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Report to the Hutt River Advisory Committee
from Daya Atapattu, Project Leader, Trecia Smith, Environmental Planner
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Hutt River Floodplain Management Plan (HRFMP) : Proposed Ava to Ewen Improvements

1. Purpose

- To update the Advisory Committee on the status of the proposed Ava to Ewen improvements.
- To seek Advisory Committee endorsement of the proposed environmental enhancement works priority list.
- To ask the Advisory Committee to request Hutt City Council to consider the environmental concept for the Ava to Ewen reach.

2. Background

The Ava to Ewen improvements with budgeted costs totalling \$14.6 million, will be carried out over the next 8 years in 4 packages:

- | | | |
|--|--------|------------------------|
| • Channel realignment | \$4.6m | July 2002 to June 2004 |
| • Alicetown stopbank | \$2.4m | July 2004 to June 2006 |
| • Ava Bridge east stopbank strengthening | \$5.0m | July 2006 to June 2008 |
| • Strand Park stopbank | \$2.6m | July 2008 to June 2010 |

TOTAL **\$14.6m**

Preliminary design investigations for the overall Ava to Ewen project improvements commenced in the 2000/01 financial year. The channel realignment construction is programmed to commence in late 2002.

3. Project Status Summary

The status of key project components is:

- The feasibility design for the stopbank strengthening at the Ava Bridge was completed and discussed with Tranz Rail. The preferred design provides for removal of the Opahu training bank, releasing greater waterway area.
- A WRC and HCC joint feasibility study for a pumping station at the Opahu Stream outlet was completed. HCC have programmed budget to construct the pumping station in their draft long-term financial strategy.
- Tranz Rail has accepted in principle the stopbank strengthening option at Ava Bridge to improve the waterway capacity.
- Ministry of Education has accepted that the preferred river alignment is the most reasonable option, of all the options considered. However, MOE requested that the Wellington Regional Council (WRC) resolve the issue of relocating games from the existing sports fields before agreeing to sell Strand Park land for the channel realignment.
- Public consultation on the draft consent application was completed in February 2002.
- The notified resource consent application to the WRC was lodged on 15 March 2002. Applications to Hutt City, for an interpretation platform and for relocating services, will be lodged by mid April 2002.
- A \$340,000 tender for physical hydraulic modelling of the Ava reach was rejected, as the costs did not justify the benefits.
- A river engineering specialist was engaged to provide the river related design parameters for the detailed works design.
- Review of the computational hydraulic model is substantially complete. The model provides input to the river parameters and sets stopbank heights.
- Tenders are due to be called for a consultant to complete the detailed design work and manage the channel realignment construction contract.

4. Resource Consent Application

The resource consent application for flood protection works was lodged with Consents Management, WRC on the 15 March 2002. A non-notified application for the proposed interpretation platform and undergrounding and/or relocating existing services will be lodged with the HCC by mid April 2002. Final design and location of the platform requires HCC's written approval, as they are also an affected party.

The river works consent application was lodged approximately three weeks later than the date previously reported to the committee. The delay resulted from a decision to base the consent application on a revised design which involves removing the training bank under the bridge and constructing a pumping station at Black Creek. The pumping station concept has been agreed with Hutt City Council. Potentially affected adjoining property owners and the wider community were also consulted prior to the consent application being lodged. The consent application addresses short and long-term effects and includes appropriate mitigation measures.

The process included notification of the application on the 26 and 27 of March in the Hutt News and Evening Post respectively. Submissions will close on the 2 May 2002. What happens thereafter is largely dependent on the number of submissions received. Pre hearing meetings and / or a hearing in front of commissioners may be required before a decision on the resource consent can be made. All going well, a decision on the consent applications could be expected by late June / early July 2002.

5. Detailed Design

The original proposal to carry out a physical model study to refine the preliminary design, was abandoned, as the costs of \$340,000 did not justify the benefits. To obtain the required design information, a river engineering specialist was appointed in December 2001. The outcomes of the 1994 Ewen floodway model, other published literature and the experience of both the consultant and Flood Protection staff, will form the basis for the information. A review of the hydraulic model that provides velocity and stopbank level information is nearly complete.

Tenders are due to be called from consultants for the detailed design of the river realignment and Alicetown stopbank, and to manage the river realignment construction contract. The consultant will be appointed by the end of April / early May 2002. Construction of the river realignment should commence by the end of 2002.

6. Stopbank Strengthening at Ava Bridge and Opahu Stream Pumping Station

Tranz Rail has accepted in principle that stopbank strengthening at the Ava Bridge is currently the only viable option to improve waterway capacity. They will not consider building a new bridge for at least 20 years. Tranz Rail's main concern is the impact construction might have on their rail movements.

The preferred strengthening option provides for an improved waterway, by removing the training bank from under the bridge and constructing a pumping station at the Black Creek outlet. A joint HCC / WRC feasibility investigation for pumping Opahu Stream was completed in November 2001. The capital cost of the pumping station is about \$1.3 million and WRC has responsibility for some part of this cost. HCC, through their annual plan process, is considering budget provision for this pumping station. If approved, the pumping station would be constructed in the 2005/06 financial year. The existing Opahu Stream training bank under the Ava Bridge would be removed once the pumping station is constructed.

7. Strand Park Land Purchase

Ministry of Education (MOE) and Hutt Valley High School (HVHS) representatives have accepted that the proposed river alignment and stopbank arrangement is the most sensible option of all options presented to them. HVHS would lose one rugby field and three cricket pitches as a result of the proposed works.

As compensation MOE / HVHS have requested access to the Hutt Recreation Grounds to fully offset their loss of amenity. As owner of the “Hutt Rec” HCC have indicated that they can accommodate some of the school aspirations by using a combination of existing grounds, including some limited access to the Hutt Recreation Ground. The full size rugby field which remains on Strand Park, and other school grounds, are retained for school use. Other areas of Strand Park will still be available for practice.

Discussions on the purchase of Strand Park are continuing and the Committee will be updated at the 11 April meeting.

8. Environmental Enhancement Works

As part of the preliminary design, a range of environmental concept designs were prepared for this reach of the river. **Attachment 1** shows the preferred environmental enhancement works; the rough order costs to complete all the environmental work for the preferred concept are about \$1,076,000.

The total budget available for the environmental enhancement works is \$707,000. This budget includes the “5% of capital work” component (including the Ava stopbank strengthening “contribution”) and other sundry “enhancement” items provided for the Hutt River.

The environment enhancement costs were prioritised and revised to match the estimated \$707,000 (see **Attachment 2**). To achieve this, the amount of rock work was reduced, proposed car parks removed and maintenance costs are not yet accounted for.

Recommendation 3 formally asks HCC to consider the proposed environmental concept, and any corresponding financial contribution they may consider appropriate. More accurate cost estimates will become available once the detailed design phase is completed.

Some additional environmental enhancement work will be required when the Ava Rail Bridge strengthening and Opahu Stream training bank works. Items 1–5 are proposed as part of the channel realignment and Alicetown stopbank construction.

9. Communications

Local residents and stakeholders were consulted through public meetings and information sheets. Separate meetings were held with major stakeholders. Community and stakeholders will have another opportunity to make submissions on the project through the consent process. The consent application will be available at the Hutt City Central Library, Moera Community Library and at the Regional Council and Hutt City Council offices. Project information sheets will continue through the design and construction phases.

10. Recommendations

That the Advisory Committee:

- (1) **receive** the report.
- (2) **note** the contents of the report.
- (3) **request** Hutt City Council consider the environmental concept for the Ava to Ewen reach, and any financial contribution they may consider appropriate.

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Attachment 1: Proposed Environmental Enhancement Works Fig. 1.3

Attachment 2: Ava to Ewen Environmental Enhancement Works Implementation – Priority List