greater WELLINGTON
REGIONAL COUNCIL
Te Pane Matua Taiao

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Committee	Hutt Valley Flood Management Subcommittee
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Hutt River: City Centre Upgrade Project - Update

1. Purpose

- To update the Subcommittee on progress made with the Hutt River: City Centre Upgrade Project

- To seek Subcommittee endorsement for the preparation of a project plan for combining components of the 'Riverside Promenade' and 'Melling Interchange' projects with the flood protection project

2. The decision-making process and significance

No decision is being sought in this report. This report provides an update on the progress made with the City Centre Upgrade Project and seeks endorsement of the next phase of the project.

3. Background

Project scoping for the City Centre Upgrade Project (CCUP) commenced in February 2013. Meetings with key stakeholders continued from February to May 2013 to discuss issues and opportunities related to the flood protection works and the extents of other projects they have planned for the City Centre/River Corridor. Currently, there are three major projects planned for the river corridor area in the CBD.

GWRC City Centre Upgrade Project

The proposed flood protection works in the Hutt City CBD includes:

- River channel improvements from KGB to Ewen including waterway improvements at the Melling Bridge.
- City Centre stopbank upgrade from Mills Street to Ewen Bridge.
- Pharazyn Street stopbank upgrade from Melling Bridge to Ewen Bridge.

Hutt City Council (HCC)

- Establishing a riverside promenade as part of the CBD Making Places Project.

NZTA

- Melling Interchange project to reduce delays to traffic and to reduce risk of crashes.

The scoping report will address issues and opportunities related to the proposed flood protection works and propose a process for formulating an integrated project for consideration by the stakeholders.

4. Stakeholder Meetings

A series of stakeholder meetings were held as part of the scoping study, and these included:

– Joint meeting with GWRC/HCC CEOs and senior staff – 4 March 2013.

– Presentation to GWRC Environmental Wellbeing Committee – 5 March 2013.

– Presentation to HVFMS – 19 March 2013.

– GWRC officers internal workshop – 16 April 2013.

– HCC officers and other key stakeholder workshop – 22 April 2013.

– Meeting with Hutt River Trail Operations Committee – 1 May 2013.

– Presentation to City Development Committee (HCC) – 1 May 2013.

– Meeting with NZTA officers – 2 May 2013.

– Meeting Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust representatives – 7 May 2013.

– Meeting with Ngati Toa representatives – 29 May 2013.

5. Issues and Opportunities

The following table provides a summary of key issues and opportunities discussed at the above meetings.

Issues	Opportunities
Channelised river and constricted floodway with no room for improvements	Investigate options for widening the river corridor to incorporate recreational features and to make allowance for future proofing
Existing flood protection structures form a 'barrier' and discourage public access to river from the City Centre	Bring forward the relevant components of the 'Making Places' project to incorporate enhanced access over stopbank
Existing Melling Bridge does not meet the Hutt River Flood Management Plan waterway requirements and the Melling	Bring forward the Melling Interchange project to implement as a combined project

Interchange needs improvements	with flood protection works
Loss of grassed berm areas between KGB and Melling	Improve the corridor with enhanced access to the river and identify other replacement areas within the river corridor
Loss of carparks in the riverbank carpark	Maximise other uses of the river corridor in the CBD area and identify other locations for replacement car parks
Maintenance of existing services in the river corridor (Power, Gas, Stormwater and Sewers) may put flood protection assets at risk	Relocate services to service corridors provided with the new stopbanks, rationalise stormwater crossings and improve water quality
Lack of commitment from key stakeholders on timing for implementing other key projects	There are significant benefits of implementing some project components as a combined project.

6. Scoping Report

The scoping report will provide a detailed description of the issues and opportunities outlined above. Attachment 1 contains a draft of the Executive Summary of the Scoping Report.

One of the key outcomes of the scoping study is the advantages of a combined project. The scoping study shows that there are opportunities to combine the investigations, design and implementation of some components of all three projects to realise additional benefits. The project components that could be combined include:

- Topographical and boundary surveys, geo-technical investigations and hydraulic modelling;
- Land purchase;
- River channel improvements and edge protections associated with a replacement bridge;
- Stopbank reconstruction along Daly Street and Rutherford Street and the riverside promenade works;
- Stormwater rationalisation, upsizing and improving water quality;
- River berm improvements.

GWRC's Long Term Plan (2012 -2022) provides $26 million to complete the proposed flood protection works by 2022. At this stage, the other two projects do not have specific funding commitments in the next ten years.

The proposed flood protection works can be broken down into a number of components for construction purposes. Our previous analysis has shown that there are a number of feasible construction sequence options for the upgrade

works. There is an opportunity to delay (or bring forward) some of the flood protection work components (e.g. works at Melling Bridge, Daly Street stopbank) if matching funding can be committed to other projects. However, it has to be noted that the existing flood risk to the central area of the city will continue until the stopbanks are upgraded.

Boffa Miskell is now progressing with the preparation of the scoping report with the aim of completing it by the end of June 2013. Attachment 1 contains a copy of the draft Executive Summary.

Boffa Miskell will present the first draft of the report at a GWRC staff meeting scheduled for 6 June 2013. Hutt City Council and NZTA staff are invited to this meeting to provide an opportunity for them to make comment on the draft report.

On completion of the report, it will be circulated to the members of the Subcommittee, key stakeholders and published on the GWRC website.

7. Land Acquisition

The proposed flood protections works require acquisition of some private land at Mills Street and Melling. GWRC has identified these requirements and contacted all affected landowners. Good progress has been made with land purchase at the Mills Street end. GWRC has acquired four properties out of the seven earmarked for purchase.

Staff have held discussions with HCC and NZTA staff on the opportunities for combining their land requirements in the CBD with those required for flood protection works. At this stage there is no commitment from these parties.

The proposed stopbank upgrade works were originally planned on the basis of utilising some carparks on Daly Street. GWRC and HCC staff will work together, through the preliminary design, to determine the optimum use of Daly Street to benefit both the flood protection and 'Making Places' projects.

8. Integrated Project Plan

The next phase of the flood protection project is to develop concept designs for consultation with stakeholders and the wider community. As described above, the scoping study shows an integrated project that combines the other two major projects with the flood protection project, which could bring additional benefits.

It is proposed to use the initial part of the concept development phase to develop an integrated project plan, which will investigate options for combining the three projects.

The expected outcome from the project plan is an integrated project for the CBD area which combines relevant components of the Making Places and the Melling Interchange project with the flood protection project. The plan will consider current commitments from the stakeholders, the feasibility of combining project components and propose an implementation programme with budget requirement for each phase. The integrated plan will be prepared by a Project Development Group consisting of staff from GWRC, HCC and

NZTA. GWRC will lead the preparation of the integrated project plan, and expects to seek stakeholder approval by March 2014.

If the key stakeholders cannot agree on an integrated project plan, GWRC may proceed implementing the flood protection project as already planned. There is some risk that the time spent on preparing the project plan may be lost if a resolution cannot be reached for an integrated project. This risk can be reduced by commencing some of the flood protection investigations during this period.

9. Governance and Project Management

GWRC has established the Hutt Valley Flood Management Subcommittee (HVFMS) to provide an oversight of the development, implementation and review of the Floodplain Management Plans of the Hutt Valley. Since 2001, the HVFMS (and its predecessors) have overseen the implementation of the Hutt River Flood Management Plan. It is proposed that the HVFMS will continue to oversee the implementation of the CCUP.

If the stakeholders agree to proceed collectively, on an integrated project, then the Project Development Group (or similar) will continue to manage the implementation of the project. If not, GWRC will continue with flood protection works as currently planned.

10. Communication

The project continues to receive wide publicity through the local press. A Newsletter will be distributed in July 2013 to the adjacent land owners, local community and the stakeholders summarising the outcomes from the scoping study and the programme for the next stage of works.

11. Recommendations

That the Subcommittee:

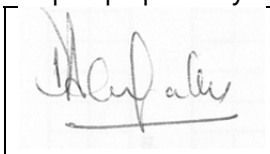
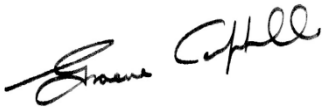
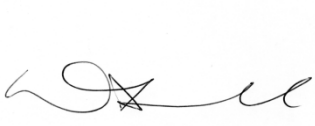
1. ***Receives*** *the report.*

2. ***Notes*** *the content of the report.*

3. ***Notes*** *that the project scoping report will be completed by the end of June 2013.*

4. ***Notes*** *that an integrated project that combines the flood protection works with components of the Making Places project and the Melling Interchange project could realise additional benefits.*

5. ***Endorses*** *the preparation of an integrated project plan that combines components of the three projects, for consideration by the key stakeholders, GWRC, HCC and NZTA.*

Report prepared by:	Report approved by:	Report approved by:
		
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Attachment:

Attachment 1 Scoping Report – DRAFT Executive Summary

Hutt River: City Centre Upgrade Project

Project Scoping Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Project

The Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) Hutt River (Te Awa Kairangi) flood protection project for the Hutt City section is a combination of stopbank raising and widening on both banks of the river, as well as river channel widening. The project stretches some 3 kilometres from Kennedy Good Bridge to the Ewen Bridge downstream and completes a higher level of protection for the more intensively urbanised river plain contiguous with the Hutt City town centre.

This project's urban interface also gives rise to opportunities for additional 'layers' of public benefit to be realised over and above flood protection. These additional benefits can be gained from combining the projects of stakeholders, particularly Hutt City Council' s (HCC) town centre improvements called *Making Places*, and the New Zealand Transport Agency's (NZTA) Melling Bridge and highway intersection improvements, with the flood protection project. A collaborative design process and commitment to other public agency investment in parallel with that from GWRC will be required to secure those public benefits. There are substantial economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits to be gained by considering and implementing these public projects together.

Project Purpose

The flood protection works, including those proposed for the Hutt City centre section, have long been planned for in the Hutt River Floodplain Management Plan (2001) (HRFMP). The HRFMP establishes a strategy of both structural and non-structural measures to reduce the risk of the Hutt River flooding the urbanised area of the floodplain.

The design standard established for protection is that it is sufficient to protect the urban areas from a 2300 cumec (cubic metres per second) river flow with stopbanks high enough to contain a 2,800 cumec flood in the Hutt River. On average a 2,300 cumec flood event can be expected to occur once in every 440 years, the equivalent of a 20 percent chance of occurring in the next 100 years. Since flood protection works have been established there has not been a flood event of this magnitude in the valley. In 1898 a flood in the order of 2000 cumecs brought extensive flooding and damage to the valley. The level of protection provided by the existing stopbank is approximately a 1 in 100 year event (1,900 cumec). It has been previously estimated that a 2300 cumec flood today would cause damage to property and assets in the valley in excess of $1.7billion.

These damages have been progressively reduced by upgrading of stopbanks in Boulcott and Strand Park.

Project Implementation Timing and Cost

GWRC's Long Term Plan (2012 -2022) allocates a budget of $26 million to implement the flood protection works by 2022. The programme includes a planning, consultation, consenting and design process of 4 years and a construction period of 6 years. There is some potential for flexibility in the project timing if additional public benefits can be secured by an agreed alternative process for planning and construction. Implementation delays will extend the period that the urban area is at risk from flooding, but the benefits on balance of extending the timing in order that additional public benefits can be realised may be acceptable.

Issues and Opportunities

Over time the Hutt River has been incrementally 'channelised' to a corridor, constricting the floodway, within the now mostly urbanised valley floodplain. The corridor is defined by stopbanks (or high ground) on either side. Urban development has come close to, and even sits up against, the stopbanks in some places. Being within an urbanised area, the open space of the river corridor has a high level of public use as well as accommodating infrastructure and car parking. The river itself and the vegetation it supports on its edges are also habitat for wildlife including fish and birds.

Because the project seeks to increase the stopbank's height and breadth, as well as widen the river channel, the physical changes as well as the way in which people use and experience it will generate issues to be addressed in planning and design. Many of these issues can also be converted to opportunities to generate new or improved public benefits through deliberate consideration and collaboration with stakeholders.

The stopbank works will require the acquisition of residential property at Mills Street and commercial land upstream of the Melling Bridge. GWRC has contacted all the landowners directly affected. The sensitivity of this loss of property for directly affected owners as well as the changes for those adjacent will need consideration. Raising and widening the stopbanks, as currently proposed, will generate interface issues with properties close to the stopbank (such as Harvey Norman) and also the street edges in some places (such as at Daly Street). There could be some utilisation of the Daly Street road space to enable stopbank broadening. This would require changes to the street configuration in terms of parking, lanes, and services.

Accesses across the stopbank (steps and ramps) and the existing car parking areas on the broader open spaces will also be removed. The parking areas are used also for a weekly market which is well patronised and the hard surfaced area are used informally for other purposes too. The repositioning of any car parking will require consideration as to the future uses of the river corridor land and the optimum locations for access from the city centre.

In the area closest to the urban edge of the Hutt city centre there is an issue in how best to achieve the *Making Places* project in terms of the elements that interlock, or overlap, with the river and its corridor. One of the significant opportunities is to integrate the design and combine resources for implementation of both HCC and GWRC's projects together. This would enable the issues raised above in terms of uses of the floodplain, Daly Street edge, connections to the city centre, parking, event spaces, river access, and open space amenity to be addressed holistically. In this way a combination of flood protection and a great new asset for the city could be generated as one project. This may in turn assist to catalyse HCC's desire to see increased private investment in the city centre.

In the more upstream areas, river channel widening will reduce the width of some of the broader open grassed areas which are utilised for staged events, dog exercising and other informal activities. The river corridor as a whole offers a range of spaces which can be used for these purposes and this may require a change to some users' experience as they change to use different places.

The existing lower level walking and cycling tracks that run parallel to the river will also be subsumed by the channel widening in some areas. These paths have been established by volunteers to a large extent and although they will be replaced with new tracks, there are changes and some sensitivity about this loss. The design of new tracks will need to recognise the use patterns and should include use of the wealth of knowledge of the volunteers.

At the Melling Bridge the river flow is restricted due to the narrower width of the river between banks/abutments and the height of the bridge above flood water levels. The HRFMP identifies replacement of the bridge as an element of the protection works to achieve the recommended standard and NZTA have investigated this recently in combination with a grade separated interchange at the highway. However, there is no progress on the bridge replacement and less substantial highway intersection upgrades are now proposed as an interim measure.

The issue is that because the bridge is not proposed to be replaced in the NZTA's current planning period, the best that can be achieved for flood protection is widening the banks at the bridge as far as possible. There is some effect on the west side of the river in terms of Block Road and parking areas. As with the city centre *Making Places* project, there is an opportunity to work with NZTA to develop the opportunities for achieving intersection improvements and flood protection together.

The channel widening will also affect areas of the river and gravel beaches currently utilised for swimming, fishing, picnicking, and staged events. To some extent if the changes are timed to avoid fish spawning/whitebaiting periods and with design consideration to providing fish habitat, then the issue of effects can be made to be positive. For activities such as swimming, the popular places have been identified and if unable to be retained can be replaced in different locations. With some design consideration groynes (like those used in Waikanae River for example) can improve the swimming amenity offered in the river. Maintaining access to the river will be important and with channel widening the current tracks down to the river will be lost. Access can be reinstated and consideration given to the optimum positioning and form of connection to meet various needs.

The loss of existing river edge vegetation will also be an issue in the sense of a visual change and the limited habitat value this provides. When complete, the channel widening will see reinstatement of some new river edge willow replanting and other areas of rock revetment in combination with native or exotic planting. If designed with biodiversity improvement in mind, rock areas can be excellent habitat for fish and a greater use of native vegetation can support bird and other wildlife.

Related to habitat value are the existing stormwater discharges to the river. There is an opportunity for these to be improved in terms of capacity and water quality (through debris catching) as well as potential for those that relate to lateral streams to be reconfigured as more natural wetlands, or vegetated areas that can filter water prior to discharging to the river.

The Hutt River floodway is highly constricted in the CBD area, particularly at the Melling Bridge and the stretch of the river along Daly Street. Beyond the immediate project period, a longer term issue for consideration is how to address currently unknown future needs to change or increase flood protection. The effects on flood risk from changes in climatic conditions, or changes in expectations of urban area protection may influence the future need for further improvements in flood protection planning and design. This project is an opportunity to consider what any future protection works might be. It will also be an expectation of the consenting process under the RMA that alternatives and future hazard risk has been addressed.

Stakeholders

The process of understanding the project stakeholders' interests has commenced and continues the relationships established in the development of the HRFMP. The stakeholders met with to discuss the project specifics include HCC, NZTA, service providers (Transpower, Capacity, Wellington Electricity, Power Co) and GWRC officers, including those with specific knowledge of use of the river corridor. The range of matters raised by stakeholders include those addressed in the discussion on issues and opportunities. Separate meetings were held with iwi representatives to discuss issues, opportunities and their potential involvement in the governance and management of the project.

Governance and Project Management Process

It is intended that the current Hutt Valley Flood Management Subcommittee that governs the implementation of the HRFMP will continue to do so for the project. This Subcommittee has representation from the stakeholders and has an understanding and overview of the HRFMP context. The only change that could be considered at this stage is the addition of a representative from Ngati Toa to recognise the statutory acknowledgement over the Hutt River following their treaty settlement.

In order to progress an understanding of, and preferably gain essential commitment towards, a combined project that incorporates the public and private benefits of *Making*

Places, Melling Interchange improvements and flood protection works, it is proposed that a new Project Development Group be established. That group would have representatives from key stakeholders, primarily HCC and NZTA.

The initial brief for that group would be to manage a 9 month process to investigate and develop an integrated project plan for the subject area that incorporates the known plans of stakeholders. This process can include public input. At the conclusion of this process, decisions would be made by the respective stakeholders as to whether to commit to invest in a share of the integrated plan, or not. If the decision is to proceed collectively, the Project Management Group (or similar) would continue to deliver the whole project with appropriate programming, shares and responsibility. If the decision of stakeholders is not to invest, then GWRC will continue with the flood protection works as currently planned with the management group providing a point of reference only. To expediently advance this collective design process GWRC will lead a process beginning with formulating a project plan with stakeholders before advancing its implementation.

There is some risk that the time spent may be 'lost' if resolution cannot be reached over the collective plan, or the required investment confirmed by the respective stakeholders. However, the potential opportunity to deliver multilayered public benefits cannot be overlooked. If successful a collective project can reasonably be expected to deliver benefits for Hutt City and the region through increased flood protection, regionally significant open space recreational improvements, river environment improvements, catalytic private investment and improved highway and local road performance. The risk of 'lost time' could be reduced by carrying out some of the investigations required for flood protection works during this period.