

Report to the Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee
from Ian Heslop, Divisional Engineer

Waiohine Floodplain Advisory Committee – Progress Update

1. Purpose

To report on progress made by the Waiohine Floodplain Advisory Committee.

2. Background

- 2.1 At the June 1998 meeting the Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee approved the formation of a Waiohine Floodplain Advisory Committee to assist Council with the development of preferred floodplain management options, the review of the current rating basis, and the related public consultation.
- 2.3 The Committee is chaired by Viv Napier. It is made up of 12 members representing Transit NZ, Carterton District Council, South Wairarapa District Council, the Greytown Community Board, Tangata Whenua, floodplain farmers and residents, and the Wellington Regional Council. Crs Long and Buchanan are both members of the Committee.
- 2.4 The first Committee meeting was held in April 1999, and monthly meetings have been held thereafter. The meetings have been positive and constructive, and there has been good communication between Committee members and Council staff.

3. Progress to Date

Progress made by the Committee to date is summarised as follows.

- Committee members have been appointed and terms of reference adopted.
- Background information from the Waiohine River & Floodplain Investigation reports have been examined.
- The current Waiohine River Management Scheme rating basis has been examined and deficiencies identified.
- Alternative rating bases have been developed, and their advantages and disadvantages examined.
- A preferred rating basis has been determined.

- Alternative floodplain management and flood protection options have been developed, cost estimates prepared, and their advantages and disadvantages examined.
- A preferred flood protection option has been adopted.
- A preliminary design of a desirable SH2 Bridge waterway capacity has been completed.
- Committee representatives attended the Waiohine SH2 Bridge Upgrade Values Workshop recently held by Transit NZ.

4. Rating Review

- 4.1 One of the key issues being addressed by the Waiohine Floodplain Advisory Committee meetings is the suitability of the current rating approach. Over recent years there have been a growing number of complaints from rural Scheme ratepayers. Staff have become aware of a number of inconsistencies within the current rating basis. David Bulman, Consultant Valuer, has been employed to assist Council staff with the rating review.
- 4.2 The current rating basis is “Land Value” within the old Greytown Borough area, and “Differential Land Area” over the rural floodplain area. Of the total rate of \$201,800, about 23% is collected from the urban Greytown area, and the remaining 77% is collected from the rural rating district.
- 4.3 There are 984 ratepayers within the urban Greytown area who pay an average rate of \$48. The rural floodplain area has a total area of 3,470 hectares, and is divided into six classes with a rating differential of between \$17 and \$55 per hectare. The average rural rate for each of the 262 ratepayers is \$590, or about \$45 per hectare.
- 4.4 The main problems with the existing rating basis are:
- The rating split between the rural and urban areas is not based on relative benefit.
 - Anomalies with similar properties falling within rural and urban areas having significantly different rates.
 - The rated area extends beyond the area of benefit in some locations.
 - Some rural land is being rated for a greater level of flood protection than is being provided.
 - The rating basis is perceived as unfair by many rural ratepayers.
- 4.5 A number of alternative rating approaches were examined, including differential Land Value and differential Capital Value. The Committee felt that the simplest and fairest approach would be to refine and update the existing rural “Differential Land Area” and urban “Land Value” basis.

Refinements would include the following:

- Adjustment of the urban Greytown boundary to fit around properties of urban character.
- Regular review of the urban boundary to reflect urban growth.

- Re-classification of the rural floodplain area to reflect benefit from current levels of flood protection.
- A shift in the rating split from 23% urban and 77% rural, to 50% urban and 50% rural.

4.6 At the October 1999 meeting the Committee passed the following resolution:

“That the improved current rating approach, with differential rural land area and urban land value, with redrafted Greytown boundaries, and with rural to urban rating split on relative land value (50/50), be recommended as the appropriate new classification approach for the Waiohine River Management Scheme.”

This approach would reduce the average rural rate to \$385 or \$29 per hectare, and increase the average urban rate to \$103.

4.7 It was recognised that the new rural rating Classification would need to be finalised prior to consideration by the Committee. There will need to be a community education and consultation process prior to seeking Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee approval. It is anticipated that the new rating Classification will be brought before this Committee in March 2001, so that it can be taken through the Special Order process in time to strike the rate for the 2001/02 financial year.

5. Floodplain Management Options

- 5.1 Two options for upgrading the standard of flood protection for the Waiohine river floodplain have been considered by the Committee. These options are the Development of the Apple Barrel Floodway at an estimated cost of \$6.0m, and the Closure of the Apple Barrel Floodway at an estimated cost of up to \$3.7m.
- 5.2 Under existing circumstances the central area and northern fringe of urban Greytown could be vulnerable in major floods. The Ahikouka and Swamp Road areas are known to flood during moderate events. The Net Present Value of the flood damage benefits for implementing either flood protection option have been estimated at \$3.75m.
- 5.3 The Apple Barrel Floodway Development option is clearly uneconomic, as the estimated cost considerably exceeds the projected benefit. Also this option is not considered viable on technical grounds, and is unlikely to be supported by the affected floodplain residents.
- 5.4 On the other hand the Apple Barrel Floodway Closure option is reasonably viable economically, is superior on technical grounds, and is more likely to be supported by floodplain residents. However this option cannot proceed before the replacement of the existing Waiohine SH2 Bridge with a bridge of significantly larger flood capacity. Transit NZ have recognised the flood capacity limitations of the existing bridge, and are currently investigating upgrade possibilities.

5.5 Another related issue to be considered by the Committee was the standard of flood protection applicable to the urban and rural floodplain areas. A flood protection standard of 100 year with a 1.0 metre freeboard was adopted for the urban area, and of a 20 year with a 0.6 metre freeboard was adopted for the rural area.

5.6 At the February 2000 meeting the Committee passed the following resolution:

“That the Committee adopt the closure of the Apple Barrel Floodway, the construction of the urban stopbanks to a 100 year standard with a 1.0 metre freeboard, and the upgrade/construction of the rural stopbanks to a 20 year standard with a 0.6 metre freeboard, as the preferred option for ongoing community consultation.”

6. Communication

A communication and consultation strategy will be developed over the next few months, using techniques such as newsletters, public exhibitions and meetings, and meetings with small common interest groups or key individuals. This strategy will need to address both the rating review and floodplain management issues. The members of the Waiohine Floodplain Advisory Committee will have a key role in both the development and implementation of the consultation programme.

The first newsletter outlining the Committee’s purpose and membership will be circulated to rural and urban ratepayers in late March. Subsequent newsletters will then update the community with progress and key decisions made by the Committee.

7. Recommendation

That the Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee note the contents of this report, and endorse the progress of the Waiohine Floodplain Advisory Committee.

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