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# Reservations over conversion

A plot of land between Taman Intan Baiduri lake and Sungai Jinjang in Kuala Lumpur, currently reserved for public purpose, is in danger of having its status revoked if no objections are filed by tomorrow. Stakeholders argue that the hearing for such a move should not be taking place during the movement control order. >2&3



Targeted for change: An aerial view of the land that is currently being used as a nursery by Kuala Lumpur City Hall. — FAIHAN GHANI/The Star





Open space like this is precious to city folk. — SIA HONG KIAU/The Star

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THE authorities have initiated the process of degazetting a plot of land in Kuala Lumpur reserved for public space, to accommodate a proposed mixed development project that will also include an affordable housing scheme.

The 3.86ha land is sandwiched between the Taman Intan Baiduri lake and Sungai Jinjang, bordering the Kepong and Batu constituencies.

Reliable sources from Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) and the Federal Territories Land and Mines Office (PPTGWP) revealed to *StarMetro* that the proposed project would be 54% affordable housing and 46% mixed development.

"It is still at proposal stage at this point, and it is a joint venture between the government and a private developer.

"However, the land must be degazetted first before anything can proceed," added the sources.

The land owned by Federal Territories Ministry is currently being used by DBKL for its nursery.

Stakeholders living in and around Taman Intan Baiduri in Kepong, including the Intan Baiduri People's Housing Project as well as businesses nearby, will have until Jan 26 to voice their objections over the proposal to revoke the status of the land reserved for public purpose.

The plot, known as Lot 80835, was gazetted as "land for public purpose" on April 17, 2015.

It is adjacent to the lot identified for the proposed housing project. The land status of the second plot is housing.

The Federal Territory Land Executive Committee has moved to degazette Lot 80835 according to Section 64 of the National Land Code.

If the committee does not receive any objection by the end of the deadline, the government will proceed with the revocation process.

PPTGWP will be handling the objections for the proposed land revocation.

It is holding an enquiry tomorrow on the proposed revocation.

This means that parties objecting to the project must file their objections at the PPTGWP office, on the 2nd floor in Federal House, Jalan Sultan Hisshamuddin, between 9am and 4pm.

## Steps to degazette land initiated

### Stakeholders question ill timing of objection hearing for proposed revocation of reserve status



The notices on the proposed degazette of a reserve land in the area are put up at the gateway to DBKL's nursery in Kepong. — FAIHAN GHANI/The Star

When contacted, PPTGWP director Muhammad Yasir Yahya confirmed to *StarMetro* that the land was being degazetted for an affordable housing project but declined to elaborate further.

On the objection process, he said the onus was on the public to object to the revocation.

"Members of the public must register their objections and state their reasons for objecting to it

(revocation of the reservation).

"We have placed notices for the public about the proposed revocation of the reserved land status and informed them to send their objections."

Yasir said the notices were put up on the notice board of PPTGWP's premises and at the site.

When contacted for comments, Kuala Lumpur mayor Datuk Mahadi Che Ngah said: "This is a

legal procedure involved in revocation of any public reserve land.

"This is a notice to invite anyone to object to that proposed revocation."

The land is located near the Intan Baiduri lake, not too far from PPR Intan Baiduri.

Kepong MP Lim Lip Eng said the authorities must provide more information about the reasons to degazette the land.



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Members of the public who want to object to the revocation of the reservation, must register their objections at the enquiry and state their reasons for objecting to the matter.

Muhammad Yasir Yahya



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I have been championing a community garden project for the residents to counter the cramped living environment. We don't want more buildings. We need space.

Khairul Anwar Yusoff



“The mayor and the land office director must disclose who are the people benefitting from degazettement of the land as well as whether the land is being sold and at what price,” he said.

Meanwhile, lawyer and Petaling Jaya City councillor Derek Fernandez said there should never be a revocation (by degazettement) of public open spaces in a compact and dense city, as there was already a gross shortage of such spaces in Kuala Lumpur.

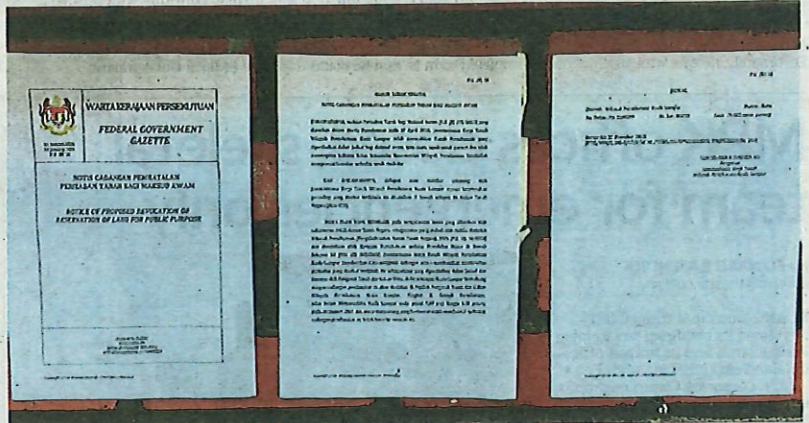
“The present ratio of public open spaces to the population does not meet the national urbanisation standards of 2ha per 1,000 population as the basic sustainable development criteria,” he said.

“In Kuala Lumpur and most big cities, this will only get worse if more public open spaces are degazetted.

“In fact, not only should more of such places be gazetted, but open spaces must also be incorporated in all development plans. And those open spaces should also be gazetted to afford further protection,” he added.

Fernandez, an expert in town planning and local government legislation, said these open spaces and their size were part of the basic criteria to determine if a city was sustainable as they had a pronounced impact on residents' health, recreation and air quality besides playing a role in flood mitigation and preventing elevated temperatures (due to the heat sink effect) in a city.

“The open space requirement for sustainable development is based on the number of people, not whether one builds affordable or high-end housing.



A closer look of the notices put up by the land office.

“People who live in affordable or low-cost housing need the same amount of public open spaces as people who live in high-end housing,” he pointed out.

He added that the policy to encourage affordable housing should be implemented through plot ratio incentives and plot ratio control on the developers' land and not by destroying open spaces.

## Objection hearing amid MCO

StarMetro reached out to Intan Baiduri People's Housing Project (PPR) residents.

Khairul Anwar Yusoff, who is in the Block A residents committee, said he was not happy to hear of the government's plan to degazette the said piece of land.

“These flats are crowded. We feel like packed sardines living here.

“So I have been championing a community garden project for the residents to balance the situation.

“When we heard about the plans to build more houses, we were

shocked. We don't want more buildings here.

“We need space.”

He lamented that the lake (Intan Baiduri Lake) was filthy and had become a rubbish dumping ground.

Many stakeholders are also unhappy over the time frame given for people to object to the degazettement.

“Why the rush?” Shanti Kumar, another resident of the PPR, queried.

“The government has implemented a movement control order in Kuala Lumpur, whereby people should not be going out unless it is an emergency.

“So I find it very strange that they are asking people during this time to leave their homes if they want to object to the degazettement,” she added.

Used car dealer Tan Kok Lan, who has a shop nearby, also criticised the timing of the objection hearing.

“People will be reluctant to venture out of their homes to object, due to safety reasons and they will also be deterred by police road-

blocks,” he said.

Fernandez and Lim concurred with Shanti and Tan's views, saying that it was not advisable to have a public hearing involving a serious issue during the MCO.

Both Fernandez and Lim urged the authorities to postpone the hearing to a suitable time so that all could have the chance to be heard on their views regarding the proposal to degazette the reserve land.

StarMetro also spoke to numerous people living in the area.

The two-dozen people interviewed said they did not know about the land degazettement exercise nor had they seen the notices informing about it.

“Something as important as this should be published in the newspapers, or at least placed at more strategic spots,” said PPR Intan Baiduri resident Fairuz Ahmad.

When told that the notice was placed at the entrance of the DBKL nursery about 2km away, he said: “No one goes there because it is not open to the public and it is quite remote.”