



# East Coulee – Berm Walk

## What We Heard & How We're Responding Report

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### East Coulee Berm Walk Through Event

On June 13, 2023, we hosted a community walk through event for the East Coulee berm project, providing an opportunity for residents to express their thoughts and concerns. We would like to summarize the key points raised during the event:

#### Preservation of Trees:

##### **What we heard:**

While tree clearing has been completed, the preservation of trees remains a major concern for East Coulee residents. Participants expressed deep attachment to the trees, especially the large cottonwoods along the berm alignment. These trees are highly valued for their shade, particularly by residents who do not have air conditioning.

##### **How we're responding:**

We understand the importance of preserving trees, especially the large cottonwoods along the berm alignment, for shade and the overall aesthetic value they provide. We have removed the trees that were absolutely necessary to come down to build the berm, but where there may be a possibility of saving some trees by working with our contractor in the field to adjust the design, we have left the trees in place and hope to work around them.

#### Views on Flood Protection:

##### **What we heard:**

Some residents shared general comments about flood protection, expressing the opinion that it may be excessive.

**How we're responding:**

We recognize that there are differing views regarding flood protection measures and their necessity. In Drumheller, the Town has elected to follow the Provincially regulated flood levels for a minimum level of protection for the community. This means that the flood berm in East Coulee has been designed to protect against the water level determined for the current 100-year flood event of 1,850m<sup>3</sup>/s plus 0.5 m of freeboard to protect people and property in the decades to come.

**Construction Methods and Compaction:****What we heard:**

During the walk through, questions were raised regarding certain construction methods, particularly those related to compaction. Some residents sought clarification and expressed a desire for more detailed explanations to better understand the construction process and ensure its effectiveness.

**How we're responding:**

We appreciate the residents' interest in understanding the construction methods and compaction processes employed in the project. Having our contractor, Brooks Asphalt attend the pre-construction walk-through event, aided in explaining the specific equipment that will be used during construction to achieve the required compaction standards to make the berm water-tight.

**Timeline for Berm Construction:****What we heard:**

The timeline for berm construction was a common question among participants. They expressed curiosity about the expected duration and milestones of the construction process. Residents were interested in understanding the project's timeline to anticipate any potential disruptions or inconveniences.

**How we're responding:**

We understand the importance of keeping residents informed about the timeline and milestones of the berm construction. At present, the contractor plans to begin Phase 1 of the work in mid-July and wrap up by the end of September, barring any regulatory, material supply or other delays. We will provide regular updates on the progress of the project, including anticipated timelines for each phase. These updates will be shared through various communication channels, such as newsletters, radio, newspaper, project websites, and social media.

**Berm Height:****What we heard:**

General questions were raised regarding the height of the berm.

**How we're responding:**

The Town is using the Provincially-determined 1:100 year flood event for the minimum level of

protection, to keep East Coulee safe from flooding for decades to come, and the height of the berm has been set based on this flood event.

### **Pathway Placement:**

#### **What we heard:**

Participants inquired about the pathway associated with the berm project, specifically whether it would be located on top of the berm or elsewhere.

#### **How we're responding:**

Pathways on the East Coulee berm will be reinstated in locations where pathways currently exist. No new pathways will be developed as part of the project.

### **Use of Riprap and River Access:**

#### **What we heard:**

Another topic that emerged during the East Coulee berm walk through event was the use of riprap in certain sections of the project. Some residents expressed concerns that the implementation of riprap could impede river access.

#### **How we're responding:**

The use of riprap at the upstream end of the East Coulee berm has been deemed necessary by our engineering design team and has been incorporated into the design accordingly. Plantings were deemed to be insufficient to resist the erosive forces for the design flood event and protect the berm from erosion. Constructing new formal river access falls outside of scope and available funding for the Flood Program; however, we will work with our contractor where possible to place riprap in a manner to facilitate access.

### **Wildlife and Fish Habitat:**

#### **What we heard:**

Several participants expressed their concerns about the impact of the berm construction on local wildlife and fish habitats. They emphasized the importance of preserving and protecting the natural environment, including the habitats of various animal species. Residents sought assurance that appropriate measures would be taken to mitigate any potential disruption to wildlife and fish during and after the construction process. The community's concern for wildlife/fish habitat underscores the need for an environmentally conscious approach to the project.

#### **How we're responding:**

We recognize the significance of wildlife habitat preservation and will work closely with environmental experts to ensure that the construction activities minimize disruption to local wildlife. Prior to beginning any design work, the first step in the project was to assess the current condition of existing terrestrial vegetation, wildlife habitat and fish habitat, and determine best practices to minimize impacts from construction. These reports

are available on the Flood Readiness website under Be Informed\Resources\ Flood Mitigation Assessments & Correspondence

<https://floodreadiness.drumheller.ca/public/download/files/194253>

<https://floodreadiness.drumheller.ca/public/download/files/194252>

Fish habitat compensation is being constructed near the Town's Raw Water ponds to make up for habitat lost by placement of riprap on the Red Deer River bank. Additionally, the tree clearing was conducted this spring outside of the migratory bird nesting season for the further protection of wildlife. Immediately ahead of construction, a wildlife sweep will be completed in the project area to assess any potential impacts to wildlife and findings will be posted on the website. The contractor is required to prepare an Environmental Construction Operations (ECO) Plan to further detail the steps they will be taking to protect the environment. Finally, the Flood Program has developed a tree replacement program, to ensure that vegetation important to fish and wildlife is replaced. For every tree in fair to good condition that is removed, five replacement trees and shrubs will be planted, with a priority to place these trees in and around East Coulee.

## **Vibration:**

### **What we heard:**

Community still has concerns regarding vibration, especially those who have onsite wells.

### **How we're responding:**

To address concerns about vibrations and their impact on wells during the construction of the East Coulee berm project, we will conduct a comprehensive vibration impact assessment in collaboration with experts. Based on the findings, we will implement mitigation measures, such as adjusting construction techniques, to minimize potential impacts on wells and maintain water quality. We will closely monitor vibrations throughout the construction process using advanced measurement techniques, promptly addressing any deviations, and taking necessary corrective actions. Our priority is to comply with regulations, ensuring the community's access to clean and reliable well water while prioritizing the safety and stability of wells.

Residents are reminded that experiencing feelings of vibration and observing some movement in household items is to be expected in areas of active construction. Any damages resulting from vibration, such as wall cracks and nail pops, should be reported to the Flood Office who can provide further guidance.

## **Community Engagement and Communication:**

### **What we heard:**

Overall, there was a strong desire among participants for continued information sharing and open communication throughout the project. Residents emphasized the importance of staying informed about project updates, milestones, and potential impacts. They expressed appreciation for the walk-through event as an opportunity to voice their concerns and preferences and engage directly with the project team. Clear and transparent communication will remain a priority as we progress with the East Coulee berm project, ensuring that residents are well-informed and have their questions and concerns addressed promptly.

**How we're responding:**

We value ongoing community engagement and open communication. In response to the expressed desire for continued interest and participation, we will continue our regular communication channels to keep residents updated on project progress, milestones, and potential impacts. We will continue to utilize various communication methods, including newsletters, project websites, and dedicated points of contact including the CAC, to ensure that residents are well-informed and have opportunities to ask questions or raise concerns.

We are grateful for the input received from the East Coulee community during the walk through event. We remain committed to addressing concerns, fostering transparency, and delivering a successful East Coulee berm project that benefits both the community and the natural environment.