

APPENDIX D

Rear of 21-29 Radford Road, Reservoir (Former Lakeside Secondary College)

Background

The land was formerly the site of the Lakeside Secondary College is approximately 72,350m² in area (7.2ha) and runs from Radford Road to the Merri Creek. About 18,000m² of the rear of the site abutting the creek, has been utilised by Council and the community as open space and a shared path for at least the last forty years.

The Lakeside Secondary College in Radford Road, Reservoir closed at the end of 2010 when the school was merged with the former Merrilands College to create the new William Ruthven Secondary College. All buildings on the land of the former school were demolished or removed by the end of 2011 and the site has been vacant since this time.



Figure D1 – Photograph of the rear of the Lakeside site

Zoning

The former Lakeside Secondary College site is currently zoned as Public Use - Education (PUZ2) however it is currently undergoing a process of rezoning via the Victorian Government's Fast Track Land Rezoning process. The proposed zone for the site is Industrial 1 (IND1). The Minister for Planning is yet to make a decision on the proposed rezoning.

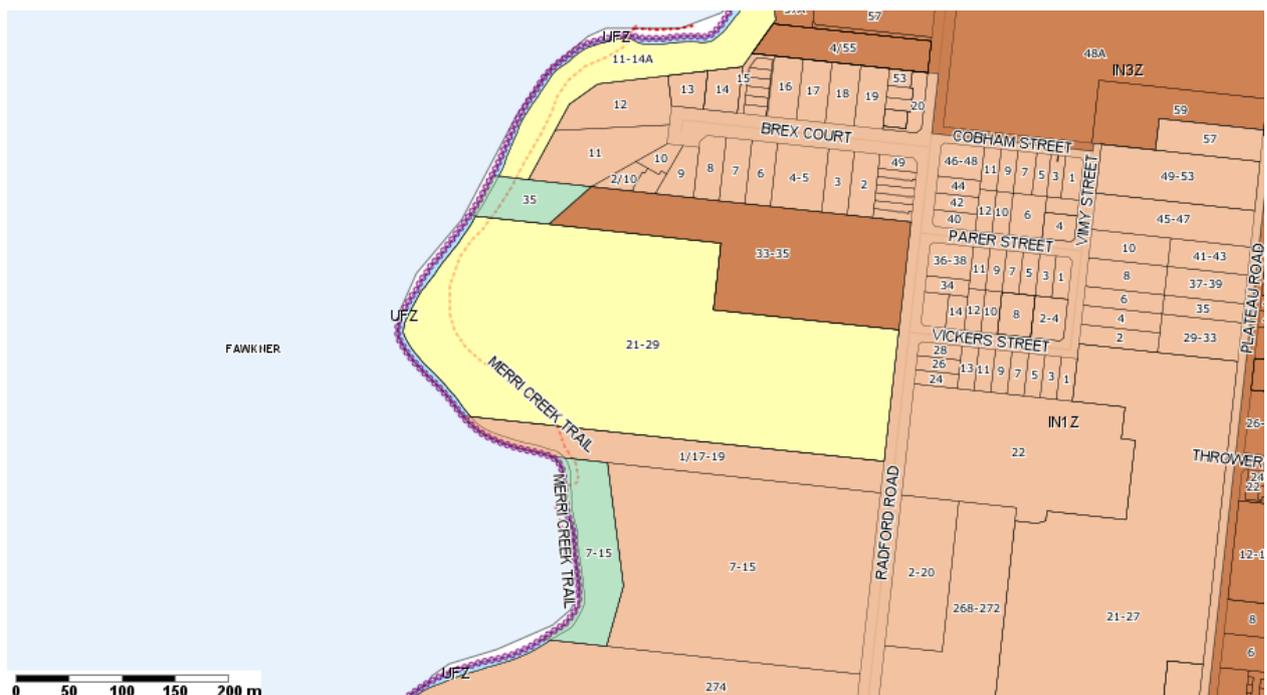


Figure D-2 – Planning Scheme Map of Former Ruthven Primary School, Reservoir



Figure D-2 – Proposed acquisition of the rear of 21-29 Radford Road, Reservoir

The land is variously covered by easements in favour of the Gas & Fuel Corporation (pipeline), the Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works (sewerage) and the State Electricity Commission of Victoria (transmission of electricity). Council also has a 3.05m wide drainage easement along the northern boundary of the site through which a 1050mm diameter drain runs to the creek.

A chain-link fence which formed the rear boundary of the school runs along the ridge line at western side of the former oval. There is approximately nine metres of fall from the western edge of the oval to the bank of the creek. Almost one third of the fall occurs within two metres of the school's rear fence (along the line of the oval). The area west of the fence has been maintained by Council as a conservation grassland and bicycle path for at least forty years.

The bicycle path was constructed in concrete by Council at some point in the late 1980s. Prior to this time the path was made of granitic sand. The section of the path through the rear of the former Lakeside Secondary College site forms part of the larger Merri Creek trail which runs for 19km from Mahoneys Road to the Yarra River swapping sides of the creek to traverse Darebin, Moreland and Yarra councils.

The conservation parkland area is maintained by Council's Parks and Gardens department on a regular basis (approx. every six-ten weeks) to provide for weed clearance and fire hazard management. Council had undertaken substantial works in the past to remove large amounts of box-thorn and other weeds from the area.

Decision Logic Map Assessment

Council was able to secure an easement over the land roughly in alignment with the bicycle path (and 1m to either side) in 2015 following earlier discussions with the Department of Treasury and Finance. Noting this, the decision logic map assessment is for the open space portion of the service provided by this site only.

Q – Is the property required to support an existing Council service?

YES – This land is required for Council services:

- Open Space – The land forms part of the Merri Creek Valley and is maintained by Council as conservation grassland.
 - Land has been identified as worthy of public acquisition in the Merri Creek and Environs Strategy.
 - The Open Space Strategy notes a need to review “land ownership in the creek corridors to ensure there is a continuous ecological and recreation corridor”.
 - The Creek Acquisition Study identified a need to acquire privately held land at the rear of 17 Radford Road – which is directly adjacent to this land. The Creek Acquisition Study did not consider the possibility that publicly owned land along the creek would be sold to private developers.

Q – What is the property’s performance against Key Performance Criteria?

At this stage a formal set of performance measures have not been developed for the performance indicators outlined in the Property Asset Management Strategy. The development of such indicators will require gathering of performance data on all of Council’s land holdings in order to establish appropriate benchmarks.

Additionally, the performance indicators assume that a method of converting an assessment of community benefit and natural environmental benefits to a dollar value has been established in order to fairly assess the benefit provided across a number of property assets within a given class of property assets. Such measures are also yet to be developed.

Notwithstanding this, a preliminary assessment of the land has identified the following:

Item	Performance Indicator	Measure	Comment
Financial	Maintenance Expenditure	\$7,500 p.a. \$0.40/m ² p.a.	Maintenance costs for weed clearance and fire hazard reduction
	Capital Works Expenditure	\$0	No capital works required at this stage
Utilisation	Usage	Low	Estimated use of the path is low in comparison to more well used bicycle paths in the southern portion of the City. Whilst usage is estimated to be low, this is an essential part of the longer Merri Creek Trail. Loss of this section of path would necessitate construction of another section of path on the western bank of the creek (approx. cost of \$170,000).
Condition	Condition Rating	9	Recent works were undertaken in early 2014 to repair displaced sections of path. Condition of the path is likely to be affected by ground movement.
	Remaining Useful Life	20-30 years	Minor repair works are likely to be required within five years.
Suitability & Sufficiency	Funding required to make fit for purpose	\$0	No works are required to make land fit for purpose
Community	Value of Community Benefits	Low	Community benefit is estimated to be low based on the remoteness of the location and estimated low levels of community use.
Environment	Value of Natural Environmental Benefits	High	Environmental benefit estimated to be high based on the size of the land and its relationship to the creek.

MEDIUM – Based on low cost of maintenance, low usage and high environmental benefit, the land has been assessed as having a ‘medium’ level of performance.

Q – Does the property require investment to support Council’s current or future service needs?

NO – No further capital investment is required to develop this land to support service requirements. Past capital expenditures have enabled the construction of the concrete bicycle path through the site. The bicycle path is considered to be in reasonable condition and does not present any significant hazards to path users which would necessitate further capital expenditure for safety works in the near future.

HOLD POINT	MAINTAIN for the purposes of providing a bicycle path along the rear portion of the site. Planning controls on the site are considered sufficient to protect the essential parts of the land from the impacts of inappropriate development.
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Land Acquisition Strategy

Option – Creek Reserve and Remnant Grasslands

- Publicly accessible open space area covering the entire site
- This would require Council to acquire the rear of the former school area (approx. 1.8 ha)
- Council to continue to maintain land as has been the case for the past 30 years.
- Lack of vehicular access through the school (following sale to private interests) can be remedied through construction of an alternate access from Brex Court.
- Opportunities exist to encourage the growth and rejuvenation of the area as a native grassland.

Risks

Should Council decide to not acquire this land, it is anticipated that the Department of Education and Training (via the Department of Treasury and Finance) would offer the land to the open market with the likely purchaser being interested in providing industrial business services from the main portion of the site.

Loss of access to the remnant grasslands in the area would be detrimental to the biodiversity and natural heritage of the local area.

Should Council acquire the site it is estimated that approximately \$30,000 would be needed to formalise the vehicle access from Brex Court to ensure the safety of Bushland crew needing to access the site to undertake periodic maintenance.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council proceed with the purchase of this site from the Department of Education and Training.