

Transforming River Corridors

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The bigger picture: Ahmad Fuad (left) with MAM, Malaysian Department Director Zaidah Ghazali during one of the consultation programs for the River of Life Beautification project.

Transforming river corridors

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—Tan Sri Ahmad Fuad (MAM)

10.7km stretch to be turned into tourist landmarks

By **RAYANI W**
rayanin@thestar.com.my
Photo by P. RAJARAN

The Global River of Life project, which is part of the Greater KL masterplan to turn Kuala Lumpur an one of the top 20 livable cities of the world, will include transforming 11 river corridors along a 10.7km stretch of the Klang and Gombak rivers into tourist landmarks.

Kuala Lumpur mayor Tan Sri Ahmad Fuad Ahmad said the project which involved a clean-up exercise of a 10km stretch of both rivers would cost RM30m, with an additional RM10m for beautification of 10.7km in the city.

Ahmad Fuad said the beautification project would include 11 spots starting with river restoration in Titowangsa, Petaling, PPRC, Sungei Buloh (Jaya Wang), Raja Laut, Masjid Jamek, Railway Station, Brickfields, KL Sentral and Sepang.

"The first parcel is in the Titowangsa area and the plans include constructing bridges, cycle

paths, walkways and greening the surrounding area.

"The main objective is to link both sides of the riverfront and integrating it with river-based public transportation," Ahmad Fuad said.

Ahmad Fuad, who launched the two-day River of Life Seminar at the DRAC training institute in Bandar Tun Razak yesterday, said 40ha of vacant land had been identified for riverfront projects.

"These plots of land have been left idle and have the potential to be redeveloped to enhance the surrounding spaces along the riverfront.

"Take the Masjid Jamek area as an example which comes under Parcel 7. It is strategic and has great potential to become a vibrant tourist spot. In fact there are even proposals to turn it into a tourist attraction with leisure facilities like Malacca," Ahmad Fuad said.

However, the mayor said the major hurdle was the cleaning up 110km of the rivers and not to mention Kuala Lumpur City Hall's (DBKL) task of relocating squatters and illegal factories and

monitoring what they throw into the waterway.

Ahmad Fuad urged city residents to appreciate the government's effort in maintaining and learning to love and care for the rivers.

"The government is allocating a lot of money for this project and I am sure many people will appreciate the efforts and value it," Ahmad Fuad said.

Five companies have been shortlisted for their proposals for the river beautification master planning competition. The judging criteria included scope of work, design, economic viability and originality.

There are four international companies and two local ones. The master plans are available for the public to view and vote at www.streetscape.com.my from now until July 28.

A panel of expert jurors have also been appointed to assess the plans. The winning plan will be based on a combination of votes from the public (20%) and the jurors (80%). The winning proposal will be announced on July 31.