

In January and February 2021, Oakland County Parks and Recreation and Springfield Township conducted a survey to obtain public comment and questions regarding the preliminary engineering and park conceptual planning phase of the Mill Pond Dam Removal and Restoration Project. An Outreach Presentation and meeting materials were made available through the Mill Pond Dam webpage. A project display also was posted at the Springfield Township Civic Center so citizens could review the plans and renderings. The survey collected 110 responses, and an additional 5 e-mailed comments and 1 letter were received. This document provides answers to questions asked in the survey, or via e-mail or written letter.

1. Is the pickleball court necessary? Could those funds be utilized for expanding the trails further or making other improvements? Is it possible to connect to Springfield Oaks?

- ✓ A final park design has not yet been completed, nor has funding been allocated for park improvements. A similar planning process will allow for more detailed public comment to develop a park master plan. Pickleball is something that Springfield residents have expressed a strong interest in.

2. How do we make sure building the pickleball courts are prioritized? We already have many walking trails, baseball diamonds and parking lots in Springfield Township but no outdoor pickleball courts.

- ✓ A final park design has not yet been completed, nor has funding been allocated for park improvements. A similar planning process will allow for more detailed public comment to develop a park master plan. We understand that pickleball is something that Springfield residents have expressed a strong interest in.

3. I would like to know if the river/stream and park will (or could) provide access for kayaks or canoes for recreational water exercise and enjoyment.

- ✓ Our hope is that it will, but we will not know the exact flow/levels of the river until the restoration project gets underway.

4. Why not keep the existing pedestrian path and save money. The pedestrian path suggested appears to be very extensive and expensive. What is the cost for this?

- ✓ A final park design has not yet been completed, nor has funding been allocated for park improvements. A similar planning process will allow for more detailed public comment to develop a park master plan. Grant opportunities may be available for new park amenities and park improvements.

5. How long will Davisburg Road be closed, and will there be an alternate roadway and if not, why not?

- ✓ Davisburg Road will be closed for approximately 2 months and a detour will be posted.

6. I live on Clark Road, upstream from the dam. I have a pond on my property that drains into a feeder stream. Will I notice any change in my water level, or change in the rate of flow when the dam is removed?

- ✓ It is unlikely that any water feature near Clark Road would be affected by this project due to these water features being located generally upstream of the Mill Pond Dam. Water flowing out of ponds in this area flows downgradient toward and into the Shiawassee River. Other factors that influence local water levels include precipitation, local water tables, beaver dams, culverts, railroad maintenance and other factors.

7. Was a special assessment or tax increase to fund the repair of the dam ever considered?

- ✓ Through the Feasibility Study, it was determined that repairing the dam was not a viable option. Alternatives were limited to dam removal or replacement. A special assessment was not explored because the dam is owned by Oakland County and this project is being completed in partnership between Springfield Township and Oakland County Parks and Recreation, utilizing grant funding to cover a large portion of the project.

8. What portion of the cost will come out of our local taxes and will an assessment be necessary to fund the project?

- ✓ The project is currently 47% grant-funded, and additional grants are still being sought. The final costs to both Oakland County Parks and Springfield Township will be determined based on the total amount of grant funding received. The remainder of the project will be split according to our interlocal agreement with Oakland County Parks for management of the dam (55% Oakland County Parks/45% Springfield Township). Oakland County Parks and Recreation's funds will come from its Capital Improvement Program funded through its millage. Springfield's funds have been planned over several budget years and set aside for the project from the Township's General Fund. No assessment is planned.

9. The presentation mentioned that some grant money would be available. What percentage will any of the grants cover in costs? Are there grants available to refurbish the dam and save the pond at a lower cost and less inconvenience?

- ✓ The project is currently 47% grant funded, with \$779,835 in grant funds awarded. The grants awarded include: (1) Michigan Department of Natural Resources Fisheries Habitat Grant Program (\$350,000 grant), (2) Southeast Michigan Resilience Fund (\$207,470 grant), (3) National Fish Passage Program (\$197,363 grant), and (4) Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network (\$25,000 grant). During the 2019 Feasibility Study, repair or “refurbishing” of the dam was determined not to be an option, due to significant economic, social and environmental factors. There are no grants available to replace the dam, which had an estimated cost of just over \$1M, along with additional long-term maintenance, operational and repair costs. Removal of the dam utilizing grant funding will cost the township and Oakland County less out-of-pocket than replacing the dam, as there are no dam replacement grants available.

10. What is the budgeting for removal, installation of the bridge and restoration? How does this compare to the restoration of the dam?

- ✓ The budget for removal of the dam, installation of the open-bottom culvert, reconstruction of the road, and river restoration is \$1.64M.
- ✓ The conceptual budget for replacing the dam was approximately \$1M, along with additional long-term maintenance, operational and repair costs associated with a dam. The 2019 Feasibility Study determined “restoring” the dam was not an option – the dam would need to be removed and replaced. However, as there is no grant funding for dam replacement, dam removal and river restoration are anticipated to cost less out-of-pocket for the township and Oakland County than replacing the dam.

11. Why not sleeve the existing dam?

- ✓ This is not an option due to the damaged condition of the dam. The current outlet pipe is crushed and deformed and cannot be “sleeved.” It is also undersized and does not meet EGLE standards, so if the dam were to be replaced, it would need to be done with a larger outlet pipe.

12. It’s hard to believe that the cost of dam removal, bridgeway and restorations necessary for the entire project are more cost efficient than the cost of restoration of the dam.

- ✓ The 2019 Feasibility Study determined that restoration is not an option – it must be removed and replaced. To remove and replace the dam is just over \$1M, with additional long-term maintenance, operational and repair costs associated with a dam. Removal of the dam and replacement with an open-bottom culvert to allow for fish and wildlife passage and restoration of the river channel is estimated to cost \$1.6M. However, we have received nearly \$780,000 in grant funding to greatly decrease the

out-of-pocket expense for Springfield Township and Oakland County Parks. There is no grant funding for dam replacement.

13. Are you aware that Stoney Creek in Oakland Township removed their dam and the local people are upset because what was free water flow before dam removal resulted in muddy ditches through the township? The local people have been upset. The examples that were in the presentation demonstrated significant larger water volume sourcing such as traverse city.

- ✓ We are aware of a dam removal project in Oakland Township on Paint Creek that occurred in 2011. These projects differ significantly due to the nature of the Shiawassee River in the project area. Removing the Mill Pond Dam in Davisburg will not lead to dewatering of ditches or a millrace as was the case in Oakland Township.

14. The long-term park area changes appear to be a very expensive project. Who will pay for these other than the taxpayers?

- ✓ A final park design has not yet been completed, nor has funding been allocated for park improvements. A similar planning process will allow for more detailed public comment to develop a park master plan. Grant opportunities may be available for new park amenities and park improvements which will likely be made over multiple years.

15. Will there be a property tax break to local businesses or reparations for lost business?

- ✓ No property tax break is being considered at this time.

16. It appears that the decision has already been made regardless of local public opinion. The presentations have presented one side but neglected to provide all the alternatives available and their related costs.

- ✓ Springfield Township and Oakland County Parks provided this information in a detailed fashion at public meetings in March and May of 2019. All of the information, including the full feasibility study with detailed analysis and cost breakdowns for the alternatives, has been available online and in hard-copy at the Township offices. The Springfield Township Board reviewed all of the alternatives and their budgets at a special meeting (public was invited to participate) on June 6, 2019. Regarding public opinion, survey responses have been compiled in a comprehensive Public Engagement Report that is available on the Mill Pond Dam webpage and the Township offices.