

## **Planning Statement**

### **Introduction**

1. This Planning Statement is submitted to the Town Planning Board (“the Board/TPB”) on behalf of Easylink Solar Energy Limited (“the Applicant”) in support of the planning application for ‘Proposed Temporary Place of Recreation, Sports or Culture (Hobby Farm)’ for a period of 5 years (“the Proposed Development”) at Lot Nos. 330RP(Part), 331RP(Part), 332RP(Part), 333RP(Part) and 334RP(Part) in D.D. 121 and adjoining Government Land, Yuen Long, New Territories (“the Site”) under Section 16 of the Town Planning Ordinance.

### **Application Site (Plans 1 and 2)**

2. The Site comprises Lot Nos. 330RP(Part), 331RP(Part), 332RP(Part), 333RP(Part) and 334RP(Part) in D.D. 121 and adjoining Government Land, Yuen Long, New Territories. The Site is accessible from Fui Sha Wai South Road via a local track leading to the ingress to its north.
3. The site area is about 2,809 m<sup>2</sup>, including Government Land of about 177 m<sup>2</sup>.

### **Planning Context**

4. The Site falls within an area zoned “Green Belt” (“GB”) on the Approved Tong Yan San Tsuen Outline Zoning Plan (the “OZP”) No. S/YL-TYST/14. The planning intention of the “GB” zone is primarily for defining the limits of urban and sub-urban development areas by natural features and to contain urban sprawl as well as to provide passive recreational outlets.
5. According to the covering Notes of the OZP, the provision of plant nursery is always permitted within the boundary of the OZP. According to the Notes of the OZP, the applied use is a Column 2 use within the “GB” zone on the OZP which may be permitted with or without conditions by the Board.
6. Provided that the structures of the Proposed Development are temporary in nature, approval of the application on a temporary basis for a period of 5 years would not frustrate the long-term planning intention of the “GB” zone.

### **TPB Planning Guidelines**

7. The TPB Guidelines for ‘Application for Development within “GB” zone under Section 16 of the Town Planning Ordinance’ (TPB PG-No. 10) are relevant to this application. In view of the above, it is expected that the Proposed Development generally complies with TPB PG-No. 10 in that it is compatible with the surrounding areas; with appropriate scale of vehicular access and parking provision; not overstraining the capacity of existing infrastructures; and not itself be the source of pollution.

## Development Parameters

8. The Proposed Development targets at people who are interested in experiencing agricultural practice. Visitors could engage in agricultural activities throughout the week. About 12 nos. of visitors per day during weekends and public holidays are expected.
9. The following table summarises the details of the structures on site (**Plan 3**):

No.	Use		Floor Area (ab.) (m <sup>2</sup> )	Covered Area (ab.) (m <sup>2</sup> )	Height (ab.) (m)	No. of Storey
1	1a	Open shed for plant nursery	106.5	129	5	1
	1b	Temperature-controlled germination rooms	15	15	3	
	1c		15	7.5 (partially under 1a)		
	1d		15	(under 1a)		
2a	Open shed for plant nursery		100	115		
2	2b	Temperature-controlled storage of seeds & flowers	15	15	3	
	2c		20	20		
	2d		15	(under 2a)		
3	3a	Open shed for aquaponic farming	186	216	5	
	3b	Meter room	15	(under 3a)	3	
	3c		15	(under 3a)		
4	4a	Agricultural produce workshop	93.7	93.7	5	
	4b	Storage of agricultural tools	15	15	3	
5	5a	Plant showroom & workshop	90	90	5	
	5b		90	90		
	5c	Storage of agricultural tools	15	15	3	
6	6a	Plant showroom & workshop	90	90	5	
	6b		90	90		
	6c	Storage of agricultural tools	15	15	3	
7	7a	Plant showroom & workshop	90	90	5	
	7b		90	90		
	7c	Ancillary office	15	15	3	
8	Meter room		15	15	3	
<b>Total</b>			<b><u>1,226.2</u></b>	<b><u>1,226.2</u></b>		
			<b>Plot Ratio</b>	<b>Site Coverage</b>		
			0.44	44%		

10. The plant nursery (structures 1-2) allows space for the cultivation of agricultural produce such as ginger, orchids and other houseplants. An aquaponic farming system (structure 3) of agricultural produce, such as tomato and lettuce, is also provided. The Applicant proposes an agricultural processing area (structure 4) for simple procedures such as pre-washing of edible vegetable and drying/grinding of ginger powder. The flowers, houseplants, edible vegetable and ginger powder will be sold to interested customers.

11. The proposed plant showrooms and workshops (structures 5-7) serve to display and give rooms for storage of the agricultural produce and plants cultivated in the plant nursery. Visitors could participate regular classes organised by local farmers and select and place order at the Site.
12. To echo government’s policy in promoting local electronic commerce (e-commerce), the Applicant will launch an electronic platform which allows customers to reserve and purchase agricultural produce and plants online. Orders could be delivered to customers’ designated locations without the need for them to visit the Site.
13. The Applicant also operates a plant rental business by means of e-commerce. Potential customers include offices, schools, private residences, etc. Houseplants will be cultivated at the plant nursery for customers’ rental purpose. Regular replacement of unhealthy/wilted houseplants will be carried out for subscribed customers. Retrieved houseplants will be properly taken care of in the plant nursery for the next rental recycle.
14. Solar photovoltaic panels ancillary to the agricultural use are proposed to be installed above the proposed structures to generate electricity for agricultural use only.
15. The Site is currently unpaved and partly grassed. No filling of land is proposed at the Site. No vegetation clearance and tree felling will be carried out at the Site.
16. Operation hours are from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily (including Sundays and public holidays). About 4 to 5 nos. of staff will station at the Site to maintain the agricultural works.
17. 1 no. of light goods vehicle (LGV) parking space is proposed for daily operation of the Proposed Development. Sufficient space is provided for vehicle manoeuvring within the Site (**Plan 4**).
18. Visitors are required to make prior appointment before visiting the Site. Public transport services are available in the vicinity of the Site (**Plan 5**). No visitor parking space will be provided.

**Similar Applications**

19. There are 3 similar applications approved by the Rural and New Town Planning Committee (“the Committee”) within or straddling the “GB” zone on the OZP:

<b>Application No.</b>	<b>Applied Use</b>	<b>Date of Approval</b>
A/YL-TYST/782	Proposed Temporary Place of Recreation, Sports or Culture (Hobby Farm) for a Period of 5 Years	27.5.2016
A/YL-TYST/921	Temporary Place of Recreation, Sports or Culture (Hobby Farm) for a Period of 5 Years	19.10.2018
A/YL-TYST/999	Temporary Place of Recreation, Sports or Culture (Hobby Farm) for a Period of 5 Years	15.5.2020

20. No undesirable precedent will be set as there are similar applications approved by the Committee within the same “GB” zone on the OZP.

## No Adverse Impacts to the Surroundings

### Traffic

21. The trip attraction and generation rates are expected as follows:

	Daily Trip Attractions	Daily Trip Generations
09:00 – 10:00	0	0
10:00 – 11:00	1	0
11:00 – 12:00	0	0
12:00 – 13:00	0	1
13:00 – 14:00	0	0
14:00 – 15:00	1	0
15:00 – 16:00	0	1
16:00 – 17:00	0	0
17:00 – 18:00	0	0
<b>Total Trips</b>	<b><u>2</u></b>	<b><u>2</u></b>

22. In view of the low trip attraction and generation rates, it is expected that the Proposed Development should not cause adverse traffic impacts to the adjacent areas and road network.
23. A vehicular access (8 m in width) is provided at the northern part of the Site. A parking space for LGV is proposed within the Site for daily operation of the Proposed Development. Sufficient space is allowed for vehicle manoeuvring within, entering, and leaving the Site. No parking, reversing, or turning of vehicles on public road is expected (**Plan 4**).
24. Prior booking will be required for visitors coming to the Site. Given that no visitor parking spaces will be provided at the Site, visitors are expected to get access to the Site by public transport services. Light Rail (LR), franchised bus and Green Minibus (GMB) services are available within walking distance from the Site. The walking time to the nearest franchised bus/GMB stop (Uptown) is about 4 minutes, whilst that to the nearest LR stop (Hung Shui Kiu) is about 9 minutes (**Plan 5**).

### Visual and Landscape

25. Apart from the proposed plant showrooms, portion of the Site will be used as a plant nursery. According to the Definition of Terms promulgated by the Board, ‘Plant Nursery’ use is subsumed under ‘Agricultural Use’, which is in line with the planning intention of the “GB” zone.
26. The proposed plant showrooms, which only involve single-storey temporary structures, are directly related to the plant nursery use and are not incompatible with surrounding land uses comprising vehicle parks, open storage yards, fallow agricultural land, temporary residential structures, and private residential development.
27. The Site is currently unpaved and partly grassed. No filling of land, vegetation clearance and tree felling will be carried out at the Site.
28. In the immediate east of the Site is Yuen Long Highway, across which is an area zoned “Open Storage” and “Other Specified Uses” annotated “Storage and Workshop Use”.

29. According to the definition of tree provided in LAO PN No. 6/2023, a plant is considered to be a tree if its trunk diameter measures 95 mm or more at a height of 1.3 m above the ground level. Under the definition, 1 no. of tree located at the western edge of the Site, namely *Leucaena leucocephala*, is identified and will be preserved in situ. It is also proposed to plant 14 nos. of *Bauhinia x blakeana* along the southern and western site boundary to mitigate the potential visual and landscape impacts arising from the Proposed Development (**Plan 6**).
30. By adopting the above mitigation measures, it is expected that adverse landscape and visual impacts to the public realm are not anticipated.

#### Drainage

31. The applicant will submit a drainage proposal, with provision of peripheral u-channels and catchpits to mitigate any potential adverse drainage impacts generated by the proposed development after planning approval has been granted from the Board. The applicant will implement the proposed drainage facilities at the Site once the drainage proposal is accepted by the Drainage Services Department.

#### Fire Safety

32. The Applicant has submitted a layout plan incorporated with the proposed fire service installations (FSI) (**Plan 7**). The Applicant will proceed to implement the FSI proposal at the Site once it is accepted by the Director of Fire Services.

#### Environment

33. The applicant will follow the measures as set out in the 'Code of Practice on Handling the Environmental Aspects of Temporary Uses and Open Storage Sites' issued by the Environmental Protection Department in order to minimise any possible environmental nuisances, and to comply with all environmental protection/pollution control ordinances.
34. No public announcement systems, whistle blowing or portable loudspeaker will be allowed within the Site. Potential adverse noise impacts to the surrounding areas are not anticipated.

#### **Planning Gain**

35. The Proposed Development provides career opportunities and passive recreational outlets and promotes the revitalisation of agricultural activities in the area.
36. The Proposed Development echoes the Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address in helping small and medium enterprises to tap into e-commerce business to expand their markets.
37. The Proposed Development is in line with government commitment with the Hong Kong's Climate Action Plan 2050 in optimising the favourable conditions of premises and developing renewable energy in Hong Kong.