

Editorial Article (Opinion Post) → Sample

Adapted from Des Moines Register Editorial Staff; April 26, 2021

Headline/Title

How Can We Bring People Back to the River?

Introduction/Opener

Hook

Explanation of Issue

Thesis

Statement of writer's opinion on the issue.

A Register staffer watched last week as kids played soccer along the banks of the Des Moines River, near the Rotary Riverwalk Playground. They ran up and down the bank as the ball rolled to the water's edge. Later, the staffer captured the orange ball bobbling below the Center Street Dam, caught in the rolling water. The children were gone. All that the dam claimed this time was a ball. But it hasn't always turned out so well. Since 1900, 25 people have been killed at the Center Street Dam. Three more have died downstream at the Scott Avenue Dam. Other people were rescued or survived close calls, and the close calls have been numerous. Rarely do we have the chance to improve spending, safety, and at the same time provide opportunities for recreation and community development; thus, removing or altering the Center Street Dam would open a rush of possibilities for the city of Des Moines.



The Center Street Dam in its current state.

Body #1

Topic Sentence/ Supporting Reason/Detail #1

Quote from Expert

First of all, removing the Center Street dam would not only have no affect the existing water supply, but this would also save the city significant costs in unnecessary fees. To support this notion, one can consult the Des Moines Area Metropolitan (DMAM) Planning Organization's recently unveiled projections, which detail what the city could look like without the dam. Jack Pinter, Senior Environmental Engineer on the project, has stated that "because of the recent construction further up the river, the Center Street Dam is no longer necessary. Removing the Center Street Dam, would not affect the existing water levels or the ability to maintain the city's water supply, as the smaller dams outside of the city, including the newly built Little Dam, are able to support the city's need for water treatment and water distribution" (*Des Moines Register*, 2016). In other words, over the past few years, the city has made improvements to the smaller dams outside of the Des Moines city

**Statistic/
Numbers**

**Concluding
Sentence**

center, which have alleviated the pressure and necessity that had been previously placed on the Center Street Dam. These dams can manage water treatment, and control the movement of water, so the water levels of the river that run through the city and access to water supply would not be changed. In addition, the planning organization have stated the annual fees for maintaining the dam are just over two million dollars (*Iowa Whitewater*, 2021). This consumes a large portion of the city's budget that could be better put to use on other projects the city desperately needs. While the initial removal of the dam may be costly, saving two million dollars per year would be an immense gain. That said, while it would be an expensive project, maintaining the dam has become purposeless, and the tax dollars could be spent elsewhere to better enhance the city.

Body #2

**Topic Sentence/
Supporting
Reason/Detail #2**

The DMAM Planning Organization also revealed their post-dam removal design illustrations that show exciting ideas and attractions that would begin to bring life and beauty back to the river. These drawings show options for different channels and sources of recreation, and conditions along the river's edge would vary from wild and natural to groomed lawn rather than just concrete. More specifically the drawings show options for a lazy river or a more challenging whitewater rafting course; they show places in which adventurers can tube through rapids, and families can paddle through gentle channels. They show fishing lines, and flying kites, and launching motor boats from new access point. But, as Jack Pinter points out, "the most important thing the designs show may not be immediately obvious: the tiny dots representing people who have returned to a safe and beautiful river" (*Des Moines Register*, 2016).

**Quote from
Expert**



*Center Street Dam Removal Design from
Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization.*

**Body #2
continued...**

**Statistic/
Numbers**

**Concluding
Sentence**

Those people, who have returned to the river, are flying kites, watching eagles, gathering at amphitheaters, picnic spots and walkways along the water. Featured in the drawings are people dining at outdoor cafes and food trucks near the riverbanks. People have always been drawn toward water. Thus, bringing recreation options to the river's edge, would also bring potential business. Again, while this venture may be expensive in the immediate future, it would have the option to provide opportunity for local business owners, and stimulate tens of millions of dollars in the local economy in the long term (*Des Moines Register*, 2016). Over the last 25 years, Des Moines civic and business leaders have done wonders— creating new parks, trails and other attractions—to open nature to citizens, instead of closing it off as it was for decades. Thus, the dam removal project would not only help to continue the expansion of recreation in the city, but also its economic growth.

Body #3

**Topic Sentence/
Opposing View**

**Statistic/
Numbers**

Many would argue that the removal of the Center Street Dam would be an extensive AND expensive project. Comparatively, the Manchester Whitewater Park cost \$2.5 million, and removing the two Des Moines dams and making other changes would cost five or 10 times that (*Des Moines Register*, 2016). It would also provide significant disruption to the downtown core of the city for at least two years, resulting in substantial changes in traffic volume. These potential issues have prevented the city from taking action and pushing the project in a forward direction.



It all comes down to the money, money, money.

**Rebuttal to
(argument
against)
Opposing View**

However, the current three dams (Fort Dodge Dam, Little Dam and Center Street Dam) have already created a small dead zone in the heart of the city, and along the principal river-walk. Sure, the falling water from the Center Street Dam makes a pretty picture. But imagine the photos and videos of people riding rapids under the same bridge and the attention that would create. Furthermore, as stated earlier, the cost would eventually be offset by the introduction of new business into the city, and would contribute considerably to the economy.

Conclusion

Restatement of Thesis

Solution & Call to Action (Extension)

All in all, the removal of the Center Street Dam could allow Des Moines to see significant results, by not only removing a strain on the city's economy and safety, but it would reinvigorate the downtown core recreationally and commercially. Before we get hung up on the cost and the construction, however, let's explore the visions for the river. The river and city center could be a place that families feel safe bringing their families, and people could seek adventure in a safer environment. The people of Des Moines would have a new place for gathering as a community. The long-term benefits definitely outweigh the short-term inconveniences. This process requires people. Get involved and provide input to the city and our city council. Let's imagine the possibilities—particularly the priceless opportunity for people to finally enjoy the river safely.

Hashtags

#DesMoines #BacktotheRiver #tourism

Sources (References & Images):

Provide a list of link to all images and references (quotes & statistics)

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