



Ruahine Stopbank

Palmerston North's Secondary Stopbank

What is the secondary stopbank?

The secondary stopbank is a flood protection structure located in Terrace End. Until the late 1990s, when new 'primary' stopbanks were constructed closer to the river to increase the level of protection for Palmerston North, the secondary stopbank formed the city's principal defence against flood events.

The secondary stopbank still provides a vital second line of defence if the primary stopbank were to fail, buying time to allow people to reach a safe location. For this reason, Horizons continues to protect the structure by restricting activities that could damage it, inspecting it regularly and maintaining it when necessary.

Where is the secondary stopbank?

The secondary stopbank runs parallel to the Manawatū River, from Ruamahanga Crescent to Ruahine Street at Fitzroy Bend. Part of the structure is located on private properties, part is on Palmerston North City Council reserve land, and part is on land leased by the city council to the Palmerston North Golf Club.

The secondary stopbank and private properties

Where the secondary stopbank is located on private property, there are some implications for the property owners. Firstly, it will be recorded on the land information held by the Palmerston North City Council and will appear in Land Information Memoranda (LIMs) and Property Information Memoranda (PIMs).

Although the stopbank may seem like a natural feature, it is in fact an artificial structure that needs to be protected to ensure that it will function effectively if it is ever needed.

This protection is provided through a rule in the Horizons One Plan, which restricts some activities on, or near the secondary stopbank.

The activities that are restricted are:

1. Excavation, drilling, tunneling or other land disturbance likely to undermine the functional integrity of the stopbank
2. Any land disturbance that impedes access to the secondary stopbank, for maintenance purposes.

These restrictions apply not only to the stopbank itself, but also to all land between the river and eight meters inland from the landward toe of the stopbank.



Ruamahanga stopbank

Normal gardening activities (including planting shrubs and trees), and digging a hole for fence posts or a washing line are not restricted by Horizons. More substantial excavations, for example to build a pond, swimming pool or cellar, create foundations for a deck or construct a retaining wall, which could potentially weaken the stopbank or prevent Horizons from maintaining it, would not be permitted.

Property owners who wish to do something that is restricted would have to obtain a resource consent from Horizons first. To date, many structural works that have involved some disturbance of the stopbank have been accommodated with minimal modification, through a relatively simple consenting process.

Horizons Catchment Operations Staff and Consents Planners can provide advice about specific proposals and activities.

What are Horizons' responsibilities?

Horizons Regional Council will carry out an annual 'walk-by' inspection, without entering private properties. The aim of this inspection is to note any obvious new structures, any new excavation or cultivation, or changes in the form of the bank. Where damage to the stopbank is identified, Horizons will follow up with a detailed inspection and provide advice on how to fix it.

Horizons will also carry out a detailed inspection of every property on the stopbank every five years. All property owners will receive a letter advising them of the inspection, seeking permission to enter the property and encouraging the owner to be present during the inspection.

The level of the top (or 'crest') of the stopbank may be checked against reference points that have been identified on each property.

Where any damage has occurred to the stopbank as a result of flooding or other natural events, Horizons will carry out repairs after discussion with the property owner.

Horizons will respond promptly to any request for advice about proposed activities that may impact on the stopbank's integrity.

Horizons is allowed to build and maintain this stopbank, and to create rules to protect it, through the Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Act 1941 and the Resource Management Act 1991.

Additional Information

For further information go to www.horizons.govt.nz or contact us on freephone 0508 800 800.