

4. EXCHANGE OF LAND - WESTMINSTER STREET

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The purpose of this report is to obtain approval for the exchange of surplus land held by the Council, for private land, so as to enhance the development of waterways, give visibility to St Albans Creek and open up the entrance to St Albans School.

CONTEXT OF THE REPORT

A beautification programme approved by the Council is well advanced by the Greenspace Unit for the St Albans Creek/Drain. The drain is situated under and adjacent to private property at 76 Westminster Street immediately before it runs into the St Albans School land (see attached plan). The ability to acquire this land will provide a strategic opportunity to greatly enhance this part of the waterway, and open it up for restoration.

The introduction to the Council's Parks and Waterways Access policy of October 2002 reads as follows:

The Parks and Waterways Unit aims to overcome barriers to access to ensure that everyone is able to enjoy Christchurch's parks and open spaces.

and the Waterways and Wetlands Asset Management Strategy 1999 for the Avon tributaries reads:

Demonstrate the potential values of waterways and wetlands by enhancing stream flows, aquatic habitats and riparian environments within public areas, eg parks, streets, schools, university and shopping areas.

DISCUSSIONS

Development plans by the owners of 76 Westminster Street are well advanced for the construction of two townhouses on this site. This will severely limit the future access and development of the St Albans Creek/drain to the north-east boundary of the site.

Discussions with the owners have resulted in a willingness on their part to exchange approximately 187 square metres on the north-east corner, for approximately 202 square metres of land held by the Council on its northern boundary. This land was originally purchased for the purpose of road widening of which the boundary has been determined and approximately 202 square metres is now surplus.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications as the land areas are of a similar size and the properties are adjoining.

There is an opportunity cost (selling rather than exchanging land) of approximately \$10,000 (subject to valuation) of opening up the waterway through this area, however this is offset by environmental enhancement.

The Council will need to pay all costs to effect this exchange. These costs will be approximately \$2,000 from the Greenspace budget.

CONCLUSIONS

This is an ideal opportunity to make a strategic land exchange to obtain the access required to the waterway adjoining this property and to give visibility to the creek and school access.

The land at 38 Courtenay Street, being Lot 1 DP5200, was obtained for the purpose of road widening. The residual land, after road widening, is not of a size that can be sold for development and would only have value to the neighbouring property at 76 Westminster Street.

To the northeast end of 76 Westminster Street is the St Albans Creek/drain which currently has very limited access for enhancement. With the exchange of the specified land, Greenspace can continue the beautification programme on this section of the drain through to the St Albans school.

Committee**Recommendation:**

That pursuant to Section 107 of the Public Works Act 1981, the Council enter into an agreement with the owners of 76 Westminster Street, to exchange land described as Section 1 SO Plan 18221 containing approximately 187 square metres for the residual land held by the Council and described as Lot 1 DP 5200 containing approximately 202 square metres.