

# Manitoba

## Floodway Expansion Authority



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## Release

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For immediate Release

### ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FILED FOR RED RIVER FLOODWAY EXPANSION PROJECT

#### Public Consultations Result In Significant Improvements to Floodway Project: Gilroy

**Winnipeg, MB** – Ernie Gilroy, CEO of the Manitoba Floodway Expansion Authority (MFEA) has announced that significant improvements to the Red River Floodway expansion project have been identified in the project's Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that has been filed with Manitoba Conservation in accordance with the Manitoba *Environment Act*.

“Since January, MFEA and our environmental consultants have been listening to the concerns of local residents from all corners of the region regarding their views on the Floodway Expansion Project,” said Gilroy. “I am pleased to report that significant project improvements have resulted from our public consultation process including groundwater protection, improved land drainage structures, improved transportation infrastructure and a reduction in land acquisition requirements. These improvements have strengthened our EIS and have contributed to help make this project a model for sustainable development.”

Gilroy noted that *the Environmental Impact Statement concludes that the Project, after the implementation of mitigation measures outlined in the EIS, is expected to create no significant adverse effects on the biophysical or related socio-economic environments.*

After the flood of 1997, the International Joint Commission (IJC) concluded that Winnipeg is at risk of major floods larger in magnitude than the 1997 event, and that the potential damages in the City of Winnipeg due to such floods would be greater than \$10 billion for a 1 in 700 year flood. Gilroy noted that, in addition to the economic impact, a flood greater than 1997 would also likely result in significant social and environmental damages. According to the EIS, it is estimated that in the event of a 1 in 700 year flood, 450,000 residents would be at risk of flooding without an expanded floodway.

As part of the environmental approval process, MFEA and the Environmental Assessment (EA) Study Team developed a public consultation and involvement plan (PIP) for the Red River Floodway Expansion Environmental Impact Assessment. The PIP was designed to provide early, ongoing and meaningful opportunities for the public involvement.

The process included consultation with municipal Councils, local citizen groups, interested Aboriginal communities, environmental non-government organizations and local residents in the RMs of Morris, Macdonald, Ritchot, Taché, Springfield, St. Clements, East St. Paul, St. Andrews and West St. Paul, in the Towns of Niverville and Morris, and in the Cities of Selkirk and Winnipeg. This consultation process began in January, 2004, and, to date, has consisted of three separate rounds of consultations, which were all completed prior to the filing of the EIS. A fourth round of public consultation is being planned for the fall.

The Red River Floodway expansion project involves a major expansion of the existing floodway protection system which includes the Floodway Channel, bridges, the Inlet and Outlet control works, utilities and services and the West Dyke to help divert flood waters around the City of Winnipeg. The project will allow more water to be diverted around Winnipeg during major floods by increasing the capacity of the floodway channel. This will greatly improve protection for the Winnipeg area from catastrophic floods materially greater than the 1997 flood (approximate 1 in 100 year return period), and provide Winnipeg reliable security against floods of up to the 1 in 700 year return period.

“In 1997, the Red River Floodway came very close to reaching its capacity during the Flood of the Century,” said Gilroy. “This project will increase the capacity of the Existing Floodway, provide increased flood protection for residents of the Red River Valley and the City of Winnipeg and increase Winnipeg’s flood security against floods up to a magnitude of 1 in 700 years.”

The Existing Floodway was constructed between 1962 and 1968 at a cost of \$63 million. Since its completion, the floodway has saved Manitobans more than \$8 billion in flood losses.

The EIS has been filed with Manitoba Conservation in accordance with the Environment Act (Manitoba) and is now subject to review by both provincial and federal regulatory agencies, as well as the public. The EIS can also be accessed at [www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/envapprovals/registries/redriverfloodway/index.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/envapprovals/registries/redriverfloodway/index.html) or at the following Public Registries:

- Conservation and Environment Library, Main Floor, 123 Main St. Winnipeg
- St. James-Assiniboia Public Library, 1919 Portage Ave., Winnipeg
- Legislative Library, 200 Vaughan St., Winnipeg
- Manitoba Eco-Network, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 70 Albert St., Winnipeg
- Selkirk and St. Andrews Regional Library, 303 Main St. Selkirk
- Jake Epp Public Library, 255 Elmdale St. Steinbach

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## Backgrounder

Improvements made to the project as a direct result of input received through the public consultation process include:

- **Protection of Groundwater Supplies:** To address public concerns regarding the protection of groundwater supplies, the extent of floodway deepening has been reduced from a maximum of two metres (six feet) to a maximum of 0.6 metres (two feet) in selected reaches of the channel, subject to final design.
- **Environmental Mitigation Fund:** MFEA will establish an environmental mitigation fund to address potential unanticipated environmental effects associated with the project.
- **Drainage Improvements:** To address concerns by local agricultural producers, improvements were made to the design of agricultural drainage drop structures that are being replaced so they could accommodate increased flows and future growth of the local drainage system.
- **Highway Bridge Improvements:** Six highway bridge crossings that cross the floodway will be completely replaced with upgraded structures at the following locations:
  - St. Mary's Road, PR 200
  - PTH 59 South
  - Trans Canada Highway East
  - PTH 15
  - PTH 59 North
  - PTH 44
- **Highway 15:** In response to safety concerns raised by residents of the Rural Municipality of Springfield, MFEA is planning for the four-lane crossing at the PTH 15 bridge in anticipation of future traffic flows. In addition, MFEA is working with Manitoba Highways and Transportation to determine the feasibility of twinning Highway 15 so it can accommodate increased traffic flows in the future.
- **Land Acquisition:** In response to concerns raised by local municipalities, land acquisition requirements for disposal piles of excavated materials from the floodway channel have been reduced from over 1000 acres to a maximum of 500 acres and may be further reduced, subject to final design.
- **Recreation opportunities:** As part of the Project planning process, MFEA will undertake discussions with municipalities about proposed Floodway recreation projects that would be located in their area.
- **Springhill Ski Facility:** Construction schedules will be adjusted so that the Springhill Ski Facility will not be required to relocate or close its operation during Floodway Expansion construction or operation.
- **Re-use of excavated earth:** MFEA will initiate a process to facilitate access to the excavated earth from the floodway channel.
- **Involvement in Design:** In response to local concerns, MFEA is working with municipalities and residents in developing detailed plans to raise the West Dyke and in determining the best approach to Floodway drainage structures in the RM of Taché and the Cook's Creek Conservation District.