
REPORT 2
(1215/12/IM)

REALIGNMENT OF PORIRUA STREAM, FINDLAY STREET

1. Purpose of Report

To inform the Tawa Community Board about the options that have been considered for the realignment of the Porirua Stream and relocation of houses at Findlay Street.

2. Executive Summary

Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) proposes to carry out works on the Porirua Stream at Findlay Street for flood mitigation purposes.

In 2002, options being considered were either relocation of the stream channel and 3 houses, or widening of the stream in its present location and the relocation of one house (with the removal of the other two houses). Neither of these options was satisfactory for both GWRC and WCC, as the former did not meet the Wellington City Council 'Bush and Streams Restoration Plan and the latter had high cost for GWRC. Consequently, in 2003/2004 a further option was developed that proposed relocation of the stream channel and 3 houses and construction of a **bifurcation** option that involves the construction of the stream channel around an 'island'.

GWRC have approached WCC to gain approval in principle for the bifurcation option and its consistency with WCC Outcomes and Policies.

The proposal is consistent with Council's long term outcomes, the Long Term Community Plan for Wellington City and Bush and Streams Restoration Plan. Garry Poole Chief Executive Officer of Wellington City Council has given approval in principle.

GWRC are now starting consultation with other key stakeholders including the Tawa Community Board prior to commencing detailed design work and application for consents.

3. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. *Receive the report.*
2. *Support in principle the bifurcation option subject to more detailed analysis of the detailed design and a full environmental assessment of the impacts of stream straightening.*

4. Background

The Porirua Stream is administered by GWRC.

In the late 1980's and early 1990's, GWRC carried out extensive investigations into possible flood improvement works on the Porirua Stream. Stream widening was proposed through Tawa to improve the flood capacity of the stream. In anticipation of this work, GWRC purchased three properties at Findlay Street, adjacent to Linden Park. It was proposed that the stream in this area be straightened and constructed along the lines of the works undertaken in the lower reaches within Porirua City.

A programme of consultation undertaken with the Tawa community by GWRC in 1989 revealed that the community, while it wished to resolve flood management issues, wished to retain the natural character of the stream as much as possible. Economic evaluation in 1992 showed insufficient benefits for works in the Wellington City area. This meant that the cost of the works would not be offset by the benefits of flood mitigation that would result from the work.

In 2000-2002, GWRC reassessed its continued ownership of the properties and developed the proposal for a new stream channel at Findlay Street. It re-introduced the proposal to straighten the stream, improving the flood mitigation characteristics and allowing the houses to be sold. This was the Full Realignment Option (Option 1)

GWRC approached WCC officers for pre-consent application comment on the proposed plans. WCC officers, guided by past community discussion and the new policy direction set in Wellington Wet and Wild: Bush and Streams Restoration Plan indicated that they felt that the cost/benefit analysis needed to take account of the ecological impacts and WCC's streams management policy. They asked that alternative solutions be considered which sought to retain the existing stream system as much as possible. A bottom-line requirement was that any alternative solution should aim to achieve the same level of flood protection as the solution initially proposed.

As a consequence GWRC staff considered an alternative, more environmentally sensitive option. This was the **Floodway** option (Option 2). This option involved widening the stream in the current position but retaining the essential structure. Two of the three existing houses would be uplifted and sold for removal. One house would be shifted to the Findlay Street side of the stream, a new section created and sold. This was a more expensive option than the full realignment option as two houses were not available for resale, offsetting the construction costs.

This option did retained the curve in the stream, accommodated flooding issues, provided for some potential recreational space linked to the local park and reduced ecological and visual impacts.

The GWRC Landcare Committee considered the options at their meeting in December 2001. They did not consider it appropriate to recommend that the Regional Council forgo income from the sale of the surplus properties and requested that WRC officers initiated further discussions with WCC. They did not support the **Floodway** option.

On 8 August 2002 the full realignment and floodway options were presented to the Tawa Community Board. The options both offered the same flood protection benefits. The full realignment option was not recommended by WCC officers as it did not meet policies in Wet and Wild. The Board supported the full realignment option.

It was agreed that an ecological report would be commissioned examining both options, The ecological report carried out by Kingett Mitchell Ltd (May 2003) concluded that *“The effects of the proposed realignment on the Porirua Stream have the potential to impact on the fishery and aquatic habitat values, but was not expected to result in any significant change to the macroinvertebrate and algal fauna. Mitigation measures aimed at recreating the preferred inanga habitat were proposed that would minimise effects of realignment.”*

As a result of this GWRC developed the **bifurcation** option (Option 1B). This option involves the removal of all footbridges and construction of a full stream realignment from 30 Findlay St to meet the existing channel about 50 m downstream from 46 Findlay Street, with a bifurcation at 44 Findlay St (adding a loop on the left bank with a low island between the two loops, and becoming a single channel about 60 m downstream); All three houses (42, 44 and 46) would be relocated forward on their sections with raised floor level above the 100 year flood level. The properties would then be sold.

Sharyn Westlake, Catchment Engineer for GWRC gave a verbal presentation to the November 2006 meeting of the Tawa Community Board. This paper has been prepared as a result of that meeting

5. Discussion

GWRC are now in a position to commence consultation on the bifurcation option. They approached WCC and asked for a letter supporting the proposal and confirming it was consistent with Council’s policies.

Council officers have assessed the option and its consistency with these policies:

Council’s long-term outcomes

- *4.6 Safer. Wellingtonians will have access to safe and reliable energy and water supplies, clean air, and waste disposal systems that protect public health and ecosystems*

- *4.7 Healthier. Wellington will protect and restore its land and water based ecosystems to sustain their natural processes, and to provide habitats for a range of indigenous and non-indigenous plants and animals*

The **Long Term Community Plan for Wellington City** has as one of its key environmental priorities “the protection of Wellington’s streams”. This work will be focussing on the Porirua and Owhiro stream catchments.

Bush and Stream Restoration Plan. In particular two clauses are relevant:

- *Modification to the natural structure and flow of the city's streams systems will be actively discouraged in the city, except where there is an otherwise unavoidable risk to human health and safety from flooding or wastewater management...*
- *6.6.1b Council will seek to minimise impediments to the natural flow of the city's streams and barriers to the movement of freshwater fauna up and down the system. Where such an approach cannot be achieved within the urban area because of flooding issues, Council will ensure that alternative design solution are explored and wherever possible, adopted.*

Council officers have confirmed that the option proposed by GWRC is consistent with, and supported by these outcomes and policies.

Council have also advised GWRC that

- WCC is supporting this work as property owner of the adjacent Linden Park. Nothing herein implies any regulatory consent or resource consent approval
- WCC is keen to work with GWRC on the detailed design of the proposal to ensure the scheme does not adversely affect the stream environment and habitat
- Linden Park is a recreation reserve under the Reserves Act 1977. Part of the realignment will pass through the park (with no affect on the playing surfaces). Approval for any works to take place in the park will be considered under section 53 (I) of the Act and require the approval of the administering body. This will require approval of full Council once the final plans are developed.

6. Conclusion

This project will alleviate the flood risk in the area with an environmentally acceptable solution.

The Bifurcation option conforms with Council policies.

There is no cost to Council with this proposal.

Contact Officers: *Mike Oates, Manager Natural and Botanic Areas and Maria Archer, Manager Infrastructure Planning*

Supporting Information

1) Strategic Fit / Strategic Outcome

Consistent with Council's long term outcomes

4.6 Safer. Wellingtonians will have access to safe and reliable energy and water supplies, clean air, and waste disposal systems that protect public health and ecosystems

4.7 Healthier. Wellington will protect and restore its land and water based ecosystems to sustain their natural processes, and to provide habitats for a range of indigenous and non-indigenous plants and animals

2) LTCCP/Annual Plan reference and long term financial impact

No financial impact.

3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations

None

4) Decision-Making

This is not a significant decision. The report sets out a number of options and reflects the views and preferences of those with an interest in this matter who have been consulted with.

5) Consultation

a) General Consultation

No consultation has taken place. This will occur once support in principle is gained from the Community Board.

b) Consultation with Maori

No consultation has taken place. This will occur once support in principle is gained from the Community Board.

6) Legal Implications

None

7) Consistency with existing policy

Consistent with policies in Bush and Streams Restoration Plan