greater WELLINGTON
REGIONAL COUNCIL
Te Pane Matua Taiao

Te Kāuru Upper Ruamahanga FMP

MCA for Rural Option Development

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Contents

1. Why MCA?

MCA's are a recognised comparative analysis tool for selecting a preferred option from a range of possible options. However the development of options to manage the flooding and erosion issues affecting the rural areas that form part of the Te Kauru Upper Ruamahanga Floodplain Management Planning project is a very complex topic.

This complexity arises from the sheer diversity of issues, expectations, solutions and impacts that can occur as part of this process, meaning an almost limitless combination of options can be developed to meet a range of levels of service expectations set up to tackle a broad number of issues.

This complexity means that MCA option comparative methods have not been appropriate to further the development of rural options for this project. MCA's typically compare a range of options against each other to identify a highest scoring option which is generally accepted as the 'best' outcome possible. This can perhaps lead to a 'least worst' outcome because it doesn't necessarily include opportunity for improvement, and continual positive development.

2. MCA method

The method developed for this MCA process relies of a cyclic feedback loop to evolve and develop options to create positive growth against criteria defined by the project aims and vision. The integral part of this approach is continual improvement, and it allows more opportunity for a 'best' outcome to be achieved, rather than a 'least worst' acceptance.

Like traditional MCA's it establishes a set of criteria against which an option will be assessed (which could potentially be weighted), and then assessment of an option is carried out against these to identify where the option is delivering against the aims, where it falls short of delivering against the aims, and where it works against or conflicts with the aims.

For this method we have initially used a traffic light system. This simplifies the assessment into, it's a good for this criteria, it needs improvement or more information, or it's flawed and needs to be changed or reworked.
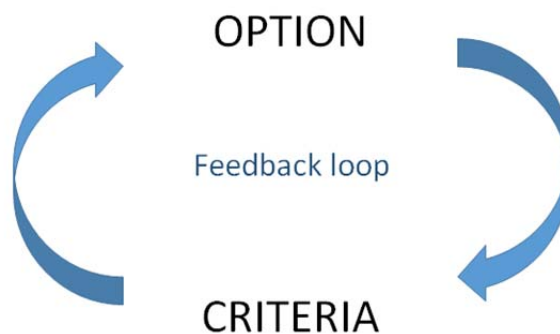
3.   Criteria

3.1   Economic

- Affordable (now and into the future)

- Protect private property, business, agriculture

- Enhances wider economic opportunities

3.2   Resilient Communities

- Remains adaptable to change

- Protect essential public infrastructure

- Protects the health and safety of the community

3.3   Cultural

- Recognises cultural values

- Protects cultural sites/ cultural heritage sites

- Recognises interconnectedness of natural systems

3.4   Natural Spaces / Processes

- Sustainability

- Improves natural values / character

- Improves natural processes / ecology

3.5   Community Needs / Amenity

- Improves river access where this is intended

- Improves recreation safety

- Recognises heritage

3.6   Meets community aspirations

This has been added as a final, overall criteria that is a catch all. It is asking, 'how good do you think this option is as a whole?'. This criteria/question has been included to allow for recording of the 'gut feeling' type answer that is difficult to explain or define within the separated criteria. An MCA is developed to cover a full range of considerations, and it is anticipated that this would strongly reflect the distribution of scoring across other elements.

3.7   Comments

Each of the criteria in the assessment tool has a comments section adjacent to it. This is perhaps the most important part of the tool because it describes the reasoning behind the scoring, why an option is deemed to be green, orange or red.

4.   Use of the tool

4.1   Subcommittee

The tool is used as a continual feedback loop. It provides structured communication between the subcommittee and the project team, and targets areas for improvement, while recognising those areas that are delivering a good outcome. Options on a reach by reach basis are put to the subcommittee for evaluation using the tool. This evaluation is carried out, and then the comments/notes regarding the scoring are fed back to the project team to refine the option, before again presenting it back to the subcommittee. This process continues until we get to a point where we have a good option developed for that reach.

There is a risk with any cyclic approach that it may never end. It may therefore be necessary to accept a less than best option for a reach and make a conscious decision to do so, through a recommendation to the subcommittee. This will be driven by time factors, and the current 'orange flag' failings of the options at the time of its selection would be recorded as part of that option. If however a red flag failing of an option was recorded it would be difficult to justify proceeding and further work is likely to be required.

4.2   Community

The use of the tool with the community is possible because of its subjective scoring method. Use of a traffic light system is an easily understandable way to define a level of acceptance, to then lead a conversation into understanding why that level of acceptance is held. This can then be used by the project team to refine the option.

4.3   Project Team

The project team are able to use the outputs from this tool to direct focus for work onto areas of options that most require it. It is a tool that aids communication between non-technical and technical people against a defined set of criteria, and then qualifies this understanding with notes provided by either party.

4.4 Tool Example

Green — Ok/Good Orange — Not Sure/Uncertain Red — Bad/Not Good			
	Criteria	**Score**	**Notes (try to explain in words what it is about the option that made you score it this way)**
Economic	Affordable (now and into the future)	🟥	
	Protect private property, business, agriculture. Private infrastructure	🟧	
	Enhance wider economic opportunities	🟩	
Resilient Communities	Remain adaptable to change	🟥	
	Protect essential public infrastructure	🟧	
	Ensure the health and safety of the community is protected	🟩	
Cultural	Recognises cultural values	🟥	
	Recognises interconnectedness of natural systems	🟧	
Natural Spaces / Processes	Improves natural values / character	🟩	
	Sustainability	🟥	
	Improves natural processes / ecology	🟧	
Community Needs	Improves river access	🟩	
	Improves recreation safety	🟥	
	Recognises Heritage	🟧	
Overall Score	Meets your aspirations and expectations. (Gut Feeling)	🟩	

ATTACHMENT ONE TO REPORT 15