



## Rainforest Protectors of Sri Lanka

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To: Mayor, City of Kandy

Kandy Municipal Council

Kandy World Heritage City Council

### **Proposal for Kandy Green City Project to preserve its Natural Heritage**

The City of Kandy, with its rich historical and natural heritage, is a favorite destination among both local and foreign tourists. However, due to lack of a long-term sustainable plan to address issues arising in the city from increasing residents and visitors, the city of Kandy is currently heading on an unsustainable growth path. Signs of this unsustainable growth was clearly reflected when Minister Lakshman Kiriella recently proposed to construct a road through historic Udawattekele Rainforest as a solution to traffic congestion. This proposal clearly demonstrates that the authorities would sacrifice the Natural Heritage of Kandy to temporarily solve issues arising from unsustainable development.

Many developed countries have recently transformed their cities to be green<sup>1</sup> by reducing motor vehicles allowed in the city, promoting public transportation, cycling and walking. Increasing number of cities are creating greenways<sup>2</sup> to promote a healthy lifestyle and reduce traffic congestion. Some large cities such as Paris has even gone to the extent of declaring car-free city-center<sup>3</sup> to reduce the hazardous smog and noise pollution. Unfortunately, our country is going backwards due to the failure of authorities to promote these initiatives while the rest of the world moves ahead. The World Heritage City of Kandy should definitely be on the top of the list for a green & car-free city-center. To reach that goal, investments should be immediately made to introduce a well connected tram service in Kandy which the residents and tourists can use to easily access the historic attractions and shops. Such a tram service will not only reduce traffic congestion but will solve the parking issues as well.



Rendering of a Greenway to promote a healthy life-style and reduce traffic congestion



Well connected Tram service can drastically cut down the traffic congestion and parking issues in the City

Other options to reduce traffic congestion without destroying Kandy's Natural Heritage include creating underground tunnels<sup>4</sup> such as the proposed 3km tunnel under Kandy Lake to ease congestion. An alternative option to tram/street-cars include the elevated Monorail<sup>5</sup> which can be built parallel to existing roads, providing passengers with easy access to the city attractions and shops. India has already implemented an elevated Monorail project successfully<sup>6</sup>.

The Kandy Green City Project should additionally take into account the protection of historic Udawattekele Rainforest which is an important Natural Heritage enjoyed by both residents and tourists. Udawattekele is one of the last green space and also ranked as one of the must visit places in Kandy by several International travel companies. Scientists across the globe agree that once a road is constructed through a forest, the bio-diversity is severely affected. The forest deteriorates, pollution increases, wildlife is killed due to strikes with motor vehicles, the noise pollution drives the remaining wildlife out of the forest. Therefore, it is vital to keep public roads out of forest reserves. When we inquired from residents in Kandy about the road construction proposal made by the minister, they were overwhelmingly against the proposal. Many residents wanted the road in front of Dalada Maligawa reopened. Suggestions were made to make the road open for one-way traffic while making the road around the lake one-way traffic on opposite direction to ease traffic congestion.

Therefore we urge the Mayor of Kandy, Kandy Municipal Council and Kandy World Heritage City Council to seriously consider this proposal for a Kandy Green City Project. Please take required steps to reduce motor traffic and invest in making Kandy a Green City to address the traffic congestion in a sustainable manner while making the city attractive for the tourists. The City and its residents will then enjoy the benefits for years to come and Kandy will keep its name as a must visit World Heritage City.

Thank you

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# Appendix

## 1. Green Cities

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Green\\_cities](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Green_cities)

## 2. Greenway

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greenway\\_%28landscape%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greenway_%28landscape%29)

## 3. Paris Aims for Car-Free City Center

<http://nextcity.org/daily/entry/paris-car-free-anaheim-disney-transportation-center-rail-line-funding-lima>

## 4 . 3km tunnel under Kandy Lake to ease congestion

<http://www.therepublicsquare.com/politics/2014/02/3km-tunnel-under-kandy-lake-to-ease-congestion/>

## 5. Elevated Monorail

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monorail>

## 6. India's first monorail readies for take-off

<http://www.livemint.com/Specials/fyCuMeh4OOmTUTy3hWOZfK/Indias-first-monorail-readies-for-takeoff.html>