



Marring business: A row of shops along the flooded road in Jalan PJU 1/3B are affected every time there is a downpour.

Flash flood victims seek relief

Sunway Mas business owners want drains cleared and widened to ease woes

By VINCENT TAN

vincent.tan@thestar.com.my

FLOODS in the Sunway Mas commercial area in PJU 1, especially in Jalan PJU 1/3B, have been a long-standing problem. However, the Petaling Jaya City Council (MBPJ) is taking steps to resolve this.

During a recent meeting to discuss the 2013 budget, councillor Cynthia Gabriel had highlighted the need to combat flash floods in the area.

The council has allocated RM2mil to carry out flood mitigation work at the Sunway Mas commercial area in PJU 1.

Engineering works to overhaul the drainage systems in Kampung Cempaka, Sunway Mas and Bukit Mayang will also only take place in the second quarter of 2013 after the tenders and engineering plans have been cleared.

Currently, the mayor's office (headed by acting mayor Puasa Md Taib) is able to use emergency funds of up to RM20,000 for urgent matters, while pressure-jet cleaning efforts are being paid for from the 2012 budget.

According to Gabriel, the council had to clear six large trees planted by the side of the road in question after it was discovered that the trees' roots were choking the drains.

Even then, the council still faced problems in clearing the undergrowth as there is a Tenaga Nasional Bhd substation in the area and the roots have become intertwined with the cables.

"We need to clear the roots and rebuild the drainage channel," said Gabriel.

In the meantime, MBPJ, through its Environmental Health department, has used pressure jet engines to clear congealed grease and sedi-

ment in the drain channels.

There will be three rounds of these pressure-jet clearing operations, the first of which took place early this month.

MBPJ's engineering department has also contacted TNB about shifting its cables and powerboxes to other locations.

Jalan PJU 1/3B was the lowest-lying point in Sunway Mas, which made it prone to flash floods.

Nearby Kampung Cempaka, which has spots even lower than Sunway Mas, has not faced any flood problems yet.

Gabriel said MBPJ officers had found that water from the neighbouring roads was not flowing through the manholes and drainage channels as these were blocked by congealed grease, plastic bags and sediment.

"The only way this could happen is that businesses in the vicinity are not using grease traps. We need the

cooperation of the local business owners and residents to keep the drains clean," said Gabriel.

While the high-pressure jets are a start, Gabriel said the engineering department had another week to come up with a plan to resolve flood woes in Sunway Mas.

One of the suggestions is to build retention ponds next to the IWK oxidation ponds and the TNB substation in Jalan PJU 1/3B.

"The pressure jets are just a temporary measure and MBPJ is looking into leasing more units but demand is high right now and we were lucky we could lease them to start cleaning the drains early this month," Gabriel said.

Meanwhile, the suggested MBPJ retention pond plan will be delayed as ownership of the plot of empty land between the substation and oxidation ponds is still being determined.

Aman Suria Residents Association chairman Wendy Chan, who was also former chairman for the Sunway Mas commercial area's joint management body, said floods had been occurring for the past two years and the situation had worsened recently.

"We were facing problems everyday because of the rain and businesses closest to the flooded area suffered badly. In the end, we lost our patience and complained to Gabriel and Petaling Jaya Utara MP Tony Pua," said Chan.

Shopowner Kenny Tong, whose automobile repair shop is next to the flood hotspot said: "This is a long-standing problem, going on since 2007. The drains are too narrow. The council should widen the drains to enable water to flow smoothly.

An employee from a nearby restaurant said the floods always left a stench and this was bad for business.