

PROPOSED ENVIRONMENT CHARGE PROPERTY ACQUISITION

Objective Reference:	A158421 Report and Attachments (Archives)
Attachments:	<u>Summary of Valuation</u> <u>Greenways Corridor Map</u> <u>Crisps Valuation</u> <u>Savills Valuation</u>
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PURPOSE

Council has been pursuing a strategy of protecting and restoring vital habitat using a number of tools. As part of that strategy Council regularly assesses properties for potential purchase using the Environment Separate Charge Acquisition funds to maintain our biodiversity and in particular strengthen wildlife corridors.

At its meeting held on 6 May 2015 council resolved to acquire properties identified in the Confidential Environment Separate Charge Acquisition List March 2015. One of the properties identified in that list is referred to in an attachment to this report. The purpose of this report is to seek Council direction in respect to the purchase price of the subject property.

BACKGROUND

- Following the Council resolution of 6 May 2015, negotiations were conducted through the Agent acting on behalf of the owner. As a consequence, a contract of sale was executed by the owner of the property for the sale of the site in the amount indicated in attachment 1 to this report.
- A counter offer was made to the owner in accordance with the independent evaluations that Council had received, and which was not accepted by the owner.
- Negotiations have been ongoing over a period of months without satisfactory resolution.

ISSUES

Environment Charge Acquisition and Management Policy POL 3077

Council has approved a land acquisition program to support the Environment Charge Acquisitions and Management Policy to achieve the following objectives:

1. To protect environmentally significant properties through selective acquisition as part of the broader strategy of methods for protecting, maintaining and rehabilitating environmental values and biodiversity;
2. To manage environmentally significant properties for existing and future generations and to protect the environmental significance of the site in both the short term and long term; and
3. To protect and enhance koala habitat, both urban and rural, through selective acquisition and rehabilitation, and to facilitate effective and safe koala movement.

The property has previously undergone evaluation against these criteria and is considered worthy of acquisition.

Land Assessment Guidelines for Proposed Acquisitions using Environmental Charge Acquisition Funds

Council has also adopted a guideline for rapid assessment of properties which become available for acquisition to be considered. This guideline allows for additional properties not previously assessed for acquisition to be proposed and added to the program. A large number of properties have been assessed with this guideline where property owners approach Council to have their land considered for acquisition.

This property has been assessed against the 15 criteria in the guidelines.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

Legislative Requirements

Local Government under state legislation has a general environment duty and responsibility to protect and maintain significant vegetation and biodiversity.

Risk Management

The property is located at key breaks in wildlife corridors, as shown in the Confidential Greenways Corridor Map attachment. If the block is retained in private ownership then there is an increased risk of degradation in wildlife corridor values and loss of koala habitat negatively impacting upon wildlife movement.

Financial

Independent valuations have been obtained for costing purposes and provisions had been made in the 2014/2015 financial year to acquire the property – funds carried over to 2015/2016 financial year. The Environmental Separate Charge funds will be used to meet the acquisition costs for the property, and initial management works (such as pest management, remediation, fencing, signage, waste removal and track works).

This may include removal of the house on site which has asbestos containing material, removal of other debris including tyres and other domestic materials. Estimated costs have been provided by City Spaces in the order of \$200,000. This cost may be reduced if volunteer groups can be recruited to assist with low risk activities.

People

There are no staff implications. The existing contiguous conservation estate is currently under active management by the City Spaces Group.

Environmental

The attached Confidential Greenways Corridor map clearly illustrates the role of these properties in enhancing and strengthening existing wildlife corridors.

The proposed acquisition sites have important positive environmental values including proximity to an internationally listed Ramsar area. The sites also contain endangered regional ecosystems (12.5.2 and 12.1.1) and koala habitat identified in the koala habitat mapping. These values are further described in confidential attachment to the report.

Social

Strengthening corridor connections also allows for enhanced visitor experiences by enabling movement through these areas.

Alignment with Council's Policy and Plans

Should Council proceed with acquisition of the property mentioned in confidential attachment it will promote the intent of the Corporate Plan Healthy Natural Environment theme and the objectives of the Council's Environment Charge Acquisitions and Management Policy.

CONSULTATION

The following Council officers have been consulted in the preparation of this report and its attachments:

The Principal Property Consultant has provided information from the property owner/agent and history of previous informal negotiations. In addition, the Principal Property Consultant will source independent valuations for the properties.

The Environment and Education Unit has confirmed the environmental and corridor values associated with the properties.

The City Spaces Group has provided information regarding the contiguous conservation estate and site establishment works required.

The Strategic Planning Unit has provided advice on the current Redlands Planning Scheme as it applies to the identified sites.

DISCUSSION

Council has obtained an independent valuation by Savills Australia. The owner has had 3 valuations undertaken by Crane and Company (1&2) and CRISP Valuation Services. The report conclusions are contained within the confidential attachment 1.

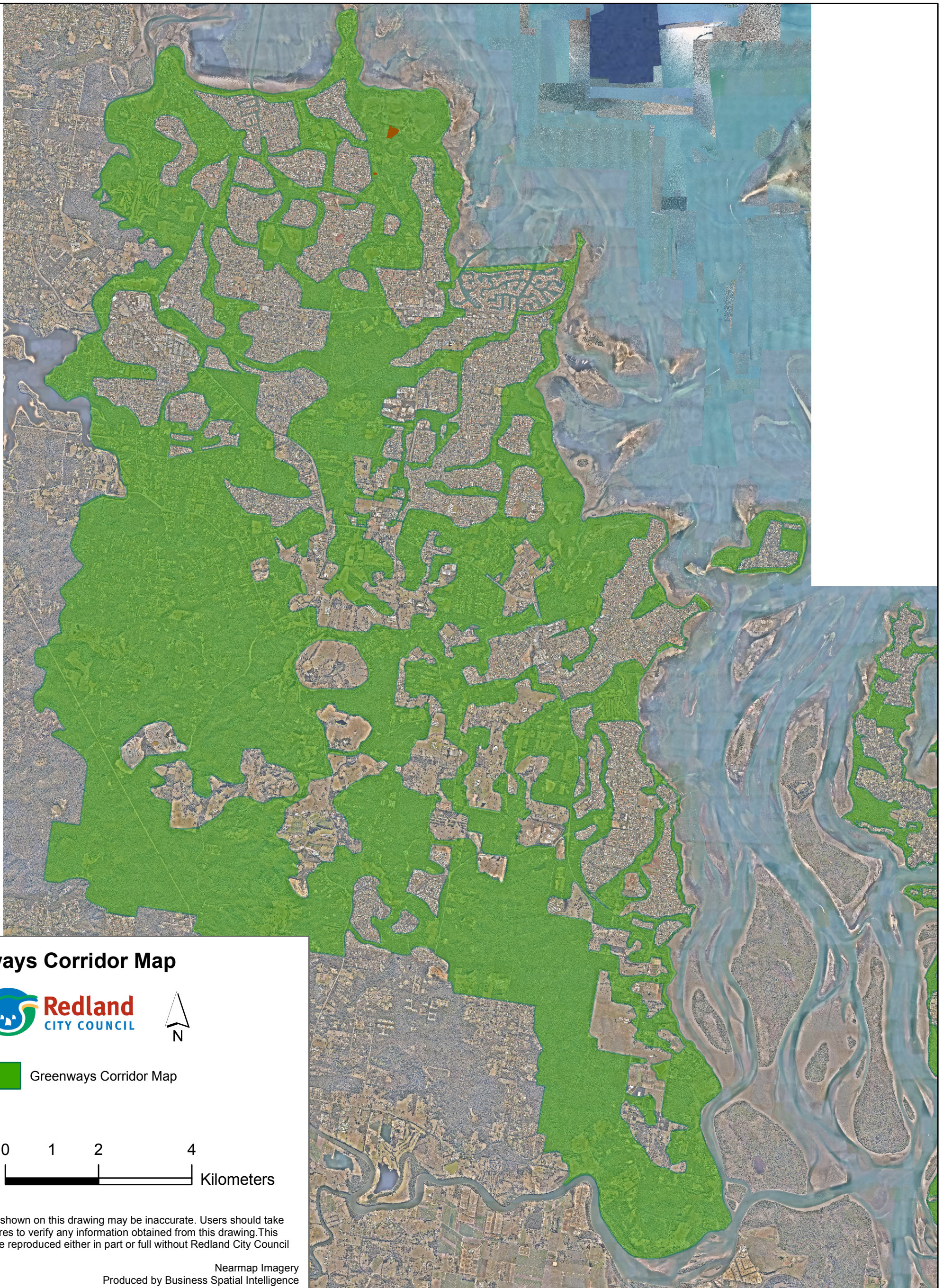
OPTIONS

1. That Council resolves to:
 1. Acquire the property identified in the confidential attachment;
 2. Delegate the Chief Executive Officer under s.257(1)(b) of the *Local Government Act 2009*, to acquire this property at the figure recommended by Council's Principal Property Consultant and execute all associated document; and
 3. That the attachments to this report remain confidential.
2. That Council resolves not to acquire the property referred to in the Attachment.

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION


That Council resolves to:

1. **Acquire the property identified in the confidential attachment;**
2. **Delegate the Chief Executive Officer, under s.257(1)(b) of the *Local Government Act 2009*, to acquire the property at the figure recommended by Council's Principal Property Consultant and execute all associated documentation; and**
3. **That the attachments to this report remain confidential.**



Greenways Corridor Map



 Greenways Corridor Map



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Nearmap Imagery
Produced by Business Spatial Intelligence
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