

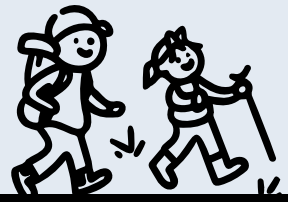
BEFORE WE CLEAR A FOREST, DEMONSTRATE WHY.

*A Community Declaration
for Maju Forest*



*Presented by
Concerned Residents of Sunset Way*

— OUTLINE



01. AVOID

Explore every viable alternative before clearing a forest.

02. INCLUDE

Give affected communities a meaningful say.

03. DEMONSTRATE

Explain why the forest, why now, and why no alternative.

THE STANDARD

Put avoidance before mitigation.

The loss of Maju Forest won't simply be the loss of a forest. It will be a loss of Singapore's **resilience, biodiversity, and spirit**. Secondary forests like Maju are critical to keep our city cool and our air clean. They are an integral part of the environment which shape the lives and identity of their surrounding communities.

Once a mature forest is cleared, it cannot simply be replaced. While trees can be replanted, an ecosystem built over decades cannot.

We believe Singapore can grow without treating nature as land waiting to be developed. When environmental damage is irreversible, **avoidance must come before mitigation**.

Before clearing Maju Forest, we ask a simple question:

Does it really have to go?



To answer that question **honestly**, we call for three things:

1. AVOID before we mitigate 🗶

The current [EIA for Sunset Way](#) was rushed in just four months without assessing the social and community impacts of clearing Maju Forest. Critical indicators such as impacts on **urban heat, flood hazard and vulnerability, community health and wellbeing** were not taken into account.

Moreover, the EIA itself states that establishing baselines should take "seasonal variations (such as bird migratory and non-migratory seasons)" into account. Yet every survey in the report was conducted between June and September, entirely outside the migratory season and the wetter northeast monsoon months.

Furthermore, the critically endangered **Sunda pangolin**, which was captured in a previous EIA, was not recorded in this one, highlighting the inadequacy of the current assessment.

Most significantly, the assessment identifies biodiversity impacts reaching **“Major Negative” even after proposed mitigation measures**. This would threaten key species of conservation significance, including the Straw-headed bulbul, bamboo bat, and the Sunda pangolin

If significant impacts remain after mitigation, we must ask: **why is avoidance not being considered first?**

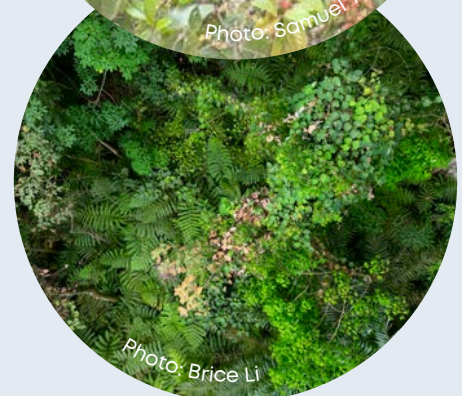




Photo: Hui-E Seeto

We call for a comprehensive Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) that addresses the gaps and duration in the current assessment and properly considers:

- Biodiversity and Ecosystem Impacts
- Climate, Heat and Carbon Impacts
- Flood Hazard, Vulnerability and Water Management
- Air Quality, Pollution and Noise Risks
- Human Health and Wellbeing
- Seasonal Ecological Conditions
- Cumulative Impacts alongside other developments and, above all,
- Whether the forest can be avoided altogether

An assessment should not simply tell us how to make destruction less harmful. **It must first and foremost establish whether destruction is necessary at all.**

2. INCLUDE affected people in decision making

The official EIA feedback window on the Housing & Development Board (HDB) website was open for only **27 days** following the release of the EIA.

The process also presented accessibility barriers, including no multi-language options, reliance on digital literacy, and a poorly designed feedback form.

Such a consultation is not meaningful engagement if significant parts of the community cannot easily understand the information, participate in the process or know what happens to their feedback.

Everyone deserves to know. Everyone deserves to be heard.





Photo: Lim Yaohui (ST)

We call for the feedback process to be reopened and expanded to include:

- Accessible, plain-language information
- Communication in multiple languages
- In-person open-door community dialogues and information sessions
- Accessible alternatives to digital-only participation
- Clear timelines for ongoing and planned engagement
- Clarity on the stakeholder engagement process as referred to in the 4th August Parliamentary Hearing
- Transparency about who is being consulted
- Public disclosure of the concerns raised
- Clear explanation of **how community feedback will influence the decision**

Proactive engagement should happen **before** irreversible decisions are made, not after, and **must set a precedent** for all future developments on forested land.

3. DEMONSTRATE why it must be this greenfield site

We have been told that alternative brownfield sites were considered. We have also heard that other viable sites will be developed “in the coming years”.

But if clearing a forest is the necessary choice, the public deserves to understand why and why now.

Show us the evidence.

- What other brownfield sites were considered, and why were they ruled out?
- What are the plans for these alternative sites, and what proportion of them would be allocated to public versus private housing?
- What are the actual housing demand projections driving this decision, and
- What are the timelines and constraints that supposedly require Maju Forest to be cleared?

Transparency goes beyond simply making documents available to the public. **It must include making the reasoning behind an irreversible decision understandable and accessible to the people affected by it.** Only then can the public trust that the right decisions are being made.

Photo: Hui-E Seeto



THE STANDARD

A clear, legally enforceable Environmental and Social Impact Assessment

Maju Forest is simply one of the green spaces that can be cleared at any given notice. Others, including **Gillman Forest, Tagore-Springleaf Forest, Ulu Sembawang Forest, and more**, are subject to a similar fate.

We should not have to fight forest by forest, asking the same questions each time. The principles we are asking should become the standard for every development that risks significant deforestation.



Photo: @vincentphotogram (IG)

We call for a clear environment framework with proper legal scaffolds that:

- Makes comprehensive Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIAs) a legal requirement for projects involving significant deforestation
- Places avoidance before minimisation and mitigation
- Requires viable alternatives to be properly assessed
- Guarantees meaningful and accessible public participation, with consultation done at earlier stages where they can influence the decision making process
- Makes the evidence and rationale behind major land-use decisions transparent
- Establishes clear thresholds for environmental and social damage

Avoidance should neither depend on public outcry nor media coverage. It should be the standard for all our green spaces.



— OUR PRINCIPLE —

The ask to preserve Maju Forest is not an ask against development.

It is an ask for better planning, more care and attention given to our natural spaces, and to thoroughly consider all alternatives and avoidance strategies before greenlighting such drastic deforestation projects. We are asking Singapore to build for a future it would be proud of.

A resilient city needs more than good buildings, especially so in the age of the current climate crisis. It needs living ecosystems, biodiversity, trees, water, shade and communities that can thrive alongside development.

When faced with irreversible environmental loss, the first question should not be: How can we mitigate it? Rather: How can we avoid it?

Before we clear a forest, demonstrate why we have to. **We should not have to lose Maju Forest too, to learn the value of what remains.**

majuforest.com

In solidarity with Gillman Forest (savegillmanforest.org)