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CHALLENGES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF URBAN REDEVELOPMENT IN BATU GAJAH, DISTRICT OF KINTA, PERAK

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Abstract:

Redevelopment is an approach used by the government in developing existing urban areas. Redevelopment means an activity to change the physical structure of the urban area to overcome social, physical, economic and environmental problems in order to achieve the concept of highest and best use of land efficiencies and effectiveness. Urban redevelopment involves complicated issues for implementation in urban areas such as the process of land acquisition, residential resettlement, negotiations on investment, modifications of existing town plans, and financial aids. The challenges are being identified by conducting a semi-structured interview to the specified respondents. All the respondents from Majlis Daerah Batu Gajah, Pejabat Daerah dan Tanah Kinta and Penghulu Kanan Daerah Kinta agreed that scarcity of land is the main challenge for the implementation of urban redevelopment.. The process of redevelopment will require a long time to be executed; however is depends on the people's perceptions. People's perception are something that cannot be easily managed by the respondent. Thus, there must be cooperation between the Local Authority, owners of the land and properties; and the government to improve the identity of the urban area. Usually redevelopment will not take a long time to implement as compared with a new town. Redevelopment is intended to improve people's lives and improve the image of the urban areas of Batu Gajah Town.

Keywords: Urban; Urbanization; Challenges; Redevelopment.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Urban redevelopment has challenges that need to be undertaken before completing the process of implementation. Urban redevelopment is important as it benefits the present and future generations for long term improvement. Hence, redevelopment can not only reuse and improve land use efficiency, but also update the existing land use (including land type, land structure, and so on) and make efficient use of possible regional land layout. Many redevelopments have been put into effect to maintain the urban vitality and transform urban function. Furthermore, urban redevelopment is a secondary development or a reconstruction on existing built land, with or without land use change. In Hong Kong's neighbourhood of urban redevelopment location, there exists transportation facilities as a medium of travel from origin to destination. Each change made in an urban area will give effect to society and the people. Hence, the role of the local authority is very important to give understanding to all people by making the best decision in doing all improvements.

The purpose of this study is to identify the issues and problems of economic development in Batu Gajah and to determine the development potential of urban redevelopment in a colonial town. The main objective of this study is to investigate the challenges of urban redevelopment in Batu Gajah. From local experience, Kg. Bharu, Kuala Lumpur is one of the urban redevelopment cases that involves complicated issues such as the process of land acquisition, resettlement of residents, negotiations on investment, modification of existing town plans, and financial aids (Sharifah Mariam, 2012).

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter discuss about the definition, concept and previous studies on urban redevelopment. At the end of this chapter, the researcher will describe the urban redevelopment concept in the case study area. By definition redevelopment involves clearance of property and the construction of new structures according to the precise plan with a different layout from the area before redevelopment is implemented, as highlighted by Burns (1963). Redevelopment is a process to recreate an old urban area to become a new area by improving the structures of the building and making a construction based on the latest technology. People will take part on each development due to new technology. The improvement of urban areas is considered as urban redevelopment. Redevelopment on the existing town was very challenging due to the existing town being redeveloped to transform it into a new one.

2.1 Concept of urban redevelopment

Urban redevelopment occurs when people choose to live in urban areas rather than living in rural or suburban areas. An urban area is a place that consists of all the requirements needed for a modern world. It has advanced transportation, high rise buildings, global exposure, business opportunities, better educational, health and recreational amenities which are enough to attract anyone who wants to improve life. Urban houses have many people with different backgrounds such as businessmen, employable people, school children, old people, housewives, disabled persons, tourists (temporary users of the city); and all these profiles further classified into rich and poor which ultimately forms up the need for different types of shelter and housing. Urban redevelopment is a mechanism that puts all factors in one place to fulfil the criteria of an urban area as stated by the local authority in each state.

2.2 Challenges for the implementation of urban redevelopment

Redevelopment can not only reuse and improve land use efficiency, but also update the original land use (including land type, land structure, and so on) and make efficient use of possible regional land layout. And many redevelopments have been put into effect to maintain the urban vitality and transform urban function. Therefore, installing the necessary site required for redevelopment depends on the ability of the developer to acquire and control all the property rights. Thus, development proposals may be constrained by the actions and behaviour of owners (Adams, 1996). Davison and Legacy (2014), claim that while redevelopment offers a profitable opportunity to exploit land rent residuals in the face of economic restructuring, the local authority bears extremely high transaction costs in the land redevelopment processes in both the land use planning and demand levels.

The challenges on the implementation of urban redevelopment are faced by the Local Authorities in each state. Redevelopment is defined as a process to rebuild or restore an area which is in a measurable state of decline, disinvestment, or abandonment. The restoration process will face the opposition from the owners of the buildings and lands because mostly they do not like to make development on their property. Davison and Legacy, (2014) claim that while redevelopment offers a profitable opportunity to exploit land rent residuals in the face of economic restructuring, the local authority bears extremely high transaction costs in the land redevelopment process in both the land use planning and demand levels. The cost of these negotiations can be attributed to many involved parties and increasingly conflicting interests between the government and land owners under state-led land requisition.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The research uses both primary and secondary data collection which is based on interview and observation. It emphasized that data may be gained through primary or secondary sources. Many researchers obtain their data from secondary sources because the data gained are more informative, easy to collect and time saving. The methodology used in this research is semi-structured interviews whereby four respondents were interviewed with ten questions as it would allow for wide coverage of this topic on the challenges on the implementation of urban redevelopment in Batu Gajah. The interviews were

conducted to get professional and personal opinions in regards to the issues and problems of urban redevelopment from the respondents' perspectives. Interview were conducted by interviewing the responsible officers from Majlis Daerah Batu Gajah, Pejabat Tanah dan Daerah Kinta, Penghulu Kanan Daerah Kinta, and academicians from UiTM Seri Iskandar to get detailed information. All the information from secondary data such as newspapers, local plans and websites in relation to urban development in Batu Gajah were collected. Information from previous journals, articles and academic writing is also gathered and presented in the literature review. All the information obtained is used for observation on this research.

Observation made for this research to complete the findings and analysis. All things that are considered as challenges are used as information for interview sessions. The entire questions used during the interview sessions are based on observation in the literature review and observation at the case study. Since the respondents have been identified, data can easily be gained and analysed. Based on the objectives, the selected sampling is usually used for interview approach. The interview was targeted to be conducted with expert panels or experienced officers from Majlis Daerah Batu Gajah, Pejabat Tanah dan Daerah Kinta, Penghulu Kanan Kinta and academicians from UiTM Seri Iskandar. All information obtained from the interview sessions and observation is used for making contents analysis in the research. All information and input received is used for making analysis for the case study.

4.0 ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

From this research, issues and problem on the implementation of urban redevelopment came from three factors; which are from the policy, economic and social aspects. These factors have become the challenges towards the implementation of urban redevelopment in Batu Gajah, Perak. This is due to the redevelopment process involving a lot of bodies including Local Authority, Consultants, Land Owners and the Government.

It has been highlighted by the respondents that Batu Gajah must strike a balance between the economic, environmental and social necessities in order to sustain the development. It was supported by a previous research by Clark (1989) that true to the word, the urban problems of traditional towns are often a declining economy, unemployment, physical decay, and poor amenities. The colonial towns have high population of old people due to the migration happening into the new urban areas. People choose to work and stay in the city compared to rural areas. A lot of job opportunities are provided in the urban areas due to redevelopment such as in industry-based economies and small businesses but people do not prefer life in this area. The population in urban redevelopment areas is always increasing because of the development process such as the current population in the previous study area. The objective of urban redevelopment in this area is to provide better transportation to the population that split the public transportation to private transportation in ensuring the safety of people in the surrounding areas. In order to prevent from the social problems, all facilities are provided for the population in the urban areas. Hence, the potential of Batu Gajah after redevelopment is that facilities will be provided to fulfil the community needs. The planned facilities for Batu Gajah include providing a service center, libraries in villages, recreational areas and so on to benefit the society in Batu Gajah.

All the old facilities will be repaired and upgraded to become almost new facilities. The optimum use of recreational areas is predicted as people today are more educated and aware of holistic use of the facilities. One of the respondents also said that the redevelopment area must provide a lot of facilities to people in urban areas. The success of the development is reflected by the facilities provided whether they provide easy access to everywhere and convenience to people to support what has been provided by the government. Easy access will put the town area as an attraction town with a stable economy. People are expected to be living in the area with a lot of facilities to provide convenience in life for getting anything they want. Easy access can give freedom to life in the urban area.

In terms of policy, it involves the regional character when development occurs after taking into considering the local site, climate and local technologies. Policy need to be carefully formulated to become one of the solutions to reduce urbanization problems. Accordingly, the Malaysian government

has initiated urban redevelopment projects and referring to new town development projects as part of a wider solution to improve such unfriendly urban and dwelling environments. The components required to develop a city can be divided into the urban space, street structure and characteristics of housing blocks and units. Policy is required by the government to prevent traffic congestion in the urban areas and prevent future problems. The respondents stated that redevelopment in all areas are subject to a policy enforced by the Ministry of Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government as guidelines. This presents a challenge for redevelopment because they need to obtain approval from the Ministry for all developments and this will impact the development period and development timelines.

5.0 CONCLUSION

Urban areas are seen as both the source of and solution to today's economic, environmental and social challenges. Success in urban development can only be achieved through an integrated approach. The urban redevelopment must be combined with those developments promoting education, economic development, social inclusion and environmental protection. It must have strong partnerships between community, local authority, industry, investors and various government levels. These challenges will give impact for achieving critical thinking of responsible persons to achieve smart growth, sustainability, inclusive social envisaged and a stable economy. Simultaneously, governance must have their own responsibility in fulfilling the objectives. Undeniably, total success in urban redevelopment starts with the involvement of all the actors. They need to give all efforts in terms of money, time and energy in the development of certain areas if they want the project to be successful. This study holds some significance for further research as a reference point for challenges, solutions and recommendations on future improvements by the respective parties. Batu Gajah Town is a colonial town with wide expanses of ex-mining lands ripe for redevelopment. The main drawback of this research is its limitation of being conducted within the perceptive experiential confines of Batu Gajah, Perak and focused to a small number of respondents. Future research should cover a wider scope of area in order to fully recognize the issues and challenges of urban redevelopment. The gap from this study can be filled in further research in future in order to improve the quality of the study.

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