

# **GOVT OFFICERS RAISE TRANSPORTATION ISSUES IN PUBLIC FORUM**

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TRANSPORTATION and implementation issues were the focus of the BSB Development Masterplan public forum for government officers yesterday at Sheraton Utama Hotel.

HOK consultants presented their proposals and strategies for the development masterplan to representatives from several government agencies and a question and answer session followed in which officers could raise any issues or concerns they might have.

Several senior government officials participated in the session including Minister of Home Affairs Pehin Orang Kaya Johan Pahlawan Dato Seri Setia Hj Adanan Begawan Pehin Siraja Khatib Dato Seri Setia Hj Mohd Yusof; Permanent Secretary of Home Affairs, Hj Mohd Abdoh Dato Seri Setia Hj Abd Salam; Permanent Secretary (Higher Education) Hj Daud Hj Mahmud; and Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, Dato Paduka Hj Jemal Hj Ampal.

Steven Townsend, Project Director of the BSB Masterplan, said that the greatest challenge was getting the community to "buy into" the project and getting them solidly behind a new direction.

Hj Daud asked the consultants who would be the main driving force behind the masterplan, to which Townsend stated that in his experience, governments set up special commissions that focus clearly on implementing development plans. Citing the example of Abu Dhabi, Townsend said that the government there had appointed a Royal commission to be in charge of implementing their masterplan.

"It is very important that lines of decision are made clear and simple. It is better for one department or ministry to be in charge of the re-development," said Robert Marshall, HOK Senior Vice President.

Dato Hj Jemal raised the issue of transportation and stressed that it must be dealt with in any new development plan.

He said that congestion during rush hours, especially outside schools, is a problem that persists. People often double park outside schools at midday, hampering the flow of traffic. This problem is cutting down the productivity of government workers, he said.

Geoffrey Rogers, a transport expert with consultancy firm MVA Hong Kong, said that introducing school buses and staggering school start times was a way to alleviate congestion. "Double parking outside schools is unsafe for children and schools need to discourage parents from doing this. It is ultimately anti-social behaviour."

Rogers went on to say that implementing a linear transport system which would expand existing bus routes would be the easiest way to solve some of the capital's transport woes. Linear transport would also raise the possibility of introducing a light rail system.

Fazlan Hj Othman of OWMP International, the firm in charge of public participation in the BSB masterplan, said that they planned to hold more forums and sessions like these in coming

months.

He encouraged members of the public to fill out the questionnaire on the BSB masterplan website and submit any additional comments they might have on <http://www.bsb-masterplan.com.bn/>.

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**Source:** The Brunei Times (<http://www.bt.com.bn/news-national/2010/01/28/govt-officers-raise-transportation-issues-public-forum>)