

23 January 2025

Kia ora Waihi Beach Community,

Waihi Beach Stormwater update

Happy New Year! We hope you've had a good start to 2025.

Waihi Beach is a beautiful place to live, but its low-lying land, limited drainage, and coastal location make managing stormwater a challenge – especially during heavy rain. While some flooding will always be part of life here, we're working hard to improve the drainage and reduce the impacts on our community.

Over the past year, we've made good progress with our stormwater upgrades. In this letter, we'll share updates on what we've done and let you know how you can be part of shaping the next steps. Together, we're working toward a safer future for Waihi Beach.

Coffee and Kōrero: Let's talk stormwater

Join us for the next *Coffee and Kōrero* community event, co-hosted by the Waihi Beach Stormwater Liaison Group, to learn more about our progress and share your thoughts. Talk to Council staff, District Councillors, SWAT (Stormwater Action Team) and Community Board members who have been involved in stormwater projects over the last year. Have questions about the earth dam (see consultation info below), or other stormwater projects? Ask them.

- When: Saturday, 15 February 2025. Drop in anytime between 10am – 1pm
 - Where: Waihi Beach RSA, 99 Beach Road
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Waihi Beach Earth Dam: Planning for the future

What are we planning for the dam?

New government safety regulations require all dams to meet stricter standards for flood control and earthquake resilience. The current Waihi Beach Earth Dam does not comply with these regulations, which means substantial upgrading would be necessary to meet these modern safety requirements. While upgrading the dam to meet the new standards is an option, it would involve significant costs and challenges, without improving the stormwater issues in the community.

It's also important to remember that the dam, built in the 1960s, was originally designed as a water reservoir, providing the town water supply until the 90's. It was not designed as a flood protection system. More recently the dam's role has shifted to managing stormwater and providing recreation.

As part of this project, it is likely that the dam will be removed, and the reservoir will no longer function as a dam. This necessary step will ensure it meets safety regulations, plus provide an opportunity to improve stormwater management and community safety. It will also support better habitat and ecological outcomes, while creating the potential to enhance community amenities.

We want to hear from you!

As part of this process, we are seeking feedback from the community on how the current dam area, which includes a public reserve and walking tracks, is being used. **Public consultation will run from 24 January – 24 February 2024.** Whether you use the space for recreation, walking, or group activities, your input is important to us. We want to understand how you interact with the area, what concerns you may have, and how any changes might affect you. For more information and to tell us what you think, visit our project page (<https://www.yourplace.westernbay.govt.nz/waihi-beach-earth-dam>), or use the QR code opposite. Your feedback will help shape the future of this space as we explore restoration options.



What's next?

We're taking the next steps to ensure the project meets both regulatory requirements and community needs. This includes detailed surveys of the dam area, surrounding reserve, and infrastructure. These surveys will inform the development of potential designs for the stream restoration and associated improvements.

Following this kōrero, we'll develop concept designs that will be shared with the community for feedback, ensuring that the project aligns with the best interests of Waihi Beach.

Other projects we've been working on

Darley Drain Outlet and Brighton Road Diversion

We have finished mapping the area and are carrying out camera inspections of the existing pipelines to confirm the constraints of the current network and landform. We are now working on confirming options for improving the drainage, including plans to replace the stormwater pipe on Wallnutt Avenue.

Beach Road Boardwalk

We've reviewed an initial design for upgrading the Beach Road boardwalk and have asked Tonkin and Taylor to create a concept image for how it will look. This will help property owners see what the final upgrade might look like. Our goal is to improve the appearance and usability of the boardwalk, address safety concerns, and manage erosion near homes.

Maranui Diversion

We've engaged a consultant to start exploring options for diverting stormwater from the Maranui catchment towards Two Mile Creek. Right now, we're in the early stages of gathering information to guide the design process and to determine if this option is feasible and will not have a negative impact on the 2 Mile Creek Catchment.

Two Mile Creek Erosion Protection

The construction of rock walls to protect Two Mile Creek from erosion (see example photos below) has been successfully finished ahead of schedule! Next, we'll focus on developing a plan for restoring native plants and ecology in Te Mata Reserve. Planting is scheduled for next winter, which will further enhance this area.



Wilson Park & The Crescent Stormwater Improvements

We're making great progress on the design for this project, with the initial stages nearly finished. The next step is to meet with local residents to share the design and get their feedback. Once that's done, we'll finalise the plans and aim to start construction this winter.

Athenree Montessori

We've nearly finished designing improvements to help reduce flooding outside Athenree Montessori. The work includes upgrades to the pavement and stormwater systems. To finalise the design, we're identifying the location of important infrastructure in the area, like electricity, fibre, gas lines, and water or wastewater pipes. Mapping out this information helps us plan the work carefully and ensures these assets are protected during construction. Once the designs are complete, we'll put the project out for tender and aim to combine this work with the upgrades planned for Wilson Park and The Crescent.

For more information on our stormwater projects, including maps showing project locations, visit our [Waihi Beach Stormwater projects page](https://westernbay.govt.nz/community/about-the-western-bay/projects/waihi-beach-stormwater-projects) (westernbay.govt.nz/community/about-the-western-bay/projects/waihi-beach-stormwater-projects or QR code opposite)



What's next?

- We will continue to work through this list of stormwater projects – keep an eye on our Waihi Beach Stormwater projects page (webpage above).
- Council has included \$20.78 million in our Long Term Plan 2024–34 for projects to provide relief from flooding within Waihi Beach (more detail at westernbay.govt.nz/WB-stormwater-2023).
- We've been taking a good look at our drain and waterway clearing maintenance to make sure our stormwater systems are in good shape. Before every heavy rain event, we make sure we are on the ground checking things like drains to make sure they aren't blocked. However, this may only keep drains clear until the next big downpour which carries leaves and debris to the catchments.

- We've seen more requests lately about plants growing in our drains, and we appreciate everyone keeping an eye out and letting us know. We'd like to explain how we handle this.

Our main goal when cleaning the drains is to keep the bottom clear for water flow, but we also try to keep plants on the banks intact. These plants help prevent erosion, protect nearby properties, and naturally filter pollutants from the water, improving the health of our waterways.

By managing the plants in this way, we're not just fixing current issues but also helping our environment stay healthy for the future.

- Learn how to tell if your stormwater drainage system is working well or not (visit westernbay.govt.nz/community/about-the-western-bay/projects/waihi-beach-stormwater-project) - and please let us know if there is a problem so we can do something about it. Either email, phone, or message us through Antenno. Antenno is an app which not only gives you a way of communicating with the Council, but it allows users to receive messages about your community from councils and other local bodies (see link to download the app, as well as our contact details, at the bottom of the page).

What can you do?

- Clean out your catchpit (drain). Make sure that lawn clippings and other garden debris are not able to make their way into your catchpit. If catchpits are blocked the stormwater system doesn't drain like it should.
- If your home is in a floodable area, we encourage you to think about raising your home. We'll waive the building and resource consent processing fees, and your application may be exempt from the rules around daylighting. Enquire now at info@westernbay.govt.nz.

If you want to get in touch and speak to someone:

- Come and have a chat at the Coffee and Kōrero event which we are hosting with the Waihi Beach Stormwater Liaison Group.
 - o Waihi Beach RSA, Saturday 15 February 2025, 10am – 1pm
- Get in touch with us, or let us know about something you have seen in the following ways:
 - o Phone us 0800 926 732
 - o Email us waihibeach@westernbay.govt.nz
 - o Download our Antenno App (westernbay.govt.nz/council/contact-us/antenno or QR code opposite)



Ngā mihi



James Abraham

Asset Management Team Leader