



Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

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Press statement

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Councils should tackle perennial car parking woes

Penangites have been facing the perennial problem of finding public car parking spaces in commercial areas as many of them are taken up by office workers for long periods of time, usually more than eight hours.

The Consumers' Association of Penang (CAP) calls on the City Councils of Penang Island (MBPP) and Seberang Perai (MBSP) to introduce Regulations to limit the hours one can park in a public parking lot, e.g. not more than two hours. Anyone violating the regulation should be fined. It will only be fair to those who run errands for less than two hours.

Parking fees on-street car parks in the commercial areas are very low and should be substantially increased. In fact, areas in Kuala Lumpur's central business district (CBD) increased the parking fee from 80 sen to RM2 for the first hour and RM3 from the second hour with effect from 18 July 2016.

Such system has been adopted by the local governments in many cities such as those in the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and Australia. However, time limits need strong and effective enforcement. To give a rough indication of how much is the cost of a two-hour parking in 2017: New York was USD32.97 (RM139.33); Hong Kong, USD11.74 (RM49.61); and Seoul, USD8.71 (RM36.81).

To prevent people from hogging a parking space in a particular area longer than the determined time limit, the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency requires a person to move his vehicle at least a block away or at least 500 feet (152 m), whichever is farther.

It is considered cheap for office workers to park in the MBPP and MBSP's parking lot at a rate of 80 sen per hour and parking for nine hours would only cost RM7.20. They will be parking their cars even before business hours and will be among the last to leave the area, thus depriving others in desperate need to park just to carry out an errand.

When that happens, vehicle owners tend to double park or illegally occupy motorcycle lots and such action leads to traffic congestion in the area. Otherwise, some drivers would park their cars in free public car parks and carpool to work, depriving others with legitimate reason to be in the area of the opportunity.

The Councils should also take action on motorcycles that occupies car parking lots. It is a common occurrence to find a motorcycle sitting in the slot meant for cars. It is also puzzling to find obstructions such as stalls, tables, chairs, wooden pallets, or tyres in car parking spaces placed there by shop owners or traders. No action is taken by the authorities on those responsible for these abuses.

We urge the Councils to rectify the dire need for car parking spaces by people who need them for short errands. The Councils should implement the two-hour limit to also encourage people working in CBDs or having to run an errand in the area to opt for public transport, either because of the hassle or the price. There is a paradigm shift for parking in many countries because land for parking is becoming scarce and expensive besides the issue of pollution and an urgent need to push for the use of public transport. Malaysia is not an exception in facing such a dilemma.



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