

Manitoba Floodway Expansion EIA – Round 1 Municipal Meetings

Meeting Highlights

**Meeting With
RM of Morris
Municipal Office – Morris, Manitoba
February 11, 2004**

In Attendance

For RM of Morris Council

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

For Environmental Assessment Team

J. Osler – TetrES/InterGroup
L. Hardess – TetrES/InterGroup

For Manitoba Floodway Expansion Authority

J. Thomson – Vice-President – Transportation
D. McNeil – Vice-President – Hydraulics

Purpose of Meeting

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

- Begin dialogue about the Environmental Assessment process
- Provide initial information about the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and its associated Public Involvement Program (PIP)
- Provide background information about the proposed Floodway Expansion Project
- Identify issues and concerns Council has with the proposed project, the EIA and the PIP.

TetrES/InterGroup Round 1 PIP

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 1 of the PIP. At least two additional rounds of meetings with municipal Councils are contemplated as information from the Environmental Assessment becomes available.

Meeting Process

John Osler of the Environmental Assessment Team made a presentation about the background and current status of the proposed Floodway Expansion Project EIA process, plans for involving the public in the EIA, and next steps in the process. In conjunction with John's presentation, Jim Thomson and Doug McNeil of the Manitoba Floodway Expansion Authority described the five components of the proposed project – Floodway Channel Expansion, Inlet Control Structure, Outlet Structure, Channel Crossings, and the West Dyke. Each Council representative in attendance was provided with a copy of the presentation and the first PIP newsletter. Extra copies were left with the Administrator for general distribution.

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

- Council asked questions, offered perspectives, and identified issues about the proposed project, the EIA and the PIP
- 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.

Key Perspectives and Issues Identified by Council

- Reeve Martens noted that the R.M. of Morris is in support of the Floodway Expansion Project. Nevertheless, they do not want to see the problems experienced in one zone shifted to another zone.
- Regarding compensation, they believe that it must be available in communities south of Ste. Agathe (i.e. not stop at Ste. Agathe).
- The community would like to see erosion concerns, bank stability and dredging addressed.
- The RM hopes that this project won't prevent their own local projects.
- What is the City of Winnipeg's financial contribution?

Project Impacts and Management of Project Impacts

- There are concerns regarding flooding of bridges.
- Will there be an opportunity to improve private dikes at the same time as construction is being completed on the West Dike?
- There are concerns if lands will be removed from the RM's tax base to accommodate the expansion.
- Will the project include the drains (drop structures) coming into the floodway (e.g. north of PTH 1 near Springfield)?
- There are concerns related to ice and debris in the floodway.

Environmental Assessment Process

- RM of Morris is located in Zone 1 on the study area zone map.
- The Council is pleased to be involved at this early stage and are in support of this proactive approach.
- What are the Department of Fisheries and Oceans' concerns?

Key Perspectives from the Environmental Assessment Team

- Floodway Expansion Project was the outcome of extensive studies and consultation by IJC and Canada/Manitoba/City of Winnipeg following the 1997 flood to identify and evaluate a wide range of alternatives to improve flood protection in the Winnipeg area.
- Before construction can proceed on the project, a license must be obtained under the provincial *Environment Act*, and federal approvals must be granted. As part of this process, a comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) must be prepared. The completed EIS will be subject to public review, including hearings conducted by the Manitoba Clean Environment Commission.
- The EIS is expected to be completed in the Fall of 2004.
- Federal agencies are being contacted early in the EIS process to address potential concerns/issues. For example, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans is on the Project Advisory Team.
- Information from existing sources indicates that impacts of the proposed project are diverse and vary substantially from area to area. To recognize these differences, the study region has been divided into six zones. A color map showing the zones and initial list of key impacts is presented in the newsletter.
- A PIP will be conducted as part of the process for developing the EIS. Input received from participants will be used by the Study Team to identify and evaluate potential effects as well as mitigative measures. Outcomes of the PIP will be reported in the EIS. Three rounds of public involvement are contemplated over the next 6 to 7 months: **Round 1** (to identify issues); **Round 2** (to review initial findings of the impact assessment); and **Round 3** (to review draft EIS content). The program includes meetings with municipalities, workshops with stakeholders and four open houses. The EIA for the PIP is independent of other consultation initiatives being conducted by the Manitoba Floodway Expansion Authority.

TetrES/InterGroup Round 1 PIP

- The open house schedule is as follows:
 - St. Agathe: Community Hall – February 17
 - Selkirk: Legion Hall – February 25
 - Dugald: Community Club – March 2
 - Winnipeg: Holiday Inn South – March 10
- The Environmental Assessment will focus on assessing impacts and identifying mitigation and enhancement measures of the proposed Floodway Expansion Project, since this is what is being licensed and approved.

Key Perspectives from the Manitoba Floodway Expansion Authority

In response to questions and comments, MFEA representatives noted:

- Floodway design is in the preliminary stages and is trying to address location-specific issues associated with widening and deepening.
- Where a potential adverse impact of the project has been identified, the project team will look first at engineering and other solutions to reduce or eliminate identified impacts.
- Manitoba Floodway Expansion Authority does not have a mandate to deal with outstanding issues associated with the existing floodway. These matters are the responsibilities of other provincial agencies.
- Compensation, summer operation, operating rules and the state-of-nature study will be dealt with through separate processes. Legislation dealing with compensation is expected to be on the legislation order before the start of the Project in the fall of 2004.
- The majority of the land required for the project is owned by the province (due to liberal amounts taken in the 1960s) and, therefore, there will not be significant amounts of land removed from the RM tax base.
- Where beneficial improvements can be dealt with easily and at reasonable cost as part of the Expanded Floodway Project, they will be considered. An example is where drainage drop structures have to be replaced; project engineers will be asked to look at increasing the capacity of the structures.