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Listed developer Protasco Berhad today unveils its plans for a new township called De Centrum City in Kuala Lumpur's growing southern corridor. With an estimated growth development value (GDV) of RM10 billion, the new township will be developed in stages over a 15-year period. The 100-acre freehold tract of land where the township will be built, is currently the site for De Centrum Sales Gallery and Infrastructure University Kuala Lumpur (IUKL).

A shopping centre called Gallerie @ De Centrum (Phase One) is also scheduled to open by February 2016. To date, 70 per cent of the shopping centre has been leased out to tenants who will operate a fitness centre, convenience stores, pharmacies, book store, fast-food restaurants and supermarket, among others.

The entire Phase One development comprising the shopping centre block with 29 retail units, service apartment block with 320 units, SOHO block with 192 units and 54 shop lots, will be handed over to purchasers around December 2015.

Within De Centrum City, two towers (A & B) of De Centrum Unipark have been completed while the remaining two blocks (C & D) will be completed by 2017. When fully completed, De Centrum Unipark will offer a total of 640 condominium units.

Coming up next is a premium residential development conceptualised as Rimbawan Residences @ De Centrum with 504 high-rise condominium units and 13 exclusive villas.

“De Centrum City is possibly the first township in Malaysia to be built around an existing academic institution and there is growth potential and opportunity not only for those involved with academia but also for families looking to set up new homes, companies looking for a prestigious address outside the city, businessmen and investors,” explains Dato’ Ir Kenny Chong Ther Nen, Protasco Bhd’s Managing Director for Property & Infrastructure.

The new township is strategically located in an area dubbed Kuala Lumpur South, almost midway between Kuala Lumpur city and the Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA). De Centrum City can be reached in approximately 30 minutes from downtown KL, around 30 minutes from KLIA and possibly 15 minutes from either Putrajaya or Kajang.

“Given the location of De Centrum City in close proximity with IUKL, University Putra Malaysia and other institutions of higher learning, it is envisioned that a knowledge community will grow and evolve from here – with start-up companies, technology incubators and other amenities to support an entrepreneurial eco-system,” says Chong.

As an integrated township development, De Centrum City will offer residential units, shop-offices, small offices/home offices (SOHO), office suites, retail lots, hotels, an academic precinct, a convention and recreation centre, among others.

Most of the existing structures within the land will be demolished to make way for new ones to be built according to the master plan. The existing university campus will also be upgraded with green features added – from a network of elevated green bridges with public parks and water features to sheltered pedestrian walkways and bicycle paths. A shuttle bus service will be implemented to link commuters between De Centrum City to the Kajang MRT station, which is scheduled to be operational by July 2017.

“De Centrum City is the first township development that is conceived from the drawing board to address the issue of community well-being. One of the definitive features of the new township is the ‘new urbanism’ concept which promotes a vehicle-free community – where amenities can be enjoyed within walking distance,” explains David Mizan Hashim, the principal of award-winning Veritas Design Group, architect for the township.

“Unlike conventional developers, Protasco Bhd started off with government-initiated infrastructural projects and later went on to establish a university. With a strong foundation in place, they are supportive of the idea of a new township based on the principles of new urbanism, where there will be layers of pedestrian networks with green features and public spaces within the township to create an environment conducive to healthy living,” adds Hashim.

On the prevailing slow economy, Chong says, “We own the entire prime land of De Centrum City which is unencumbered so there is less pressure on us to achieve unrealistic targets as we can pace our growth to coincide with general economic growth accordingly. We believe a sound long-term development will override any temporary fluctuations in the market.” For fiscal year 2014, Protasco Bhd recorded a turnover of RM1.06 billion and operating profit of RM57.1 million.

De Centrum City is expected to be a dynamic catalyst of growth for the Kuala Lumpur South corridor by providing investment opportunities and creating new jobs. The new township will cater to the existing population of 500,000 located within an approximate 20-minute radius, which is projected to grow exponentially within the next 10 years. True to its name, De Centrum (which means “the centre” in French) is poised to be the next potential growth centre.