



Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

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Press Statement

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Mount Erskine Underpass is NOT the Best Option

This statement is in response to the Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow's claim that the Mt Erskine underpass is the best option to solve traffic woes as reported in the Star, Nov 8, 2019.

We offer five reasons why not only it is not the best option but even more so it is a waste of rate payers money and should be scrapped.

1. This project is not a priority as traffic flow at this junction is good most of the time, except during morning peak hours. Even then, the waiting time going to Burmah Road is less than 10 minutes.
2. The project will create massive traffic nightmare for at least two years or more (during construction period) as all residents in the north will have only one road - Tanjong Tokong Road - to travel to town and back. Has the Penang Island City Council taken this into account? Has the Council done a detailed traffic simulation study of this problem? If so, please make it public. This "solution" is akin to cutting your nose to spite your face.
3. Assuming traffic flows smoothly under Jalan Gottlieb via the underpass, would traffic not hit congestion level again when cars emerge from the underpass onto Jalan Burmah and Pulau Tikus? Why spend RM 55 million just to move the traffic jam 1 km down the road?
4. The cost of this project has more than doubled to RM55 million and possibly higher due to land acquisition compensation to about 20 landowners who will receive over RM20 million. Why pay out millions of ringgit at the expense of all rate payers in Penang for unwarranted projects when simpler cost-effective solutions that will not destroy the surrounding above-ground community are well on hand?
5. Council is expected to raise RM54 million from its proposed assessment rate increases. By cancelling this project Council can save RM55 million and reduce its proposed assessment rate increase to benefit all rate payers.

Council should not waste ratepayers' money on bad solutions to traffic congestion.

What is needed is better management of the traffic light system and stricter enforcement against congestion caused during school opening and closing hours which will cost next to nothing.

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