



The Peninsula Project

Working together to protect our people, property and environment

Kia mau ki te mauri o te taiao o Hauraki



Floodway improvement works at Graham's Creek

Newsletter, July 2014



What the council decided

The council has worked with the community for more than eight years to identify a workable solution for everyone. After considering all submissions and talking with Thames-Coromandel District Council (TCDC), we decided it was now time to get on with work to address flooding at Graham's Creek, such as that experienced last December.

A budget of up to \$600,000 has been approved in the council's 2014/15 Annual Plan for the programme of works, conditional on:

- a joint working group refining and confirming the works programme
- TCDC's upgrade of the Manaia Rd causeway proceeding in accordance with the scheme design
- agreement from the landowner for access where floodway improvements will take place.

Greater protection from flooding

A joint working group including members of the Tairua community, and district and regional council representatives has been set up to refine and confirm the programme of works which will reduce the impact of flooding on properties.

The group's membership has just been finalised and they are due to meet for the first time this month.

As part of its role, the working group will explore opportunities to reduce the final cost while still achieving a reduction in flooding.

It's intended the works programme will be finalised by the working group by September, when resource consents will be sought by the regional council and TCDC.

TCDC has set aside \$620,000 in its 2014-2015 Annual Plan towards upgrading the Manaia Rd causeway bridge.

As part of our 2014/15 Draft Annual Plan process we asked more than 700 Tairua ratepayers to give their support to proceed with up to \$600,000 of floodway improvement works to address flooding at Graham's Creek. We also wanted to understand people's reasons if they didn't want the work to go ahead.

Eighty-one submissions (representing 11 per cent of the affected property owners) were received.

This newsletter confirms the council's decision and outlines what is happening to finalise a programme of floodway improvement works at Graham's Creek.

Who is on the joint working group

The working group comprises regional councillors Clyde Graf and Stuart Husband, TCDC Tairua-Pauanui Community Board chairperson Bob Renton, and staff from the regional council and TCDC.

We also wanted to ensure community members on the working group who had input on the final works programme came from across the Graham's Creek rating area. They are:

- Phil Smith (Ocean Beach Road)
- Jim Jackson (Manaia Road)
- Joyce Birdsall (Paku Hill)
- Ian Jowett (Summer Lane)
- Tony Jacobs (Tairua-Pauanui Ratepayer's Association)
- Graham Turner (floodway landowner).

We'll keep you up to date with the outcomes of the working group.



Rating for the work

- Targeted rating for the work will be implemented from 1 July 2015.
- Targeted rating will be based on a 30 year loan repayment (instead of the standard 20 years) to reduce the annual rate burden on landowners.
- Staff are investigating the potential of a lump sum payment option.
- Staff are investigating ratepayer submissions relating to specific property queries.





Talking points

This section outlines the comments made by submitters to the council on the Graham's Creek floodway improvement works proposal.

Thank you to those people who submitted suggestions regarding engineering solutions, the proposed floodway improvement works and new ideas for consideration. These will be considered by our engineers and river managers.

“Rates are already too high. The whole of Tairua and/or the entire district or region should contribute to the proposal.”

- Currently, council policy requires the property owners who benefit the most from any capital flood mitigation works to fund the greatest share of the cost (75 per cent). The policy also provides for a 25 per cent contribution from the wider peninsula and Waikato region.

How the 75 per cent community share is spread across the local area is determined via a rating classification. This work was carried out by an independent classifier for the Graham's Creek project, based on the flood mitigation works identified. As part of refining and confirming the flood mitigation design, consideration will be given to where some properties sit within the rating classification. These properties will be notified individually of any changes.

- Originally a 20 year loan repayment term was proposed for targeted rating for the flood mitigation works. To reduce the annual rate burden on landowners, the council has decided to extend that term to 30 years. In addition, and in response to requests, the council will investigate the potential for a lump sum payment option for local community ratepayers.

- Council expenditure at Graham's Creek to date has involved technical work associated with the development of flood mitigation proposals, consultation with the community and TCDC, and stream maintenance works. With respect to stream maintenance, the annual budget provides for physical works and staff time.

Given the range of interests in this community (properties on the floodplain, recreational and aesthetic values and environmental considerations), undertaking any work has required significant discussion with landowners.

“Those who have purchased properties on a floodplain should have been aware of the issue so should pay for the cost of protection.”

- The rating classification reflects the degree of benefit a property receives from the flood mitigation works. Properties on the floodplain currently at risk from flooding fall into the higher benefit rating areas and therefore contribute more towards the cost of the works than those receiving less or no benefit.

“Property owners who have undertaken their own measures, such as lifting their floor level, should pay less.”

- Currently, the proposed rating classification for Graham's Creek does not allow a rates reduction for landowners who have lifted their houses above flood levels or built on elevated parts of their section.

This is consistent with flood mitigation rating classifications and policy for other schemes on the Coromandel Peninsula and elsewhere in the Waikato.

There are two main reasons why individual measures carried out by landowners are not taken into consideration in rating classifications:

- This approach ignores the benefit to the rest of a property.
- It would require annual revision across a community to keep up with any changes, which would cost more to manage.

Rating classifications also take into account the future likelihood of larger floods due to climate change and sea level rise. Waikato Regional Council will, however, investigate whether recognition might be given to such properties through the 2015-2025 Long Term Plan, as this is a principle that should be considered across all schemes.

“My property has never flooded and should not be rated for mitigation works.”

- The fact that a property may not have flooded in the past doesn't mean it won't in the future. Similarly, because a property hasn't flooded in the recent past doesn't mean it has never flooded before.

Once the floodway improvement works programme has been finalised the rating classification will be confirmed and any adjustments needed will be made at that time. This will include consideration of any submitter queries.

“The proposed works will not have the desired effect.”

- A significant amount of technical work and discussions with community members has contributed to the development of the proposed floodway improvement works options. This has included:
 - Montgomery Watson Harza reports to TCDC in September 2000 and February 2001, Waikato Regional Council status report Graham's Creek Flood Risk Investigation November 2008 and Kessels & Associates report to Waikato Regional Council on the proposed widening of Graham's Creek Assessment of Ecological Effects May 2005.
 - Hydraulic modelling of the proposed construction measures including an overflow path (diversion) and stopbank upgrade.
 - On site investigations of the stream and floodplain, and improvements required to effectively convey flood flows to the proposed upgraded bridge.
 - On site and round the table discussions with community members and review of photos, video footage and reports provided by community members.
 - Discussions with the key owner of the open floodplain land about the viability of potential modifications and works on his farming operation.

For more information

General enquiries and funding

Emily O'Donnell, Coromandel Area Manager
Julie Beaufill, Hauraki and Coromandel Division Manager
Freephone 0800 800 401 or 07 866 0172

River maintenance works

Kerry Smith, Coromandel River Works Manager
Freephone 0800 800 401 or 07 862 8376