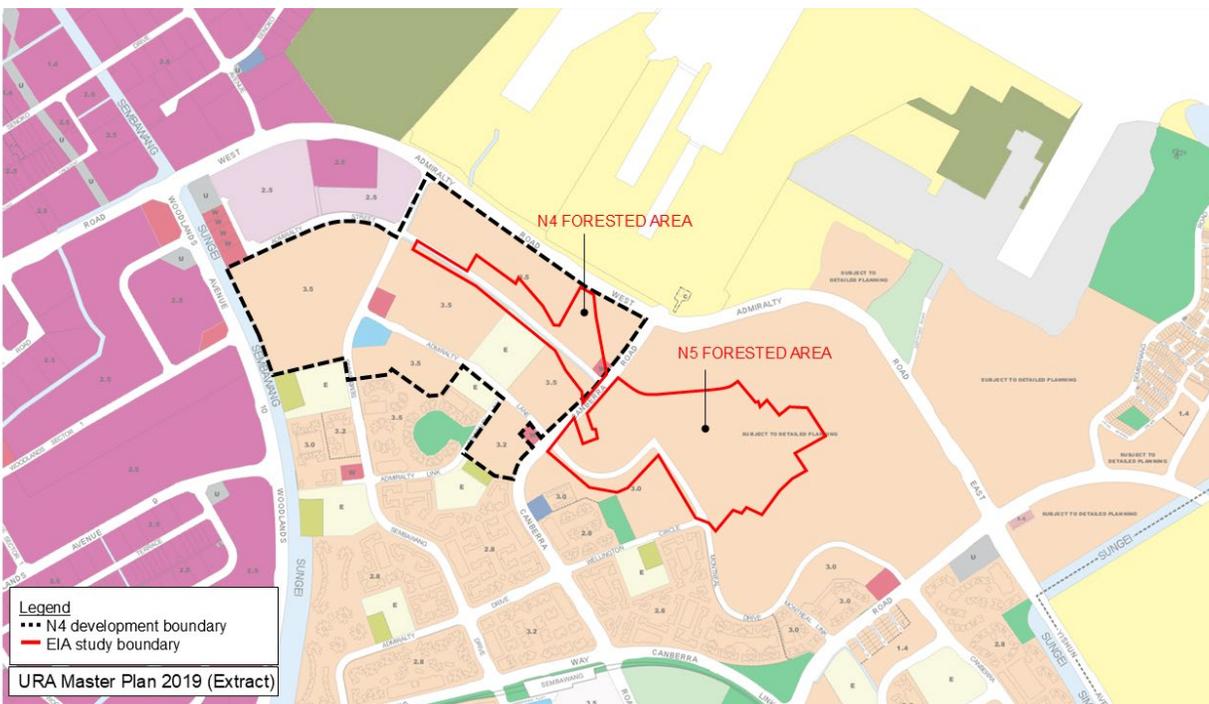


## Summary of Response to Feedback on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for Sembawang Neighbourhood 4

### I. Site context & milestones

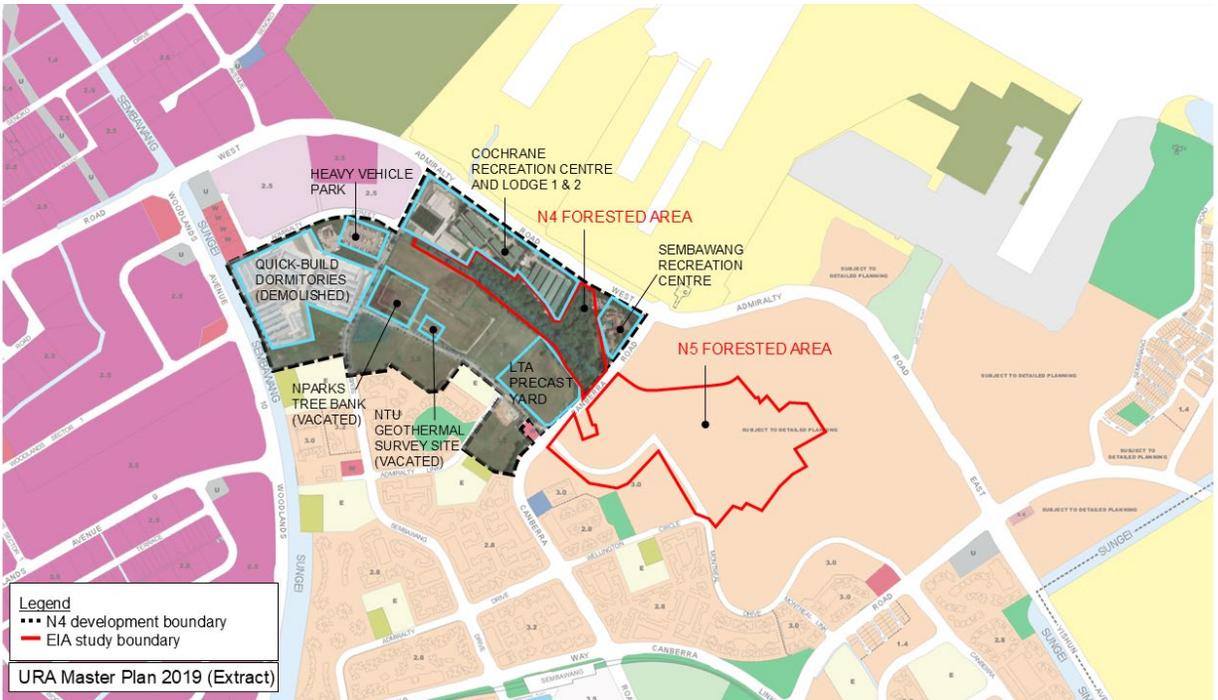
The Government recently announced plans to provide more housing opportunities within the North region, which will offer existing and future residents a sizeable supply of affordable housing options and new supporting amenities.

The Sembawang Neighbourhood 4 (N4) site which is bounded by Admiralty Road West, Canberra Road and Sungei Sembawang, is approximately 53ha. It is largely zoned for Residential use in URA's Master Plan 2019, along with supporting facilities such as Commercial, Civic and Community Institution, Educational Institution and Place of Worship (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1: Zoning of Sembawang N4 site in the Master Plan 2019**

At present, 90% of the N4 development site is brownfield, comprising mostly urbanised areas, turf vegetation, and existing construction worksites. The remaining 10% is made up of the N4 forested area. (see Figure 2).



**Figure 2: Existing context of Sembawang N4 development site**

The new housing area will add close to 10,000 homes with a good mix of public and private housing to meet different housing needs and enable young families to live close to their parents, for better mutual care and support. Initiatives under HDB Green Towns Programme will be implemented to enhance the sustainability and liveability in the new housing area, where appropriate (see Figure 3).

We continue to see strong demand for public housing across Singapore. This is due to larger cohorts of Singaporeans born in the late 1980s to 1990s reaching marriageable age, and an emerging trend of smaller households as more young couples, singles, and seniors are choosing to have their own flats. To meet this demand, agencies adopt a range of development options such as increasing the density of developments while ensuring liveability, prioritising the development of brownfield sites such as Sembawang, where feasible and undertaking necessary studies to guide sensitive development.



**Figure 3: Sembawang North – Sembawang’s Newest Housing Area**

## **II. Engagement with Stakeholders**

An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) was carried out in 2023 to assess potential impact to environmental impact of proposed development plans for the N4 site. Together with NParks and URA, HDB engaged various Nature Group (NG) representatives and biodiversity experts on the EIA findings and the proposed mitigation measures. These representatives shared their ideas and perspectives on solutions that agencies could explore to mitigate the environmental impact. The session provided an opportunity for various parties to come together to co-create solutions to balance the necessary trade-offs.

The EIA report was subsequently published online for public feedback from 13 Nov 2024 to 10 Dec 2024 with a total of **275** responses received.

## **III. Feedback received**

We value the feedback from our partners and members of the public and have considered all the suggestions that have been submitted.

These included concerns over the potential impact on biodiversity and climate change, requests for development of alternative sites and re-development of existing estates, e.g. through the

Voluntary Early Redevelopment Scheme (VERS) programme. Some had also provided suggestions on flora and fauna relocation methods, as well as management strategies to minimise impact to wildlife during construction and operational phases.

We also received some comments on the technical aspects of the EIA, such as the scope of the study, methodology of impact assessment conducted, and terminology/ criteria used for assessing environmental impact.

#### **IV. Responses to feedback**

HDB is mindful of the need to develop housing areas sensitively, to mitigate potential environmental impact and incorporate the heritage and history of these areas in our development plans.

For new housing developments, HDB first utilises suitable and available brownfield sites in the vicinity of existing neighbourhoods. In the case of Sembawang, the town has been progressively built up since the 1980s. We are now developing the remaining undeveloped tracts of land like Sembawang N4, which has been largely zoned for Residential use in the URA Master Plan since 2003. The site is largely brownfield, comprising mainly vacant turfed land, temporary uses that will be phased out, and a forested area accounting for 10% of the development area. Its proximity to existing neighbourhoods also provides opportunities for shared amenities and the injection of new ones.

We remain committed to adopting a holistic, long-term and science-based approach of stewarding Singapore's limited land resources to meet the various aspirations and needs of Singaporeans while balancing trade-offs across a wide variety of land use needs, and to engage the relevant stakeholders for ideas and feedback to improve our plans.

Taking into consideration the EIA findings and the feedback received, Agencies will adopt the following key measures for the new housing estate:

- A) Implementation of an Environmental Management and Monitoring Plan (EMMP):** For the forested area that is 10% of the development site, a specialist EMMP consultant will be engaged to develop an EMMP to mitigate and manage any potential environmental impact arising from development works, and closely monitor the works throughout the construction phase. Before any site clearance works begin, pre-felling inspections will be carried out to identify all active nests, burrows, slow-moving animals or hatchlings. Felling of these trees can only take place after these animals have been translocated safely or have flown off. Vegetation will be cleared progressively and directionally in zones to ensure wildlife are passively shepherded out of the active work zones. Upon the completion of clearance works for each sub-zone, hoarding or temporary fencing will be installed to prevent re-entry of wildlife into the cleared zones. If any trapped or slow-moving animals are encountered in this process, HDB's wildlife management contractor will be activated to relocate them. For Sembawang N4, the wildlife will be shepherded eastwards from Sembawang Drive to the forested area along Canberra Road. To minimise any incidence

of roadkill, hoarding will also be put up to guide animals across Canberra Road via the culvert instead of at-grade crossing.

We will also explore the implementation of a suitable lighting management plan during the construction phase, where appropriate, to minimise light pollution and its potential impact on biodiversity.

- B) Green cover within new housing development:** To ensure greenery continues to remain a focal point of our future development, the new developments will be designed to provide 45% green cover, including trees, shrubs and lawns. Green cover is an indicator of land area covered by greenery as seen from the sky. This includes providing native plants to attract biodiversity (e.g. birds and butterflies), rain gardens to cleanse surface run-off, heat mitigation from canopy trees, lush greenery and community gardens. All greenery will be well integrated with precinct facilities and recreational spaces to allow residents to enjoy the full benefit of the ecosystem services provided by neighbourhood landscaping.
- C) Bringing residents closer to nature:** The future housing area will have a new linear park which will feature lush greenery made up of the native planting palette. This will not only provide lush and green recreational spaces for outdoor play, but facilitate the creation of new habitats through sensitive landscaping right in the heart of the estate. As existing platform levels need to be raised to meet minimum flood protection standards, it would be challenging to retain existing trees on site. Where possible, HDB will study retaining some of the existing trees at localised areas.
- D) Landscaping to attract biodiversity:** In a similar vein, Active, Beautiful, Clean (ABC) features using dense native species planting palette will also be explored within the common green in the estate for flora rehabilitation.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

The Government regularly reviews our plans to ensure that they remain relevant to the changing needs of Singaporeans and will only develop sites when necessary, after all options have been thoroughly considered. Nevertheless, the development of sites of ecological significance, like Sembawang N4, will always be guided by rigorous environmental studies, balancing the loss of biodiversity with the housing needs of current and future generations of Singaporeans. As responsible land stewards, agencies will continue to assess our various land use needs, as well as social, economic and environmental considerations when reviewing and implementing plans.

## **Annex: Key EIA Findings**

In 2023, HDB engaged an external consultant to conduct an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) on the N4 area and an environmental baseline study for the adjacent N5 area (for more details, you may view the full report [here](#)) The purpose of the EIA was to understand the existing topography, hydrology, flora and fauna, ecological connectivity between the two regions, and assess the nature and extent of environment impacts arising from upcoming development of the N4 area. These findings will guide HDB's development plans for N4 and inform mitigating measures to minimise potential impact. The key EIA findings are summarised below:

- 1) **Habitats and Vegetation Distribution:** The N4 forested area comprises largely exotic-dominated secondary forest, scrubland, grassland and semi-naturalised drain.
- 2) **Biodiversity:** For flora, five species were identified to be of conservation significance in the N4 forested area (see Figure 4). For fauna, while 8 bird species of conservation significance were recorded in the N4 forested area (Figure 5), no mammal and bat species of conservation significance were recorded in the N4 forested area.

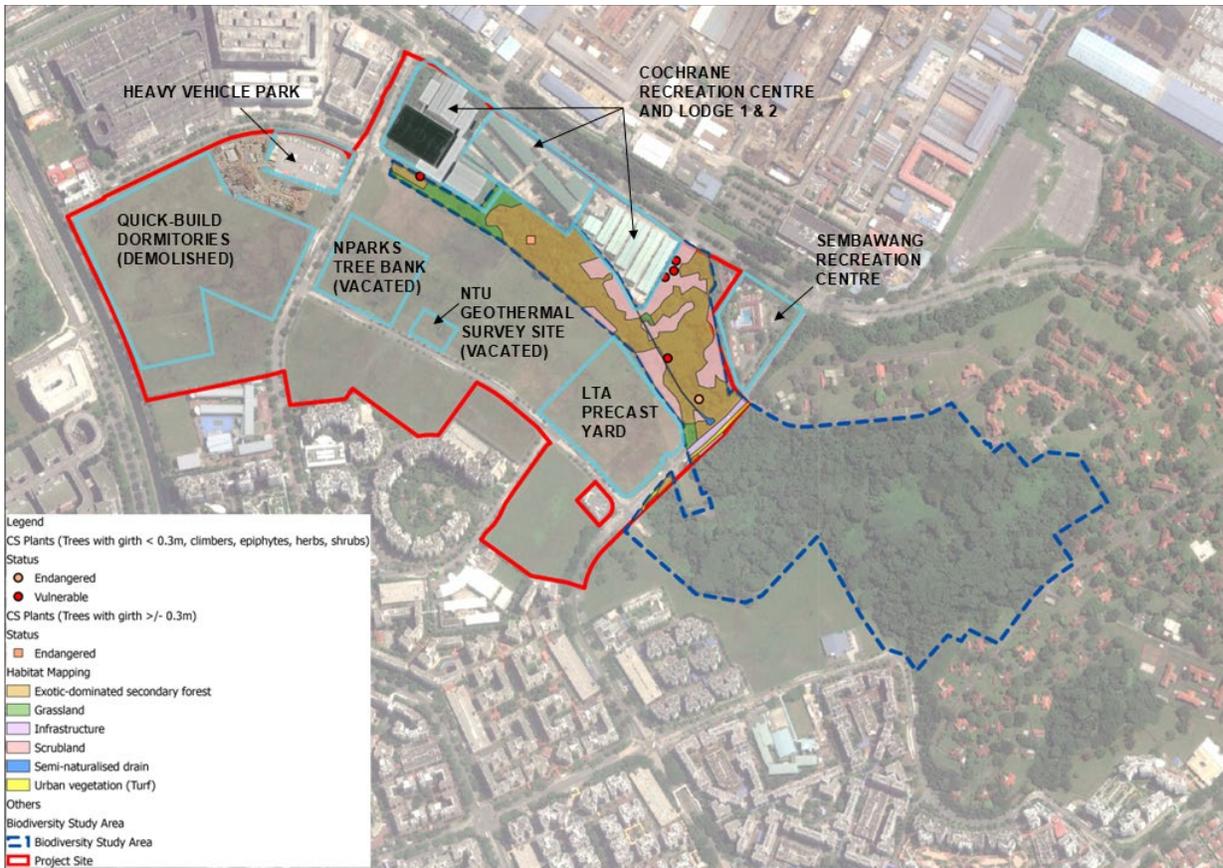


Figure 4: Habitat map with distribution of plant specimens of conservation significance within N4 Forested Area

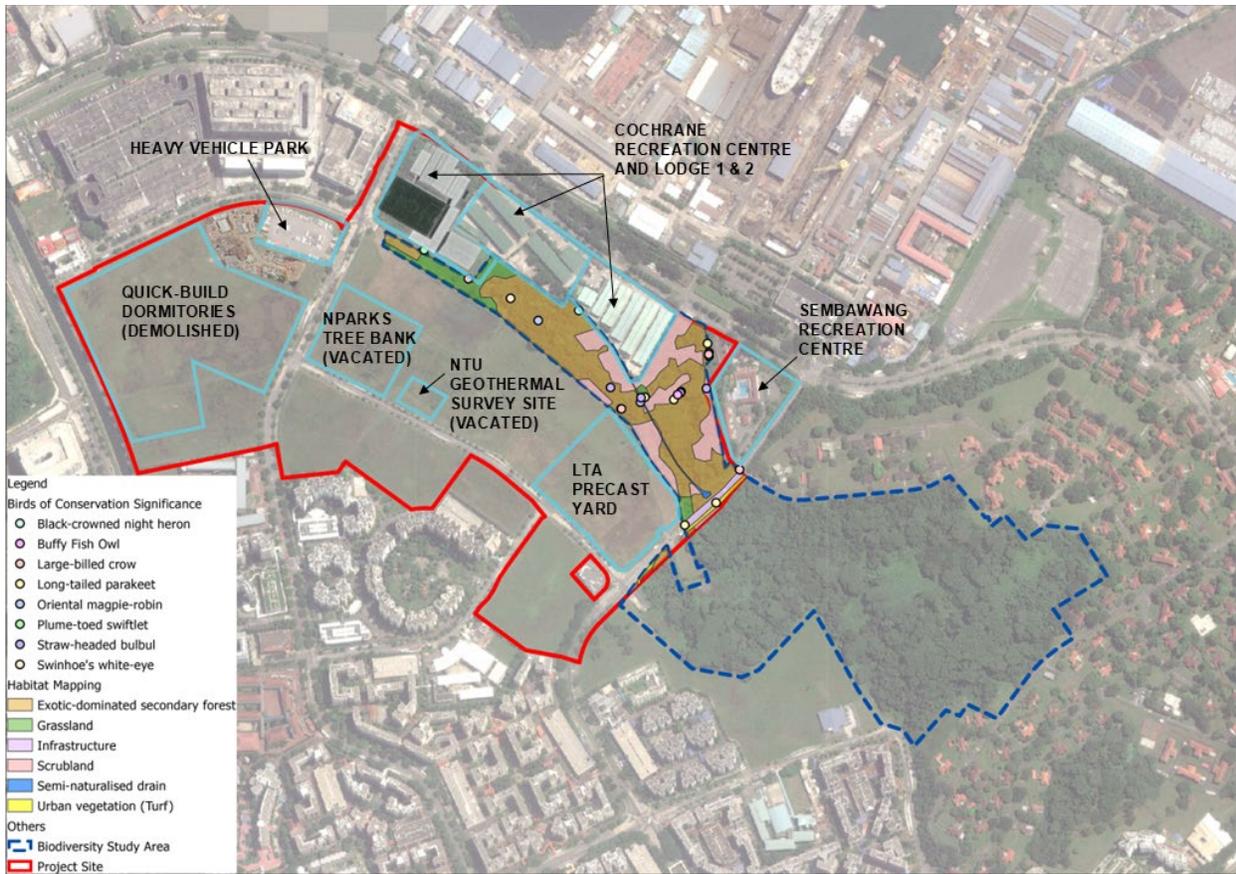


Figure 5: Habitat map with distribution of birds of conservation significance within N4 Forested Area

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