

# Shaping KL's first *low-carbon township*

Kuala Lumpur City Hall has identified Wangsa Maju's Section 1 for its pilot project and hopes to impress stakeholders in other areas on the long-term benefits of switching to green technology to address climate change.



**Starting point:** Aerial view of Section 1 in Wangsa Maju, which is one of the largest townships in the city and is well-planned with new growth centres. — IZZRAFIQ ALIAS/The Star

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WANGSA Maju will become the first eco-conscious township in Kuala Lumpur, thanks to a pilot project spearheaded by Kuala Lumpur City Hall's (DBKL) Project Implementation and Building Department.

DBKL is, however, zeroing in on the Section 1 neighbourhood as its test project in a move to encourage active participation from stakehold-

ers, including residents and private businesses.

"Visibility is key. In my experience, nothing convinces people more than actually seeing and experiencing if a project works.

"That is why we chose Section 1, Wangsa Maju as our pilot project for the first zero-carbon township initiative," said Kuala Lumpur mayor Datuk Seri Mahadi Che Ngah.

"We want people to experience the benefits of living in an

eco-friendly township.

"Once they have experienced it, they will better understand what it means and it will be easier to get them to come on board with DBKL's wider plans to go green."

For the past five years, DBKL has been accelerating its efforts to become a zero-carbon city and to eliminate carbon footprint while tackling climate change.

A task force was established in 2019 to work towards achieving the Kuala Lumpur Low-Carbon Society

Blueprint 2030 goals.

"Since the blueprint's launch four years ago, we have managed to reduce carbon emissions in the city by 54%," he said, adding that DBKL hoped to hit its target of 70% by 2030.

"The best way to convince people of the social and economic benefits arising from city climate action is to show them that the action to tackle climate change can benefit residents and businesses in the area.

"They can have better living and working conditions, better air quality, cleaner rivers, reduced congestion and lower electricity bills.

"Now is the time for action and we believe that from these co-benefits in mind, we can convince stakeholders to invest in going green."

Mahadi hopes Section 1 will inspire city folk, in other areas, to embrace green living.



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# Solar panels' visibility key to engaging interest, says mayor

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## Why Section 1?

Wangsa Maju, consisting of Section 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10, was established in the 1980s.

"We have to go back to the question of visibility.

"Wangsa Maju was chosen because it is one of the largest townships in Kuala Lumpur and is well-planned with new growth centres," Mahadi said, adding that public facilities like schools, business centres and transportation hubs were centralised so it was easier to improve upon them.

The overall plan includes upgrading the infrastructure, which is already in the works.

DBKL is currently in talks with stakeholders who are keen on working with the local authority to convert Section 1 into a model carbon-free township.

Part of the work includes constructing a network of pedestrian walkways, jogging tracks and bicycle paths; upgrading ageing railings along the residential area as well as the Sungai Bonus jogging/cycling track behind the Wangsa Sari People's Housing Project.

There are plans to build a recreational park with trees planted along the way for the township's residents.

"With such infrastructure, we hope to encourage people to walk and exercise more, and drive less.

"People should only resort to driving if it is absolutely necessary and there will be less pollution and clean air for a healthier society," Mahadi said.

DBKL also envisions converting empty spaces into landscaped gardens or urban farms in the township.

## Solar power plans

Switching to solar power to help reduce electricity consumption tops Mahadi's green agenda to increase visibility and create awareness in Wangsa Maju.

He plans to do this by working with private companies.

"If we can use renewable energy like sunlight, we can save money and it will be much less harmful to



This flood retention pond near Semarak Setapak Jaya will become a solar farm for the production of renewable energy.



This pedestrian walkway built along Sungai Bonus in Section 1, Wangsa Maju will be spruced up with better infrastructure and LED lighting.

the environment.

"So we plan to tap into that (energy) by installing solar panels on our assets in Wangsa Maju.

"Take street lightings, for example. We plan to instal 76 units of solar-powered lights along the Sungai Bonus jogging tracks with sensors operating from 7am to 7pm," he said, adding that power consumption would be only 30% if there was no movement.

Mahadi also said that DBKL was working with private companies like Aeon Wangsa Maju, which was keen on the proposed plan to build 800kW solar panels on its rooftop.

The local authority is also in discussions with schools like SK Wangsa Maju Seksyen 1 to instal 315kW panels on the rooftop of eight of the school's buildings.

As for residential units, 86 blocks of five-storey apartments have

been identified for the installation of 15-20kW solar panels on rooftops.

The construction of a solar farm at a flood retention pond near Semarak Jalan Rejang is in the pipeline as well.

Once approved and constructed, Mahadi is confident that these buildings will see a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and experience a more cooling environment as well as cleaner air.

"Through these projects, we hope to see electricity usage cut by 50%.

"Stakeholders' positive feedback will encourage more people to voluntarily convert to renewable energy," he said, adding that this would be effective in reducing carbon emissions and battling global warming.

DBKL will be working with SEDA (Sustainable Energy Development Authority Malaysia), SWCorp, Alam Flora, TNB, and Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) to ensure the project's success.

"We are working with UTM consultants on this.

"Once the plan is completed, we hope to execute them one by one.

"Hopefully by the end of the year, we can have some visibility and data to share," Mahadi said.