

Manitoba Floodway Expansion Project – Round 3 Municipal Meetings - EIA

Meeting Highlights

Meeting With RM of Ritchot Municipal Office – St. Adolphe, Manitoba June 1, 2004

In Attendance

For RM of Ritchot Council

Mayor R. Stefanuik
V. Rutherford
L. Morin
Y. Sabourin
R. Philippe
M. Leclaire

For Environmental Assessment Team

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

For KGS

R. Carson

For Manitoba Floodway Expansion Authority

D. Hurford – Community and Government Relations Coordinator
G. Piasta
B. Peter
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

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

There has been no discussion with the RM about summer operation. Has a decision been made with respect to operating the floodway in the summer? Also, will the floodway be operated in the summer for recreational purposes?

Response – The Province is currently reviewing the summer operating rules. MFEA discussed operating rules, including summer operation, during their round of public involvement. The floodway will not operate in the summer during the Floodway Expansion project's 2005-2009 construction phase, except during an emergency.

Council feels that the term mitigation should be changed because for those upstream there is no mitigating adverse effects related to the Floodway.

How much deepening and widening will occur in the floodway channel?

Response - The extent of possible deepening has been reduced from a maximum of 6 feet to 2 feet, with the goal of no deepening.

What is the rationale for increased widening and less deepening?

Response - There were a variety of reasons why it was decided to lessen deepening and increase widening of the floodway channel, including: 1) decline in value of deepening as engineering knowledge improved; 2) widespread public concern about groundwater quality and quantity; and 3) input from the Environmental Assessment Team about potential impact of deepening. Council noted that mitigative measures such as deepening have been adopted, which help users in other areas of the floodway expansion project. However, there are not mitigation measures to help people south of the inlet – such measures are needed.

Council noted that it would be useful to define some of the important terms in the EIS such as summer operation and mitigation so members of the public know exactly what the terms mean.

At the first meeting there was no mention of land requirements. Is any land required for the project?

Response – Some land will need to be acquired outside of the right of way, especially around some of the bridge structures and the west dyke. Overall, the land required will probably be less than 100 acres in total; however, specific locations and acreages are currently being determined.

Will any land need to be purchased in Lockport due to upgrades to the outlet?

Response – No, all modifications to the outlet will be conducted within the right of way.

The bridge on Highway 59 has been retrofitted last year. Is the plan to replace this bridge?

Response – This bridge structure will only be retrofitted due to the upgrades last year.

What will be in place to reduce water velocities at the outlet?

Response – The outlet will be widened and cement blocks (baffles) will be in place in order to dissipate the energy of 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 water exiting the floodway outlet.

Will the inlet lip berm be lowered to allow water to enter into the floodway at a lower level? Council noted that they would like the lip elevation lowered so water could enter into the floodway at a lower level and, thereby, reduce backwater effects.

Response – There is no plan to change the lip elevation. The inlet lip is at its current elevation in order to reduce the chance of ice entering into the floodway.

The Grande Pointe drop structure was constructed last year. Is this structure going to be replaced?

Response – The Grande Pointe drop structure will not be replaced.

Originally the Seine River Syphon was to be moved south of its current location. Is the plan still to move the syphon?

Response – There is no plan to move the syphon as originally thought.

What will the water levels be for a 1:700 year flood event south of the inlet? What will the water levels be for a 1997 type flood with an expanded floodway?

Response – Water levels with the expanded floodway will be lower than with the existing floodway immediately south of the inlet control structure for major flood events (1:700) and will be similar for extreme flood events. For a 1997 type flood event, water levels would be approximately 1.5 feet lower at the inlet and tapering to no effect south of Ste. Agathe.

Council is concerned that the new gated culverts through the dyke west of Labarriere Park will contribute to washing out the Labarrier Bridge. The RM would like to see this bridge raised considering it cannot be used in the spring and during times of high precipitation. When the bridge is washed out it is a large inconvenience for school buses and emergency services.

Response – The improvement to the dyke will contribute negligibly to Labarrier Bridge washing out. The majority of the water that is contributing to the bridge washing out is from the LaSalle River.

Council mentioned that the Grand Pointe drop structure appears very low, and it is concerned that during a flood backwater flooding could be experienced via the drop structure. This is a large concern for residences located in Grande Pointe. If it is determined that the drop structure is too low, Council expects the drop structure to be changed.

Response – ACRES is currently assessing this issue and information will be available in the near future.

Is there going to be any opportunity for members of the public to use any of the excavated materials?

Response - In terms of the excavated material, this will not become an issue until 2005 when construction of the project begins. Members of the public will have an opportunity to obtain excavated materials through a formal process, as long as it does not increase the cost or delay the project. Moreover, materials required for major public works and for bridges associated with the project will take precedent over other demands for the materials.

Will the RMs be responsible for administering the program to obtain excavated materials similar to when the notches in the floodway were being constructed?

Response – If there have been some successes in the past with respect to RMs administering programs, MFEA would be willing look at such processes.

Who will be responsible for the recreational opportunities associated with the project?

Response – There was a call for expressions of interest for recreational opportunities in mid march and submission were accepted until April 20, 2004. Currently, MFEA is reviewing the expressions of interest. Following a review, MFEA will report on what it has received, and further consultation will be conducted with RMs potentially impacted by the possible recreational opportunities associated with the project.

A councillor noted that she participates on the Rivers West Coalition and the organization submitted an expression of interest but has not heard from MFEA about possible next steps.

Response - The next step in the process after reviewing the proposals that were selected is meet with the organization and the engineers to discuss the feasibility of the plans.

Does the City of Winnipeg receive 1:700 year flood protection and the RM 1:140 year flood protection?

Response – It is correct that the RM will receive 1:140 flood protection with an Expanded Floodway. However, although the Expanded Floodway largely benefits residents of Winnipeg, the RM is receiving improved flood protection such as a reduction in waters levels upstream of the inlet for major floods. If any flooding takes place over 1:140, residents will be able to apply for compensation. Council noted numerous concerns exist with the province's proposed compensation legislation

When will the RM have the opportunity to see the construction plans?

Response - The construction plans will be included in the EIS, which is a public document and will be placed in the public registry.

Council noted that there are two locations along Red River Drive that are close to being inaccessible due to erosion.

Has the cost of the project increased due to replacing all bridge structures?

Response – It is believed that the cost of the project will still be approximately 660 million dollars. The increased cost to remove the bridges will be offset by the reduced cost of excavating less material for the project.

Council would like to see mitigation measures added to the project that will improve flood protection for residents south of the inlet. There is very little in the project proposal for RMs south of the inlet.