Transforming River Corridors

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The bigger picture: Ahmad Fuad with DBKL Masterplan Department director Zamali Ghazali viewing one of the masterplan proposals for the River of Life beautification project.

Transforming river corridors

10.7km stretch to be turned into tourist landmarks

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– TAN SRI AHMAD FUAD FAISAL

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Photo by P. NATHAN

THE RM86d River of Life project, which is part of the Greater KL masterplan to turn Kuala Lumpur as one of the top 20 liveable 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 Ismail said the project which involved a clean-up exercise of a 110km stretch of both rivers would cost RM30d, with an additional RM50d for beautification of 10.7km in the city.

Ahmad Fuad said the beautification project would include 11 spots starting with river corridors in Titiwangsa, Pekelling, PWTC, Sime Darby loop, Dang Wangi, Raja Laut, Masjid Jamek, Railway Station, Brickfields, KL Sentral and Seputeh.

"The first parcel is in the Titiwangsa area and the plans include constructing bridges, cycle paths, walkways and greening the surrounding areas.

"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 DBKL 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 boating 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 threw into the waterways.

Ahmad Fuad urged city residents to appreciate the government's effort in revitalising 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 includes scope of work, design, economic viability and originality.

Three are from international companies and two local ones. The master plans are available for the public to view and vote at www.riversfolio.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 30.