

Pen Dam Removal Support Guidance

The City of Ypsilanti either needs to repair the Peninsular Paper Dam or remove it. Recent Michigan Department of Environmental Quality inspections identified many needed repairs. The dam is a high hazard dam in fair condition. Dam failure does not appear imminent but a failure would likely result in fatalities.

The City of Ypsilanti reached out to the Huron River Watershed Council to better understand the available options and their implications. A workgroup was established that included The City of Ypsilanti, Ypsilanti Township, Superior Township, Friends of Peninsular Park, and HRWC.

Princeton Hydro LLC was hired to conduct a removal feasibility study. Their assessment was recently completed and presented to City Council. The findings of the feasibility study strongly support removal.

Pen Dam currently serves no function, increases liability to the city, and is costly to maintain. Removing the dam would have many ecological, social, and economic benefits. You can find more information at <http://www.hrwc.org/pendam>

What to Do

- Attend the public forum on February 20th at the Ypsilanti Senior & Community Center, 1015 N Congress St. and voice your support for dam removal
- Submit comments through the online survey and comment portal at cityofypsilanti.com/. The portal will open after the meeting for two weeks. The link will likely be at the bottom of the city's website homepage in the left hand menu.
- Contact your city council members directly by phone or email.
- Tell your friends and family in Ypsilanti to do the same!

Key Benefits of Removal

There are many known benefits of dam removal. Some benefits are well-established by robust peer-reviewed research and what we know about the Huron River. Other benefits are due to Ypsilanti's specific circumstances. Feel free to use the key benefits below or choose your own messages of support when submitting comments, or speaking up.

- **Improve ecological habitat.** Removing the dam will reconnect the stretch of river to the free-flowing sections below the dam and improve conditions for native fish and plant species.
- **Improve fishing opportunities.** Based on the historic river profile, it was likely a great fishing spot. There will be more types of fish to catch and fish of many species may get bigger.
- **Vastly improve water quality.** Restore natural temperature and oxygen profiles of the river.
- **Protect Ypsilanti from extreme weather and climate change.** Remove the risk of catastrophic dam failure. Help sustainably manage flashy flows that are becoming more frequent with climate change and development.
- **Improve public health and safety.** The dam is a liability. Many have drowned near dams on the Huron River. It also breeds bacteria and algae blooms upstream. Removal would improve public safety, relieve the city of liability, and reduce insurance costs.



- **Make Ypsilanti more equitable.** Removing the dam provides benefits throughout the city for all residents. Right now, the benefits of the impoundment are enjoyed mostly by waterfront owners up river in Ypsilanti Township and Superior Township at the expense of city residents.
- **Provide more options for restoring and improving Pen Park for all residents.** The associated park has become a neighborhood safety problem. Removing the dam will dramatically increase the size of Pen Park and reinvigorate interest in the area.
- **Preserve current recreational opportunities at Pen Park.** Some existing recreational opportunities, like fishing from platforms, could be expanded.
- **Improve recreational opportunities on the river.** Canoeing, kayaking, fishing from boats, and swimming would all be more favorable than they are currently.
- **Reduce long-term costs to city residents.** Removing the dam is a one-time cost. Maintaining a high hazard dam is expensive over time. External funding sources will partially fund dam removal. There's no support for keeping it.
- **Create a beautiful, natural place.** Removing the dam would likely create a meandering floodplain meadow similar to the areas in Proud Lake and Island Lake State Recreation Areas, or the area up river of Barton Pond.

City Council Contact Information

Beth Bashert, Mayor	734-483-1100	mayor@cityofypsilanti.com
Lois Richardson, Mayor Pro-Tem	734-482-2017	loiserich@hotmail.com
Nicole Brown, Council - Ward 1	313-888-4044	nbrown@cityofypsilanti.com nbforward1@gmail.com
Steve Wilcoxon, Council - Ward 2	734-334-5407	swilcoxon@cityofypsilanti.com
Jennifer Symanns, Council - Ward 2	734-506-8411	jsymanns@cityofypsilanti.com
Peter Murdock, Council - Ward 3	734-485-7799	pmurdock@cityofypsilanti.com murdock.sweeney@comcast.net
Anthony Morgan, Council - Ward 3	734-334-3407	amorgan@cityofypsilanti.com asmorgan77@gmail.com

City Council office hours: Tuesdays 12:00 p.m. through 2:00 p.m. at City Hall

