

Safeguarding our Stopbanks



NOVEMBER 2024

PROJECT UPDATE #14

Welcome to the November edition of the Safeguarding our Stopbanks community newsletter.

With the busy festive season fast approaching our team has also been busy making the most of the warm, dry weather and cracking into **Stage 4** of the project.

Initial work has involved geotechnical investigations, establishing access tracks and ramps for earthworks machinery, installing drainage, and removing vegetation from the stopbank. This preparatory phase is now complete, and the stopbank repair works are now underway.

If weather and ground conditions continue to behave themselves this final stage of the Whakatāne Safeguarding our Stopbanks project is expected to be complete by May next year.

This update includes a reminder about safety around work sites, an overview of how our team works with property owners and some brief news on what's happening with Project Future Proof, the work to fix or improve areas of stopbanks and floodwalls in the Whakatāne CBD.

If you'd like to have a chat about the Safeguarding our Stopbanks project or have questions about this update you are welcome to contact us by email at riversanddrains@boprc.govt.nz

The Safeguarding our Stopbanks project team

A quick recap on why this work is underway

Stopbanks are only as strong as their weakest link and are vulnerable to damage from inappropriate use, vegetation or structures that shouldn't be there.

Over the years, non-approved structures, trees and gardens have been established outside private property boundaries. These can create weakness in the stopbank, which can cause water to flow through during a flood (seepage) leading to stopbank failure.

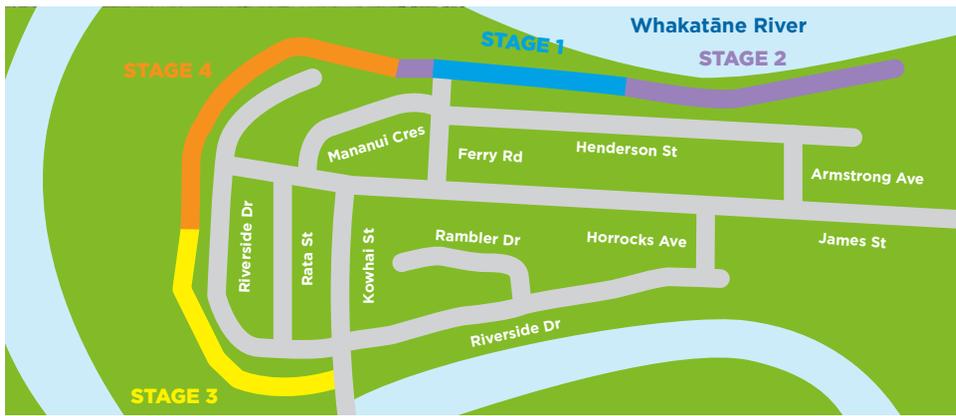
Safeguarding our Stopbanks involves removing vegetation and structures so the stopbank can be repaired, strengthened, and continue protecting the community from flooding.

VISIT: 5 Quay Street, Whakatāne **OPEN:** 8.30am - 5pm Monday - Friday
PHONE: 0800 884 880 | 6am - 6pm **7 DAYS A WEEK** or **EMAIL:** info@boprc.govt.nz



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- **STAGE 1:**
COMPLETE ✓
- **STAGE 2:**
COMPLETE ✓
- **STAGE 3:**
COMPLETE ✓
- **STAGE 4:**
October 2024
- May 2025

Thanks for your ongoing support to stay safe around worksites

As part of **Stage 4** works we've restricted access through the stopbank area behind Riverside Drive. We appreciate this area is a popular local recreational space. If you're out and about near the work area, particularly during weekdays, please remember to take note of any closed areas and associated signage. The work site is not operational during weekends, but it's still important to take care if you're nearby.

We appreciate your ongoing patience with the construction noise, traffic movements and the temporary closure of the accessway at the end of Riverside Drive.

This is about keeping you safe and ensuring our team completes work on time - thank you!!



Flood Protection and Drainage Bylaws

With this last stage of vegetation and structures being removed as part of the Safeguarding our Stopbanks work, it's a timely reminder about the Flood Protection and Drainage Bylaws.

A Bylaw Authority may be required if your property is near a Regional Council flood defence (such as stopbanks, floodwalls, drains and pump stations). It is written permission from us to carry out your planned works, with conditions in place to make sure that what you want to do doesn't affect the condition of these flood defences. It's not to stop you doing work - just ensuring that whatever work you do doesn't accidentally affect our flood protection and drainage infrastructure integrity (which is critical to help keep the community safe in floods).

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Some activities that may need a Bylaw Authority include:

- Planting and / or removing trees and shrubs
- Building and / or removing fences and garden sheds
- Building and / or extending a house, shed or deck
- Landscaping earthworks
- Constructing or removing retaining walls
- Installing, upgrading or removing an in-ground swimming pool

If you live in the Safeguarding our Stopbanks project area (i.e. your property borders the base of the stopbank), you are in a Bylaw Applicable Area and, therefore, most works will need a Bylaw Authority.

Our team are here to help you through the process.

Check out the website to find out more: boprc.govt.nz/flood-protection-bylaws or contact our team on riversanddrains@boprc.govt.nz



The ins and outs of stopbanks and flood protection

With the increasing frequency of large flood events happening across New Zealand and around the world, our team often get asked about how useful are stopbanks in the major (and they mean major) floods.



First up, a quick Stopbank 101...

Stopbanks are compacted earth banks covered in grass designed to prevent a river (or stream, lake or sea) from flooding land, properties and infrastructure.

They are designed to protect against flooding from certain sized flood events.

The size of an event is described as an Annual Exceedance Probability or the percentage probability of a particular flood event being exceeded in any one year.

Yes, Annual Exceedance Probability is quite a mouthful, so it's easier to use 'AEP'. In a nutshell, an AEP is the chance of a flood happening in any one year. Large floods occur rarely, whereas small floods occur more frequently.

A 1 per cent AEP is often described as a one in 100 year flood event, and a 10 per cent AEP is equivalent to a one in 10 year flood event. A so-called 100 year flood does not mean that there is only one flood of this size every 100 years. It means that there is a 1 in 100 chance in any given year that a flood of this size or bigger will happen. When a flood event occurs that is greater than the design level, the river may overtop the stopbank and cause flooding.

Some areas, for example the Whakatāne CBD also have flood walls. They act like stopbanks but resemble a solid concrete wall or a wall made from steel sheet piles and covered in concrete.

The stopbanks in urban Whakatane, including the safeguarding our stopbanks area, are designed to a 1 per cent AEP.

Other work underway

Stormwater upgrade work:

Whakatāne District Council is progressing stormwater upgrades in the James Street and Riverside Drive area.

The work includes installing a new 'upsized' stormwater pipe along James Street and a high-capacity catchpit to improve drainage toward the Riverside Drive stormwater pump station.

Contractors will be working primarily on James Street, from Mananui Crescent and in the area of the pumpstation.

Work continues up to 20 December and the WDC team will be back on site from 13 January. At this stage, the upgrades are expected to be complete by the end of February 2025.

Project Future Proof: Upgrading CBD flood defences

Stage One of Project Future Proof remains on track to be completed by the end of this year.

The work primarily involves fixing or improving areas of stopbanks and floodwalls that have seepage, where uncontrolled water can pass through putting them at risk.

Work also involves raising flood defences to a height that are more suitable to meet challenges associated with increasing heavy rain events and rising sea levels.

Stage One, from McAlister Street Pump Station to the Whakatāne iSite (which has been temporarily relocated to 144 The Strand while construction is happening) is progressing well.

The concrete capping of the sheet piles was completed in early September, however a small section of sheet pile near the iSite will remain uncapped as it's being incorporated in **Stage Two** construction.

Kakahoroa Drive is now open in both directions, however a section of the road shoulder remains closed with the existing temporary speed limit, while contractors' complete construction of stairs and ramp near the new entrance to the Yacht Club.

Staging the re-opening of the Warren Cole Walkway continues. This has involved progressively opening the first section from the McAlister Street Pump Station to the Yacht Club, with the remaining section from the Yacht Club to the iSite happening this month.

Construction work for **Stage Two**, covering the area from the iSite through to the end of Quay Street, is scheduled to begin in early 2025.

Because of the size and scale of **Stage Two**, construction will happen into three parts.

Part One, covers the iSite to Wairere Stream, with **Part Two** covering the Wairere Stream bridge to the end of Quay Street, in front of the Regional Council building. **Part Three** is the construction of the new footbridge across the Wairere Stream.

A key part of the **Stage Two** work is focussed on revitalising the area to make it more attractive for residents and visitors to Whakatāne. This will see flood protection incorporated into the look and feel of the surrounding area instead of, literally, standing on its own.

To achieve this, the team will retain as much of the existing vegetation as possible and ensure access to the river is maintained.