



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 09-1025, **Version:** 4

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### Resolution to Accept the Huron River and Impoundment Management Plan from the Environmental Commission and 30 Consensus Recommendations

Attached for your approval is a resolution to accept the Huron River and Impoundment Management Plan developed and approved by Environmental Commission.

The Huron River is a significant natural feature in the City of Ann Arbor and the Ann Arbor community has shown high interest in the Huron River watershed by their support of studies and planning in the watershed and use of the Huron River. Because there was no comprehensive plan for managing the river, the Environmental Commission created the Huron River and Impoundment Management Plan Committee in 2006 to develop a plan for managing the Huron River in Ann Arbor. The Huron River and Impoundment Management Plan (Plan) is the result of two years of information gathering, expert input and public engagement.

The vision for the Huron River in Ann Arbor as stated in the Plan is as follows:

- A healthy Huron River ecosystem that provides a diverse set of ecosystem services.

- A swimmable, fishable and boatable river, including both free-flowing and impounded segments, which is celebrated as Ann Arbor's most important natural feature and contributes to the vibrancy of life in the city.

- The river and its publicly owned shoreline and riparian areas create a blue and green corridor across the city that contains restored natural areas and adequate, well-sited public trails and access.

- Ample drinking water, effective wastewater removal and a full range of high quality passive and active recreation and education opportunities provided to the citizens of Ann Arbor.

- Ongoing public engagement in the river's management, leading to greater stewardship and reduced conflict among users.

- An approach to management that creates a model that other communities upstream and downstream emulate.

This vision and the Plan recognize that the Huron River in Ann Arbor is highly used for recreational purposes and bordered by multiple parks forming a greenway along the river. The City of Ann Arbor owns the majority of the property along the Huron River in the City of Ann Arbor. The City owns and maintains four dams: Barton, Argo, Geddes and Superior, two of which (Barton and Superior) generate hydroelectric power, and three of these dams create impoundments that are used actively by area residents for recreation and sport.

However, these recreational uses are often impaired by nuisance growth of invasive aquatic vegetation in the impoundments. The Plan recognizes the need in each impoundment for regular monitoring and maintenance activities to support continued recreational use. The Plan recommends a sustainable funding mechanism be developed to support these activities. The Plan recognizes the need to improve riparian buffers along the Huron River and tributary streams to reduce pollution entering the river. The Plan recommends that mechanical harvesting should be used as a primary

management tool for nuisance aquatic vegetation, while recognizing that requires additional, yet to be identified, funding. The Plan also recognizes that the City's Natural Area Preservation program provides sufficient management and stewardship of terrestrial natural areas, but lacks staff and financial resources to provide management and stewardship of aquatic natural areas. The Plan recommends expanding NAP capabilities to include aquatic areas if funding can be identified.

The Huron River and Impoundment Management Plan developed by the committee outlines a consensus vision statement, set of objectives and detailed analyses, along with 32 recommendations, 30 of which the committee is in full support. Both the Environmental Commission and Park Advisory Commissions adopted resolutions supporting these 30 recommendations.

The attached resolution asks City Council to:

Accept the Huron River and Impoundment Management Plan and endorse the 30 consensus recommendations in the Plan;

Support the establishment of a River Stewardship Committee (RSC) to provide oversight to the implementation of the Huron River and Impoundment Management Plan. The RSC should be created with representatives from the Environmental Commission, Energy Commission, and Park Advisory Commission and others appointed by City Council with expertise in river science (e.g., ecology, hydrology) and river recreation (e.g., canoeing, rowing, angling, and other user groups). This committee should be supported by staff from Systems Planning, Natural Area Preservation, Field Operations, and Parks and Recreation Services

Appoint a City Councilmember to be its representative to the RSC and to make recommendations to Council on appointees to the RSC;

Directs the RSC to provide an implementation plan with identified funding needs and proposed funding strategies, including language for a river millage, within 6 months;

Recommend that operation and maintenance of the recreational dams (Argo and Geddes) not be funded from the Drinking Water Enterprise Fund; and

Recommends that funds currently used for the operation and maintenance of the recreational dams from the Drinking Water Enterprise Fund be reallocated to implement the Source Water Protection Plan to protect Ann Arbor's Drinking Water.

The resolutions from the Environmental Commission and Park Advisory Commission are attached.

Prepared by: Matthew Naud and Molly Wade

Reviewed by: Sue F. McCormick, Public Services Administrator, Jayne Miller, Community Services Administrator

Approved by: Roger W. Fraser, City Administrator

Whereas, The Huron River is a significant natural feature in the City of Ann Arbor;

Whereas, The Ann Arbor community has shown high interest in the Huron River watershed by their support of studies and planning in the watershed and use of the Huron River;

Whereas, The Huron River in Ann Arbor is highly used for recreational purposes and bordered by multiple parks forming a greenway along the river;

Whereas, The City of Ann Arbor owns the majority of the property along the Huron River in the City of Ann Arbor;

Whereas, The City owns and maintains four dams: Barton, Argo, Geddes and Superior, two of which (Barton and Superior) generate hydroelectric power, and these dams create impoundments that are used by area residents for recreation and sport;

Whereas, The Ann Arbor Environmental Commission created the Huron River and Impoundment Management Plan Committee in 2006 to develop a comprehensive plan for managing the Huron River in Ann Arbor;

Whereas, The Huron River and Impoundment Management Plan Committee has developed a comprehensive plan for managing the Huron River in Ann Arbor entitled the Huron River and Impoundment Management Plan (Plan);

Whereas, The vision for the Huron River in Ann Arbor as stated in the plan is as follows:

A healthy Huron River ecosystem that provides a diverse set of ecosystem services.

A swimmable, fishable and boatable river, including both free-flowing and impounded segments, which is celebrated as Ann Arbor's most important natural feature and contributes to the vibrancy of life in the city.

The river and its publicly owned shoreline and riparian areas create a blue and green corridor across the city that contains restored natural areas and adequate, well-sited public trails and access.

Ample drinking water, effective wastewater removal and a full range of high quality passive and active recreation and education opportunities provided to the citizens of Ann Arbor.

Ongoing public engagement in the river's management, leading to greater stewardship and reduced conflict among users.

An approach to management that creates a model that other communities upstream and downstream emulate;

Whereas, The Plan developed by the committee outlines a consensus vision statement, set of objectives and detailed analyses, along with 32 recommendations, 30 of which the committee is in full support;

Whereas, The Park Advisory Commission adopted a resolution supporting the Plan on May 19, 2009;

Whereas, The Environmental Commission adopted a resolution supporting the Plan on May 28, 2009; and

Whereas, On July 6, 2009, the Ann Arbor City Council received from the Environmental Commission the Huron River Impoundment Management Plan and the 30 consensus recommendations contained therein;

RESOLVED, That the Ann Arbor City Council directs the Park Advisory Commission and Environmental Commission to evaluate the 30 consensus recommendations, and to present options for implementation to City Council for those that can be acted upon at little or no cost; and

RESOLVED, That the Park Advisory Commission and the Environmental Commission complete their recommendations and report back to Council within one year.

Submitted by: Councilmembers Margie Teall and Carsten Hohnke

**As Amended by Ann Arbor City Council on November 16, 2009 and December 7, 2009**