

## Summary of Response to Feedback on Environmental Baseline Study for Yishun Miltonia Close

### I. Site context & milestones

Miltonia Close is about 27 hectares and has largely been zoned 'Residential' since the Master Plan 2003 (see Figure 1), with plans to develop this area for public and private housing.



**Figure 1: Original Zoning of Miltonia Close According to Gazetted Master Plan 2019**

In 2019, HDB engaged an external consultant to conduct an Environmental Baseline Study (EBS) (for more details, please see the full report [here](#)). The purpose was to better understand the existing topography, hydrology, water quality, flora and fauna to the housing development plans in a way that would minimise potential environmental impact. A summary of the EBS findings may be found in the executive summary published earlier [here](#)).

## **II. Engagement with Stakeholders**

Together with NParks and URA, HDB carried out engagement sessions with Nature Group representatives. These sessions provided opportunities for the various parties to assess the findings of the EBS report and identify the more critical areas to conserve.

The EBS report was also published online for public feedback from 14 Oct 2021 to 11 Nov 2021. In total, we received 41 responses via HDB's feedback channels.

## **III. Feedback received**

We are appreciative of the partnership with the Nature Groups and the interest and feedback from members of the public. We have reviewed all feedback and suggestions that were submitted. Some have requested to preserve the vegetated area in Miltonia Close to varying degrees while others expressed their support for development of new housing in the area and hoped to see a balance of housing and greenery in the area. There were also several suggestions to improve recreational opportunities and enhance ecological connectivity with other parks and nature areas in the vicinity.

## **IV. Responses to feedback**

Demand for public housing has increased significantly in recent years due to marriage and family formation, as well as changing social norms and aspirations. The overall number of applications received per Build-To-Order (BTO) flat has risen from 3.7 times in 2019 to 5.5 times in 2021. Thus, to meet strong housing demand, there are plans to launch up to 100,000 flats from 2021 to 2025, if needed, as recently announced by HDB. Moreover, as there have not been any BTO launches in Yishun from 2019 to 2021, there would be a need to cater new flats here to ensure good geographical spread of new BTOs.

Given this strong public housing demand and land scarcity in Singapore, we would need to develop the area here for housing. However, we have worked with other agencies and Nature Groups to adjust our plans so that we can retain the most environmentally significant areas in Miltonia Close, which sensitively balances development and conservation needs. We have also studied the feedback received as well as the EBS findings and recommendations to refine the development plans for Miltonia Close (see Figure 2 for the conceptual land use plan).

In developing this conceptual land use plan and the development strategies for Miltonia Close, we have also taken into account findings from NParks' island-wide Ecological Profiling Exercise (EPE), which maps the ecological profile of vegetated and forested areas across Singapore to better understand their role as biodiversity refugia and/or for ecological connectivity. In this particular area, the proposed development plans are studied in relation to the ecological connectivity around Khatib Bongsu through Lower Seletar Reservoir and Orchid Country Club, for which the lease is expiring in 2030. More details on the EPE for this area will be shared when ready.

**Legend (Boundaries and Proposed Developments)**

- Residential
- Place of worship / Civic & Community Institution
- Health & Medical Care
- Green / Park Spaces
- Road
- ★ Response to Feedback and EBS
- Core Biodiversity Area (recommended in EBS)
- Study boundary

**★ To retain nature park of 6.4ha, which is approximately 2.5 times of park space safeguarded in the Master Plan**

- A large part of the core biodiversity area recommended in the EBS to be retained in a contiguous manner, encompassing the primary stream and areas of concentration of conservation significant flora species
- Accounts for 30m buffer around natural stream and bamboo clusters south of stream; 15m buffer around conservation significant flora species
- Provides more seamless ecological connection through waterfront and Lower Seletar Reservoir



**★ To introduce nature ways along Yishun Ave 1 and proposed road on eastern boundary**

**★ To translocate the bats from bamboo roost site in the north to other retained bamboo clusters**

**★ To transplant young saplings of the affected conservation significant plant species, where possible.**

**★ To shift road to edge of Miltonia to avoid affecting retained park**

**Figure 2: Conceptual Land Use Plan for Miltonia Close**

The key components of this conceptual land use plan include:

- A) Retaining 6.4ha of the core biodiversity area recommended by the EBS in a contiguous manner, which can be preserved as a nature park. This is about the size of 9 football fields and approximately 2 ½ times of the 2.5 ha of park space gazetted in URA’s Master Plan 2019:** This will continue to protect existing biodiversity (including a large proportion of existing conservation significant species) and serve to safeguard wider and seamless ecological connectivity through the waterfront and Lower Seletar Reservoir. More broadly, our proposal to conserve this forested patch and the ecosystems it supports would contribute to ongoing efforts to mitigate impacts of climate change while developing sustainably.

We are proposing to revise original land uses reflected in URA’s Master Plan 2019 to better balance the need to meet public housing demand and sensitively retain more of the existing greenery, which involves trade-offs against other land uses:

- i. The proposed road that was originally cutting across Miltonia Close will be shifted to the eastern boundary to avoid affecting the proposed nature park.
- ii. The safeguarded Educational Institution (EI) site will be shifted out of this area to another nearby site within Yishun Town.

This proposed 6.4ha nature park will consist of the following elements:

- i. **Retained natural primary stream in the middle of the nature park that supports several conservation significant species:** With a riparian buffer on both sides (up to 30 metres), this offers an ideal habitat for aquatic species and adds to the greenery in Miltonia Close.
- ii. **Conserved areas within abandoned land forest south of the natural stream, which includes bamboo tree clusters and a high concentration of conservation significant flora species and large tree specimens:** a 30m buffer around the bamboo tree clusters, and a 15m buffer around the remaining flora species and large trees are proposed to be implemented.
- iii. **Nature-based recreation opportunities for future residents and visitors,** thereby sensitively catering to both ecological needs while creating platforms for them to learn about our local biodiversity. This will be well-connected to a wider network of park connectors, nature ways and parks, offering even more recreation options for members of public.

- B) Providing nature ways along Yishun Avenue 1 and the proposed new road along the eastern boundary of the site:** Nature ways are stretches of enhanced roadside planting which mimics the natural structure of forests through tiered vegetation, and are enriched with flowering plants to support other species. They are a key component of Singapore’s City in Nature vision to introduce more naturalistic landscapes to foster biodiversity, enhance sustainability, improve our built environment and promote a

greater appreciation of nature in our urban fabric. These proposed nature ways in Miltonia Close can also provide ecological connectivity towards other green spaces.

**C) Introducing mitigating measures to protect biodiversity in habitats affected by development plans:**

- i. Plans to translocate the bats from bamboo roost site in the north of Miltonia Close to other retained bamboo clusters within the proposed nature park,** as the flight path of the bats could be adversely affected when future developments are built in the vicinity.
- ii. Plans to transplant young saplings of affected conservation significant plant species to the proposed nature park where possible.** This would ensure native stocks of these plant species remain genetically diverse, as recommended by the EBS.
- iii. Migratory birds are generally either passage migrants which stop in Singapore briefly before continuing to their destination, or winter visitors which stay in Singapore over the entire winter season in the Northern hemisphere. The proposed nature park within Miltonia and proposed nature ways in the buffering areas can serve as ecological connections to other green spaces.** These habitats also provide food and shelter for both resident and migratory bird species and ensures that Singapore remains a suitable place for these birds to rest or transit despite the environmental change globally.

**D) Implementing Environmental Monitoring and Management Plan (EMMP):** HDB will engage a specialist consultant to develop an EMMP which will mitigate and manage any potential environmental impact arising from development works, and closely monitor the works from start to finish.

**E) Implementing measures to mitigate potential disamenities affecting existing residents during the construction phase:** To address dust, noise and other disamenities caused by development and construction works, appropriate mitigating measures such as the provision of earth control measures and noise barriers/meters at designated locations, will be put in place to maintain the quality of life for residents in the vicinity.

**F) Introducing biophilic design of future developments:** Guided by the Biophilic Town Framework which aims to better integrate nature and the urban environment, greenery will be woven throughout the developments within Miltonia Close and measures will be implemented to sensitively respond to the retained floral and faunal species in the proposed nature park. Spaces for community gardening will be provided to support interest in sustainable lifestyles and foster stronger community bonds amongst residents.

The Government regularly reviews plans to ensure that they remain relevant to the changing needs of Singaporeans and will only develop sites when necessary and after all options have been considered. As responsible land stewards, agencies will continue to assess our various

land use needs and social, economic and environmental considerations when reviewing and implementing plans.

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