Corp has not received any further communications from ARSA as of 10:00am, 28 August 2012.



5. MRT Corp's lawyers are now studying statements and representations made by Puan Norliza Kamarudin during a media conference held on Friday, 24 August 2012, at her house in Pinggir Zaaba. A decision and any further action on the matter will be made once MRT Corp's lawyers have finished studying the statements.
6. MRT Corp accepts that such large-scale projects will have its fair share of detractors and opponents, but reiterates that the interest of the larger population has to take precedence.

ENDS

Attachments:

- a) *Chronology of meetings/engagements*
- b) *Letter from lawyers representing the group*

About the MRT Project

MRT is a new rail transport system for the Klang Valley. It is part of the government's Greater Kuala Lumpur/Klang Valley's National Key Economic Area (NKEA), under the Economic Transformation Programme. The Sungai Buloh – Kajang (SBK) Line runs for 51kms, from the north-west town of Sg Buloh to the south-east city town of Kajang. Upon completion, it will comprise 31 stations, and serve 1.2 million people along the route. It will also have strategic integration with KL's existing rail transport network, namely the LRT, Monorail and KTM Komuter, as well as intra and inter-city bus routes. The end result will be better connectivity for KL and its surrounding cities, while reducing the number of cars that enter the capital.

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