

Manitoba Floodway Expansion Project – Round 3 Municipal Meetings - EIA

Meeting Highlights

**Meeting With
RM of Morris
Municipal Office – Morris, Manitoba
June 9, 2004**

In Attendance

For RM of Morris

Reeve H. Martens
S. Neumann
R. Groening
E. Buhler
B. Fraese
D. Robert
L. Kornelson

For Environmental Assessment Team

D. De Pape – TetrES/InterGroup
D. Morgan – TetrES/InterGroup
B. McGurk – TetrES/InterGroup

For Manitoba Floodway Expansion Authority

B. Peter
G. Piasta

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

Denis De Pape 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

When will the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) be filed? How long does the public have to review the EIS?

Response - The EIS will be filed in early August. Usually the public is provided 60 to 90 days to review EIS documents.

Why is the public allowed to review the EIS after it has been submitted if the public has been consulted through public involvement activities for the Environmental Assessment?

Response – The reason for public input at this stage of the Environmental Assessment is because this is the first opportunity that the public has to review the completed EIS.

If the floodway channel is not going to be deepened and just widened, will it accommodate the same water flow?

Response - The expanded floodway will still be able to accommodate the same design flow of 140 000 cfs with little to no deepening and just widening, in conjunction with improvements to the bridge structures.

Will deepening the floodway channel begin from the existing floodway, which has sediment build-up, or will the possible two feet of deepening begin at the floodway channel depth when the existing floodway was constructed?

Response – All design concepts that have proposed deepening would relate to depth below the original design channel bottom (whether that be 6' as originally proposed, or up to 2' maximum as now planned). However, through many reaches, the floodway channel has eroded below it's original design elevation by more than 2', and therefore, in those locations, it will be actually be built back up to achieve improved water flow and minimize risk of fish trapping.

Are there plans to move the right-of-way?

Response - There are no plans to extend the channel right-of-way for channel expansion itself. Spoil piles will be placed within the existing right of way. Right-of-Way acquisition may be necessary (to a much lesser extent than originally anticipated) for bridge and highway modifications.

Will Highway 15 be twinned?

Response – The current thinking is to twin Highway 15, however this remains to be finalized by Manitoba Transportation.

Council noted that it is pleased that there should be no major disruption to traffic during construction of the expanded floodway with construction sequencing as described.

Will the Seine River Siphon be in the same location?

Response - There is no need to move the Seine River Siphon as originally contemplated (the original need for relocation was driven by the initial design concept which included deepening by up to 6'; since that has been revised to no more than 2', there will be no impact to the existing siphon).

How will water velocities be reduced at the outlet?

Response – The outlet will be widened and concrete blocks (baffles) will be installed order to dissipate the energy of the water as it exits at the outlet. Moreover, riprapping will also be put in place for a distance of one kilometre starting at the floodway outlet to limit erosion caused by wave action from water exiting the floodway outlet.

One Councillor noted that he sees the Floodway Expansion and improvements to the West Dyke as separate issues. He offered the opinion that since the West Dyke will not directly benefit the RM, area residents should not have to pay for upgrades to the structure.

Response – The West Dyke is an integral component of the flood protection system for the City of Winnipeg. Without the West Dyke the City of Winnipeg would be flooded during extreme flood events. The benefit to all Manitobans is the protection that the project as a whole provides against economic disaster should Winnipeg be lost to an extreme flood.

Will agricultural producers on the south side of the dyke be compensated due to project related flooding?

Response - If any upstream residents are flooded artificially as a result of the operation of the floodway, they will be able to apply for compensation.

Are improvements to the dykes in Letellier and Rosenort included in the scope of the Project?

Response - The dykes in these communities are not part of the Project and, therefore, there will be no enhancements to these dykes, unless undertaken separately.

Will the location of the aqueduct need to be changed?

Response - Both branches of the aqueduct will need to be realigned as part of the Project.

One councillor indicated that since the West Dyke was constructed, he perceives that more water has been diverted from Starbuck into the municipality. He postulated this was occurring in order to reduce the amount of water entering into Winnipeg via the LaSalle River, as part of a regional drainage modification program.

None of the EIS team members or MFEA representatives present had any knowledge of such a program taking place. The Environmental Assessment Team informed Council that a meeting was being held on Thursday, June 10, 2004, between MFEA and the residents of Macdonald to discuss issues regarding the West Dyke, and that this question could be posed at that meeting to Rick Hay (MFEA) who would be most knowledgeable regarding this issue it is of significant concern.

Council felt that it was equally important to comment on the deleterious effects of the project, as well as noting the positive effects in the presentation materials.

Will floodway channel widening and possible deepening impact the Birds Hill Aquifer?

Response – Concern over potential aquifer impacts expressed by Birds Hill area residents was one of the major factors considered that lead to the revised design concept which minimizes or eliminates channel deepening as much as possible. There is still a secondary concern that further widening of the floodway channel could result in breaching the aquifer. However, there will be continual monitoring of the aquifer throughout excavation to ensure that channel widening will not negatively impact the aquifer.

Council asked if there were any works planned near Breezy Point. Council commented that it does not want to pass on any of its problems onto other RMs downstream.

Response – there is no work proposed for Breezy Point as part of the Floodway Expansion Project.

The reeve mentioned that MFEA should consider looking at implementing 'ARDA 4', a previously planned, but unimplemented project that could improve flow routing and timing between the Morris River and the Red River and, potentially reduce the magnitude of flooding.

Council commented that it appreciated the Environmental Assessment Team coming to discuss the initial EIA findings, and it sees many positive changes to the project since the first meeting between the Environmental Assessment Team and Council.