



Memorandum

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Copy	
From	Stefan Steyn - Senior Landscape Architect
Office	Napier
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Subject	MCA - Landscape Effects

1 Introduction

This memorandum provides a high-level assessment of landscape, visual amenity, and character effects from each of the 4 short-listed options. The assessment was requested to assist with the multi-criteria analysis (MCA) of the 4 flood protection options. The 4 options are described in the above report. The assessment considers visual amenity and landscape effects as well as natural character considerations, and biophysical impacts. The level of effects is described using the following scoring terminology, to make it consistent with that used in the above report:

1. Large positive
2. Moderate positive
3. Slightly positive
4. Neutral
5. Slight negative
6. Moderate negative
7. Large negative

The assessment below is a high-level assessment for use with the multi-criteria analysis scoring, but does not constitute an assessment of effects for resource consenting purposes. A site visit has not been undertaken specifically for this assessment. However, I am very familiar with the site locations having been involved in many Wairoa projects over the last 10 years in a landscape architect capacity.

2 Option 1 (Floodway)

2.1 MCA Rating

MCA Rating - Moderate negative

2.2 Visual Effects (Rural Views)

The floodway will noticeably affect rural views nearby. The change will include construction of the cut batters and the lowered base of the floodway which will create a large 'depression' in the landscape. Other changes will include removal of residential properties and vegetation.

The new floodway, similar to river terraces, may be perceived as a natural feature within the river environment, as it rests within the natural contours. The 'depression' will be low enough to relate to the surrounding river landscape character without blockage of views to ridgelines or significant landscape features in the background. The lowered contour will sit below the main viewing angle. It is therefore considered that the degree of change in visual outlook and amenity for these viewers will likely be Moderate. The largest visual effect will be on users in proximity to the floodway. The degree of change from viewers within the wider landscape will be **small**.

2.3 Biophysical Features and Natural Character Effects (Landform, Land Cover and Landuse)

The landform is generally flat and will therefore require cut earthworks and large-scale excavations to construct the floodway. The cut batters and lowered base will have a noticeable effect on the topography of the area. The inlet and outlet of the floodway will have a noticeable effect on the natural character values of the river and its banks. Although the river does not have high natural character values, the proposed changes will have negative effects on the perception of the remaining naturalness. Construction of the floodway within the rural zone will result in the removal of mainly pasture. Land use modifications will include the removal of a large number of farm dwellings and will have an effect on productive farming practices. However, it is anticipated that most farming activities will be reinstated following construction of the floodway. Due to the scale of the works the floodway will result in **moderate negative effects**.

3 Option 5 (Stopbank)

3.1 MCA Rating

MCA Rating - Moderate negative

3.2 Visual Effects (Rural Views)

The largest visual effect will be on occupiers and road/river users in proximity to the stopbank. For these viewers the stopbank structure will protrude above ground floor views and will be seen as an unnatural structure that contrasts with the flat landscape. This raised elevation may block views to the river and impact on the quality of these views. However, stopbanks next to rivers are familiar and accepted objects in the landscape, overtime time they will become accepted in the landscape and result in lower medium and long term visual effects.

3.3 Biophysical Features and Natural Character Effects (Landform, Land Cover and Landuse)

The landform is generally flat and will require fill earthworks to construct the stopbank. Although the earth wall and the stopbank will not impact directly on the river margins and river itself, the structure will have a negative effect on the topography of the area and diminish perceptions of natural character. Construction of the stopbank within the rural productive zone will result in the removal of small areas of pasture. Landuse modifications will include the removal of a small number of farm dwellings, relocation of Ruataniwha marae to the landward side of the stopbank and impacts on a small area of productive farming practices. Due to the small footprint and scale

of the stopbank relative to the other options the stopbank will not significantly alter the rural landuse patterns or introduce new types of landuse in the area. As such, the stopbank will result in **Moderate negative effects**.

4 Option 17 (Combined)

4.1 MCA Rating

MCA Rating – Moderate negative

4.2 Visual Effects (Rural Views)

Visual effects of the Option 7 floodway component of this option on the rural properties are less severe when compared to the Option 1 floodway. This is because Option 7 Floodway is shorter and narrower, with an overall smaller footprint compared to Option 1. Although the visual effects of the floodway will be low, the stopbank component of this option may block views to the river and impact on the quality of these views. The combined visual effects of the floodway and the stopbank are **moderate negative** as the two options are separate in terms of viewing context.

4.3 Biophysical Features and Natural Character Effects (Landform, Land Cover and Land use)

The combined size and length of the earthworks and the resultant footprints from the stopbank and floodway will greatly impact the biophysical features. For this reasons Option 17 scores an overall High negative impact.

5 Option 1B (Floodway)

5.1 MCA Rating

MCA Rating – Moderate negative

5.2 Visual Effects (Rural Views) and Effects on Biophysical Features and Natural Character Effects

The footprint for this option is slightly narrower when compared to Option 1, but the visual effects, and effects on biophysical features will be comparative.