

Manitoba Floodway Expansion Project – Round 3 Municipal Meetings - EIA

Meeting Highlights

Meeting With RM of Macdonald Municipal Office – Sanford, Manitoba June 8, 2004

In Attendance

For RM of Macdonald

R. Burns – Reeve
R. Kirouac
C. Bisson
B. Erb
T. Raine – Chief Administrative Officer
R. Burns
D. Dobrowolski
G. Lavallee
G. Junkin
R. Morse

For Environmental Assessment Team

J. Osler – TetrES/InterGroup
D. Morgan – TetrES/InterGroup
B. McGurk – TetrES/InterGroup

For Manitoba Floodway Expansion Authority

R. Hay – Floodway Engineer
B. Peter
G. Piasta
R. Eden

Purpose of Meeting

The meeting was requested by the Environmental Assessment Team for the Floodway Expansion Project to:

- Review status of EIA

- Present key developments in project description since last meeting
- Present initial EIA findings
- Obtain input on additional mitigation measures
- Describe next steps in EIA findings

The meeting is one of a series of sessions being held with municipal Councils in the areas affected by the proposed Floodway Expansion Project as part of Round 3 of the EIA PIP.

Meeting Process

John Osler and David Morgan of the Environmental Assessment Team made a presentation about:

- Status and scope of the Floodway Expansion EIA
- Important recent developments in the features of the Floodway Expansion project – channel, highway bridges, agricultural drainage drop structures, outlet, land acquisition for channel, construction sequence.
- Initial EIA findings for
 - Groundwater levels and quality
 - Drainage and related effects
 - Construction access and disruption
 - Land requirements and related effects
 - Way of life / project benefits

Copies of the presentation as well as more detailed information about the Initial EIA Findings were provided to those in attendance. An electronic version of the presentation accompanies these notes.

Throughout and following the presentation, discussion took place in which:

- Council asked questions, offered perspectives, and identified issues related to what had been presented
- Where appropriate, representatives of the Environmental Assessment Team and Manitoba Floodway Expansion Authority offered perspectives on items raised by Council.

The following are highlights of the meeting and are intended to capture the key points that were raised or presented. They are not presented in the sequence in which they were raised at the meeting, nor are they a detailed or verbatim transcription of what was said.

Questions, Key Perspectives and Issues Identified by Council

What is the EIA?

Response - The Environmental Impact Assessment assesses anticipated adverse and beneficial effects of the Project, as well as identifies measures to mitigate (reduce/avoid) adverse effects and to enhance beneficial effects. The results of the EIA are contained in the Environmental Impact Statement.

A variety of questions arose at the meeting that dealt with the West Dyke. The following are questions pertaining to this very issue. It is imperative to note that many of the questions that Council asked are to be addressed at a meeting held on June 10, 2004, between MFEA and residents of the RM of Macdonald when specific information about the West Dyke is available.

Where will the West Dyke be increased up to 6 feet?

Response - The dyke will be increased up to 6 feet (1.8 meters) west of Avonlea Corner. Immediately North of Avonlea Corner there will be no increase in dyke top elevation, but the dyke top elevation will be raised gradually as the dyke proceeds northerly to a maximum increase in elevation of 1.2 meters in the vicinity of La Barriere Park.

How far west will the dyke be increased up to 6 feet before it starts to drop?

Response - The increase in dyke top elevation will be from 1.4 to 1.8 meters on PR 305 all the way to Brunkild. The increase in dyke top elevation will drop to approximately half a metre immediately north of Brunkild.

Does the West Dyke have an emergency overflow on 305 as was suggested in the presentation last time?

Response - MFEA does not know how overflow will be handled. Engineers are still studying this issue.

Where will the spillway be located?

Response - This still has to be determined, but the purpose of the spillway is to ensure flooding if it occurs can be controlled to protect residents and have flood water not enter into areas that do not experience any flooding.

If the spillway had to be used, how far would the LaSalle River flood away from it's banks?

Response - This will be answered at the meeting on Thursday. This information is not currently available.

Where will the water level be on the West Dyke with the Floodway Expansion for a 1997-type flood?

Response - Depending on where along the West Dyke, the water level at the West Dyke would be no higher than in locations closer to the Inlet Control Structure, lower with the Floodway Expansion for a 1997-type flood event. Overall, a 1997-type flood event would result in water levels about 1.5 feet lower at the Inlet tapering to no effect just south of Ste. Agathe, where there is no backwater effect.

Will drainage along the West Dyke remain the same?

Response - Drainage along the West Dyke will be improved due to enhancements such as steepening drain slopes.

Will borrow pits be needed to lengthen and heighten the dyke?

Response - No borrow pits will be necessary. All materials needed to increase both the length and height of the dyke will be taken from adjacent ditches. At some locations, rehabilitation of affected ditches will include steepening drain slopes and other enhancements that will improve drainage.

Council informed representatives of the EA Team and MFEA that they understood a drain from the West Dyke to the LaSalle River was to be constructed as part of the Project. The RM was promised by the Province that this drain would be constructed. Rick Hay noted that the current plan for the West Dyke project only includes the installation of 2 new 1500mm diameter gated culverts through the West Dyke NE 15-8-2E. Rick Hay commented that he would attempt to confirm whether a commitment has been made to also include within the project's budget, the construction of the 2.25 miles of municipal drain required to convey water from the new culverts to the LaSalle River.

How wide is the floodway right-of-way?

Response - The width of the right-of-way changes throughout the floodway. However, in some locations the right-of-way is a half a mile wide.

Council asserted that it is important to inform people that the reason for increasing the height of the dyke is to increase the freeboard and to protect against wind and wave action, not to store a greater amount of water.

Council noted that residents in the RM would like to see the floodway operating rules changed to reduce the impact of floodway operation on upstream residents.

Will agricultural producers who want to seed and access their farmyards during construction have access?

Response - Agricultural producers will be able to access their fields and farmyards during construction. Construction of the West Dyke and Floodway Expansion will conform to existing Highway construction practices, ensuring among other things, access to fields during construction.

Where does DFO stand on erosion and sedimentation caused by the Project?

Response - The EIS is reviewed by DFO and they will provide their comments on the document, including commenting on erosion and sedimentation.

Will all bridges crossing the floodway channel be built higher and wider?

Response – All vehicular bridges will be replaced and their final configuration will be higher and wider.

Where will dredging take place?

Response - Dredging the Red River is not part of the Environmental Assessment; however, dredging will be indirectly assessed through the cumulative effects assessment. Dredging took place in the past along the Red River north of the Floodway Outlet to aid navigation.

When will project construction commence?

Response – Subject to completion of the regulatory review of the EIS, construction could begin on the Project at the earliest in 2005.

How long will it take to build the entire Project?

Response - It is expected that the entire project will take four years to construct.