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Prices rise sharply in parts of the city

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Tah Wah has mainland Penang firmly in its sights



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Alleviating traffic congestion

Four new highways have been proposed in the Klang Valley to improve traffic flow. In the first of a two-part series on the proposed highways, **Lam Jian Wyn, Wong Mei Kay and Haziq Hamid** find out where better accessibility could increase land values.

Traffic jams are part and parcel of Malaysian city life, especially in the Klang Valley. As the major arteries of the Klang Valley such as the Federal Highway, the Damansara-Puchong Highway (LDP) and Middle Ring Road 2 (MRR2) become increasingly clogged with vehicles, four new highways have been proposed to improve traffic flow. These new highways, if built, could alleviate traffic congestion and improve connectivity as well as unlock the potential of certain areas or developments that are made more accessible via these highways, mapmaker Ho Chin Soon, who is also the founder and director of Ho Chin Soon Research Sdn Bhd, tells *City & Country*.

The proposed highways are the Damansara-Shah Alam Elevated Expressway (DASH), the Kinrara-Damansara Expressway (KIDEX), the Serdang-Kinrara-Putrajaya Expressway (SKIP) and the Sungai Besi-Ulu Kelang Elevated Expressway (SUIKE).

In the first of a two-part article, *City & Country* will explore DASH and SUIKE and the areas along their alignments that are poised to benefit from the highways.

The concessionaire of the two highways is Projek Lintasan Kota Holdings Sdn Bhd (Prolintas), which also runs the Ampang-Kuala Lumpur Elevated Highway (AKLEH), the Guthrie Corridor Expressway (GCE) and Lebuhraya Kemuning-Shah Alam (LKSA).

Prolintas and the Malaysian Highway Authority are in the midst of collating feedback from various affected parties such as residents on the proposed alignments and interchange locations. For now, according to reports, Prolintas plans to start work on the highways by the second quarter of next year.

Ho believes the new highways could pave the way for development in parts of the vast swathes of land and forest still available such as the Air Hitam and Hulu Langat forest reserves — similar to how part of the Sungai Buloh forest reserve was alienated for the development of Kota Damansara in Petaling Jaya.

Meanwhile, JS Valuers Research & Consultancy Sdn Bhd executive director Chan Wai Seen says the proposed highways will benefit vacant and agricultural land greatly as their development potential will be enhanced by improved accessibility.

"Depending on the locations, the land values could increase several-fold."

He points out that the value of properties along the four proposed highways have already risen by at least 20% to 30% over the past two to three years due to the strength of the property market, the prime or established status of these areas and other factors. "When the highways are completed, we can expect property prices to rise a further 10% at least."

Chan cites house prices in the south of Shah Alam that had risen 10% and 20% in late 2008 when it was announced that one of the LKSA interchanges will open in 2009.

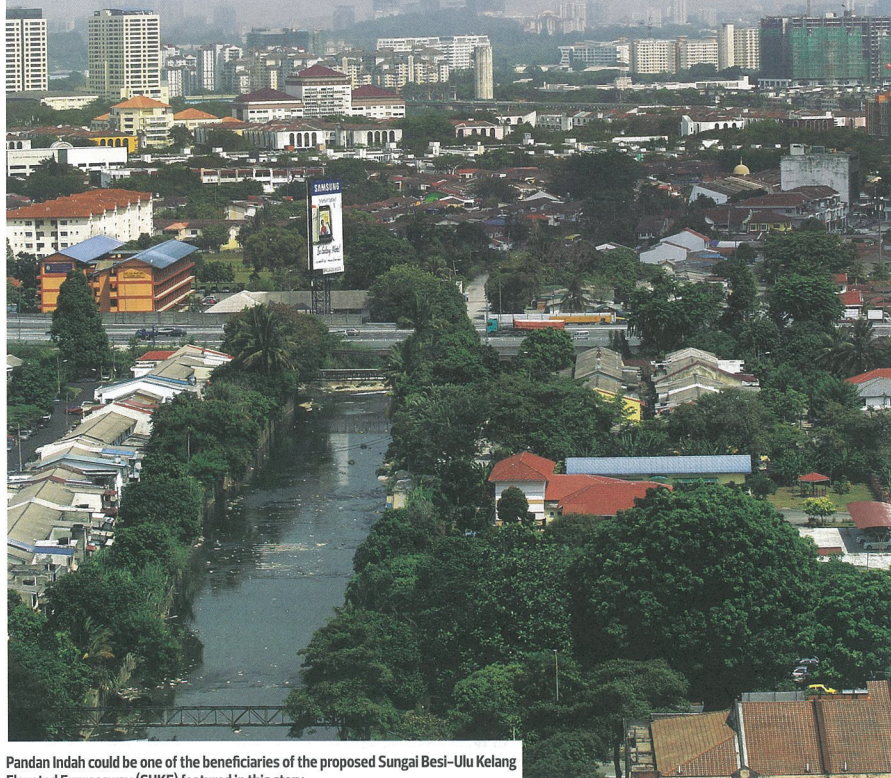
"The prices of existing houses will increase gradually, especially after the highways are completed and when home-seekers and existing residents start to enjoy the benefits of improved accessibility. With their enhanced marketability, coupled with a conducive economic environment, property prices near these highways may continue to go up in the medium to long term."

However, some townships such as Bandar Kinrara in Puchong, Mutiara Damansara and Damansara Perdana in Petaling Jaya may not benefit much from the new highways because they are already connected to several highways and trunk roads, opines Ho.

DASH

The proposed DASH is a 20.1km, three-lane, dual-carriageway that will start from an LDP interchange at Puncak Perdana in Shah Alam and end at the Penchala Link along the SPRINT Highway. It will connect the north of Shah Alam to

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Pandan Indah could be one of the beneficiaries of the proposed Sungai Besi-Ulu Kelang Elevated Expressway (SUIKE) featured in this story